

November 2020 Latvia, Iran

We strongly recommend you download the "*Bible Companion*" app, from where you can access *Carelinks* messages, daily Bible readings, *Bible Basics*, commentary on every verse of the Bible and audio exhortations on every chapter of the Bible.

For Android / Google Play at

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.carelinks.bc>

and on the App Store for Apple / iOS at

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/bible-companion/id1475914490>

You can break bread live online as follows:

Sunday mornings GMT on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/groups/69292278377>

Sundays at 3:00 PM New Zealand time. That's 1 PM in Sydney Australia;

10 PM in New York, USA on Saturday evening [run by Br John Aldersley in New Zealand]

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87515766908> Meeting ID: 875 1576 6908

Sundays at 10am North American Eastern Time [3 PM UK GMT time, 11 PM Sydney Australia time]. Run by Br Jim Barton in Canada.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9123758179> Meeting ID: 912 375 8179

The growing number of Spanish speaking converts are now running their own Spanish only breaking of bread service online every week. Contact us for more details or see the Facebook group "*Carelinks Latino America*". Here you can see Pedro from Florida USA and Ben from California USA breaking bread on it:



IRAN

The Persian "*Bible Companion*" app continues to be downloaded by Iranians worldwide, currently on average about 220-250 are downloading it every day; that's around 10 every hour, one every 6 minutes. We're pleased to announce the online baptism this week of MOHSEN in Iran, amidst grave concerns for his security. Let's continue to pray for all our contacts and brethren. We recently had a message from a contact in Iran:

"They are Muslims here, and in the religion of Islam, it seems that whoever converts to Christianity is punished with death, just as in this city a newly converted Christian was beheaded and thrown in front of his house. But it does not cause any problem in our faith".

LATVIA

We continue distributing welfare and trying to care and preach to those who used to attend our meetings. Pleased to announce the baptisms of ALEKSANDR and ANDRIS this week.

A few weeks ago we baptized Robert in **Riga**. His transformation has just been amazing. He's talking freely to people about Jesus, giving out Bibles and on his initiative talking to the homeless and taking them food and clothing. Doing our best to keep him supplied with things to take them. Really, "If you believe, you will receive new life". He really has changed, and personal transformation is the most powerful witness to the power of the basic truth of Christ when believed by ordinary, secular, man-in-the-street people. He is a great testament to the activity of

the Spirit today in the lives of Bible reading sincere folks who have come to Jesus. Robert came through the Bible app advertised on Google. Have a view of the video of his testimony at <https://youtu.be/SauS1F6YliQ>

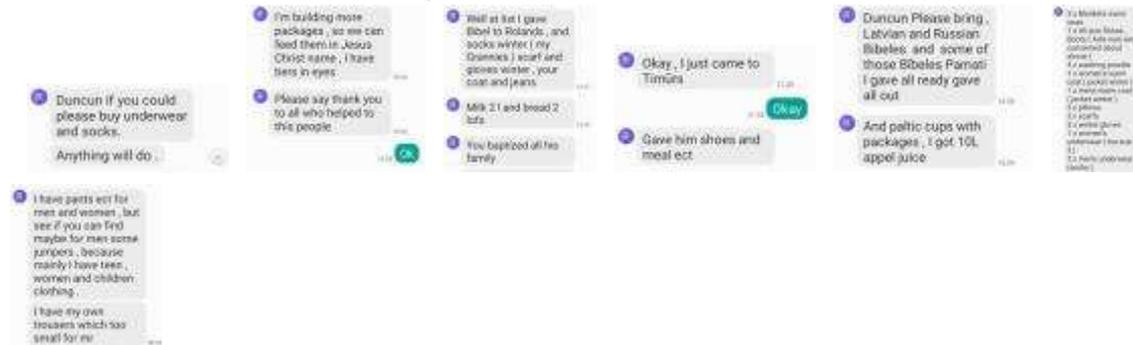
and pray for our work which he and we are doing on the streets here .

Unable to hold any meetings or indoors feeding due to the pandemic, we are taking out food, clothing, bedding and firewood to those in need, especially those who are living rough with temperatures around freezing at night. Brother Robert has been a huge help, going out to our brethren and contacts and finding what they need- boots of what size, what clothing, who needs firewood, and of course the need for food is common to all.

People can only stay in the night shelters for so many days / 365, and they have to fend for themselves for around 3 months of the year. And the pandemic is meaning that night shelters are closing or going into lockdown quite often. The rate of Covid infection amongst the homeless is high, and there is little testing of them. So Robert sends us text messages with what is needed and where, and we are engaged in a huge effort to take out the necessary assistance.

We are buying second hand jackets and clothing, but shoes, socks etc. are very hard to get second hand. Unlike in western countries, there is very little state support in this time of economic and social collapse.

So here are the kinds of texts we get:



We're spending a lot of time and resources meeting these various needs. Most of the people we know as they have at some point attended the soup kitchen. Sister Evia is the 2nd hand clothes shopper, and she and Daniel are well used to assembling the food packages- meat and cheese sandwiches, chocolate, biscuit, soap, apple, carrots, zipped inside a plastic zipper bag:



We had one particular evening that was really very harrowing. Two of our brothers are squatting in a derelict garden house near the river. They are now taking care of a 75 year old lady in a wheelchair who really cannot walk. They wheel her to a supermarket every day, where she begs for food and money. And then wheel her back again to the unheated shack where they're staying. It is only a shelter from the rain really. We gave them firewood but there's a risk of smoke asphyxiation if they burn it inside the shack. So they are trying to keep warm and cook by burning it outside, despite the very wet weather here. We pushed her back from the supermarket one evening and provided warm bedding, food etc. But she really needs to wash. We're trying to fix up things for her, of course. But this is how bad things are getting. Those without private medical and social insurance schemes are just abandoned. In pre-Covid days, we would have appealed for folks to come out here and share this work with us. But for now, we ask for your prayers. Transporting them around in the car, with them inevitably coughing

heavily, is quite the challenge to faith. So, you can 'come with us' for 15 minutes by viewing the video of that evening at <https://youtu.be/-HeXrFvSnxY>.

The poverty is pathetic.



In the pictures, you can see Luba in her wheelchair next to the outdoors fireplace, and also Robert's bicycle, which he uses to get around and see people.

We visited the shack in the day time too; here's her wheelchair, with some cardboard over it to keep the worst of the rain off it:



Wherever we go, we distribute Bibles. "Free Food / Free Bibles" is on the back of our visibility vests and that is indeed our mission, to above all take the Lord Jesus to this world:



We are seeking to alleviate suffering this Winter wherever we can, not just in Riga, as we have responsibilities and contacts with brethren and contacts all over. Please do prayerfully support our work.

In the midst of all this work, we're sad to report the falling asleep in Jesus of Maria, one of our longest term and most regular attenders at our soup kitchen meetings over the years... but it is so encouraging to see someone accept the faith and endure to the end. Amidst Covid restrictions, 6 of us buried her. But it was a time of reflection- of how she had first attended the meetings around 10 years ago, and took to everything like a duck to water. It all seemed so intuitive to Maria. She was not homeless and lived in one of the high rise tower blocks near the hall.

She took great pleasure in helping the homeless who attended, both spiritually and practically. She introduced many to the Gospel and persuaded them to be baptized even though they may have had bad experiences with 'religion'. One of those, brother Gunars, attended the funeral and kept making the simple statement: "Here is a woman who saved me, through Jesus":



This is the power of preaching, of evangelism, that indeed we can save others, through Jesus. And so funerals like this are the time to look back and reflect that all our work has indeed been blessed. The labour was not in vain, in the Lord. Women like Maria [and men like Gunars] came to know Jesus in spirit and truth, and we can confidently bury them in sure Hope of the resurrection. The well loved scriptures we read, 1 Corinthians 15, John 11 [resurrection hope of Lazarus] all have real and actual application:



This is no fable, no mere religious tradition, but the absolute Truth of salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord. And one feels a huge wave of gratitude, above all to Him, but also to all who have come over and laboured in Riga, those who believed in our mission and ministry from afar, those who donated and donate, and above all, the many who pray and prayed over the years. In these strange times of isolation, you may like to spend 4 minutes "with us" at the funeral; see <https://youtu.be/ofpQUcEejMk>

PRAYER POINTS

- For our Winter welfare program
- For those who are cold, hungry and in need of medical attention
- For those persecuted in Iran
- Thanksgiving that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus and His Kingdom really has taken root in so many lives

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks