

October 2022 Afganistan, Australia, Cameroon, China, North America, Ukraine

AFGHANISTAN

This week we were so happy to baptize more contacts from the *Bible Companion app* in Afghanistan, MOHAMMAD, ZEINAB and TAHA.

AUSTRALIA

Brother Peter and sister Hilary Osborne have finished the first half of their around Australia missionary trip. Peter writes: "We have not been home that long but feeling like we are ready to explore the EAST half of AUS and make conversations with the locals - it's a quantum shift from mission work in Africa but we found folk in the mood to converse and only 3 or 4 cards were given back to say, "thanks but not for me" ... everyone else happy to share their life stories take a card with the *Bible Companion App*.

May their enthusiasm stimulate others to likewise do what they can to by all means spread the Gospel.



CAMEROON

Mim and Craig write:

We are very happy to report that bro Wilfried has baptised bro Idriss and sis Safira into the saving name of our Lord Jesus. Our new brother and sister have been taught by bro Zebedé (who was baptised earlier this year by bro Wilfried), with guidance from a distance by bro Wilfried. Bro Idriss lives in the same village as bro Zebedé, but sis Safira comes from a neighbouring village, both are from Muslim families. However, the parents of sis Safira gave their blessing for her baptism, which is such good news as she can practice her faith openly. Bro Wilfried writes (translated):

"Sis Safira went from another village close to bro Zebede and bro Idriss to be baptised when she heard that I was to come, because she has been in search of the truth. She testifies that she has read the whole Quran but nowhere did she see the promise of eternal life, whereas Jesus Christ openly declares that whoever comes to him has eternal life. She tells me a story in the Quran saying that even Mohammed, the guide, did not give any enlightenment in eternal life, he said that even he does not know. Mohammed died and never rose again whereas Jesus Christ gave his own life for those who follow him, and he rose again to give life to those subjects. So she finds no reason to continue in the dark when the light is very close." We thank our heavenly Father for this wonderful blessing. Please pray for bros Wilfried and Zebedé, and our new brother and sister that, through their witness, the true gospel will continue to spread in Cameroon.



CHINA

Brother Donald writes:

I baptized XIANG ,an 83 year old woman but with a very clear mind. She occasionally went to a church and wanted to be baptized,but they insisited the baptism should be baptized in 2 years

after learning all their doctrines. So she was afraid of dying meanwhile and having received a Bible from our Bible distribution work 3-4 years ago, she contacted us. Below is the testimony of our newly baptized sister.

"I have had four children in my life. I have stayed in the countryside alone for many years. In our countryside area, most people are elderly people. Because the elderly cannot leave their hometown and do not know what to do when they enter the city, so we are very lonely. Our children usually come back to see us only during the Spring Festival (7days). Once people feel lonely, hearts will become soft to God. In fact, this is a very vulnerable time. Our children often find it difficult to take better care of their parents because of their work. I am one of quite a few elder local people here who are interested in participate Christianity. However, as an elderly person inevitably I have some physical problems. I was thinking a lot about death and not getting any answers apart from in the Bible. I experienced the death of my husband, my elder brothers, daughter etc. So I realize that when we are old, we enter the countdown of life. Many of my friends in the village are now dead. Some died in their sleep. So I kept asking myself, what happens at death? Where will I go in the future (after die)? Through your preaching, I got a clear answer. As long as we accept Jesus as the Savior, when he comes to the earth again, we will get eternal life. This is undoubtedly a good gospel for old people. Therefore, I was more eager to accept Christ, so as to find an eternal future in the Kingdom".

In the photos you can see our new sister holding a page from *Bible Basics* in Chinese printed in large font; and her weeping as she talks about the death of her daughter



NORTH AMERICA

This week we had the self baptism of RAFAEL, originally from France. He is so excited to be with the Lord Jesus and looks forward to fellowshiping online with brother Jim Barton's online Zoom group. He writes: " So I did it! Today, I finally did it. I baptized myself, and it fills my heart with joy. I feel reborn, thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ. Ready for a new life as his disciple. The business of religion has been my problem here, but I feel like I have found the right people in you all. A million thanks again".

UKRAINE

Brother Mark Hawkins from Australia spent this week with Duncan in Ukraine on a difficult but very blessed mission. We really appreciate all your prayers and support. The lack of electricity and heating is crippling ordinary people in Ukraine, we saw many bombed buildings and major highway bridges destroyed, and the state of the roads is getting to the point of being impassable in some areas. Apart from shelling, the constant passage of heavy tracked vehicles, tanks and tank transporters has broken up the asphalt. You're not allowed to film military things so we don't have any photos of the constant road blocks, army units etc. No electricity means unstable internet, credit card terminals not working and such a host of other issues. On top of that is the constant bombing, missile and drone attacks. We are grateful to now be back in **UK** and away from the constant wail of the sirens and messages to go into the shelters. Some thoughts under bombardment at

<https://youtu.be/fcnfEii-CMw> and <https://youtu.be/9RbILs7-GT0>

The psychological stress on the population is huge. Outside of the big cities, getting any kind of cooked food was difficult. People are just cooking on old barbeques and selling meat, if you

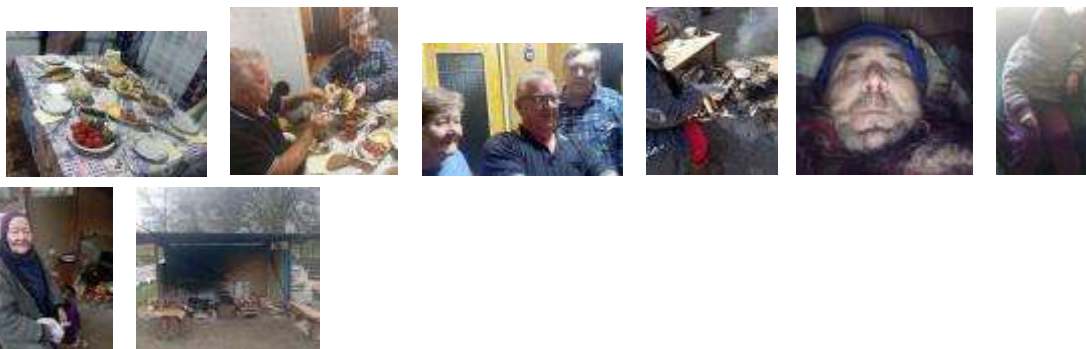
want something cooked. These pictures sum it up- fixing up a broken down Lada with barbeques offering to cook food for you:



Nobody can live under a rock, so life goes on as usual . When the sirens go off, which they do regularly, this picture sums up the attitude. The sign is to the bombshelter. Whilst we scanned the skies for drones with the sirens wailing, Ukrainians just light up the next cigarette [this is a still from one of the videos just referenced]:



But the Lord's hand is mighty, stretched out to save in this difficult situation. 82 year old SVETLANA and her son PAVEL were baptized where we visited them in their village just a few km. from Bucha, scene of unspeakable tragedies. They were 50 days under occupation. People in the blocks of flats resorted to burning wood outside to create heat and to cook whatever they had to eat. Just posting the photos to focus your prayers on what is going on in reality for so many people, especially the elderly and those who can't get out, just huddled up in their coats indoors. We're providing help all we can. Svetlana and Pavel were users of the *Bible Companion app* in Russian, and their experiences under occupation made them see the personal need to come to the Lord. Svetlana had been an atheist ex Communist, but she found herself praying to God and thinking about Jesus. She saw a neighbour shot dead carrying her grandchild. Instead of turning away from God and Jesus, she accepted they were the answer to the hole in the heart she felt. Her husband and daughter had already died from Chernobyl radiation issues [Chernobyl is quite near them] . The issue of "death" brought her to God. She described how she sowed seeds and watched them grow... and started asking "Who makes them grow?". She is a classic example of people recognizing that the hole in their heart can only be met by God, His Son and His word. She said they had dreamed and prayed for the day when occupation would end, when they'd have at least some electricity, and could eat properly again. So they placed before us an absolute feast:



Not without major dramas and God's grace, we got to Krivoj Rig, Zelensky's hometown and constantly under bombardment, with very little power, children under special curfew as the schools are targetted. Here we baptized ROMAN who had in happier days attended some of our gatherings in Kiev years ago. He had needed a major operation, but hospitals are full with war wounded and you can only get anything done privately at huge cost. We did meet this, thanks to your generosity [which we'd appreciate keeping up.... so many needs]. He had had the operation privately and had been immediately released from hospital, and we met the large bill. He was in

a lot of pain. We did the baptism in a bath tub, after wrapping his stitches in cling film to keep them dry as he had a major operation the day before,
video at <https://youtu.be/20EyceNw0RQ>

He was in significant pain throughout the baptism. But truly he had come to the Lord Jesus.



On our last trip we baptized Nina, who thanks to a botched operation has an unusable lower leg and foot. She hobbles around on crutches. We chartered a vehicle to take us about 20 km from the front line to an old people's home, to baptize her mother VERA and also we took her ex husband IGOR with us and baptized him. The place was remote and broken down- but full of limbless soldiers in wheelchairs, and because of them, the old folks are just being pushed out... to sleep in school halls on the floor, up to 50 of them just on the floor. This is all a by product of "war"; the legless soldier in this photo was complaining he is Russian but his legs were blown off by Russians... all so tragic:



One feature of the Gospel is reconcillation, not only between God and man but between men and women in His Son. We had a wonderful time at the baptisms, doing Bible studies, Nina singing hymns, and sharing with her mum what she had found on the latest reading from the Bible app.

Video at <https://youtu.be/PXI23GNSVz8>

It all became very emotional. Nina had been unreconciled with her mother for a lifetime and had been brought up in care... and she had divorced with her husband. And now her ex husband and mother were baptized and we broke bread together and there were many hugs and tears between them. Without going into their personal stuff, believe us when we say that this was a huge triumph for the unifying, reconciling work of the Father and Son when they are believed on in spirit and truth. You can sense some of the joy and emotion from the pictures:



That very unstable place was the very last place you needed your taxi to break down... again by God's grace we got out of there:



Then there was a visit to sis Nana [known and baptized by Duncan over 25 years ago] and her husband bro Alexei, faithful attenders at our Kiev gatherings down the years. They got the chance to flee from Kherson Region, leaving behind their flat and all they have in this world. It took them 4 days to cover 110 kilometers- walking, travelling in convoys and vehicles crammed with people, with Nana battling Covid. They described how they got to the last block post, and

the Russian soldiers said "Enough" after their vehicle in the convoy, and made those behind them turn back. Nana described with tears how they looked back that night from the Ukrainian held territory they'd entered to see shells bursting around those turned back. It was her 70th birthday- and it felt like a 21 gun salute, but at huge cost to the line of turned back refugees. Nana and Alexei are now living in a derelict cottage far from anywhere in north western Ukraine, previously the scene of fighting. We passed many damaged buildings and destroyed bridges on our drive to this remote location:



Alexei despite being in his 70s has gallantly done what he can to insulate the building, got the fire place working, cut up firewood ready for winter, and made hutches where they are raising rabbits so they will have some meat this Winter, God willing. And they have sown some vegetables in hope to have some harvest before the snow comes down. But they worry terribly for their children and relatives left behind. They are surrounded by huge fields of unharvested maize and sunflowers- the fighting was that close that the farmers were unable to harvest and the plants are just being ploughed back in to the fields.



We broke bread together, and what true fellowship that was. They are still shell shocked, but glad beyond words that we made all the effort to get to them. They warmly send their love to all who remember them from the many Bible Schools we shared together over the years:



This is what fellowship in the Lord Jesus is all about. They are truly Kingdom people, and despite the unspeakable traumas, their faith and trust is strong as ever. Our work with folks like this over the decades has not been in vain.

Finally we went to see brother Igor and the family of sisters Irina and Nastya, whom along with the children we evacuated to the UK on an earlier trip, after sister Nastya's husband was killed at the front. It was as usual, a journey that took longer than planned- two major bridges had been brought down by missiles and there were huge lines waiting to pass the temporary single track pontoon. We found Igor and the rest of the family strong in faith and were able to briefly break bread. Again, the encouragement give by us to them and them to us is just beyond words to describe.



We had been planning to go from there to get our bus back to Poland and thence our flight to the UK. But we then got a call from the bus company telling us the bus needed to leave an hour

earlier than planned. We found a guy who offered to take us to the bus stop for 1000 grivna. However his car was electric and very slow and we'd have missed our bus to Poland. And thence our flights out. He said 2000 if we used his petrol car which went faster. We did this but by the time we had changed cars and refuelled the petrol car, we had missed the bus back to Poland. He drove off. There's a strict curfew in Ukraine and sleeping at a bus stop means arrest by the patrols. But God is indeed great. Another bus came. We gave Euro cash to the driver who "happened" to have only two spare seats on the otherwise crowded bus. Despite having to wait the entire night to cross the border, we did make it to the safety [humanly] of Poland - and street lights, electricity, normal life. And thence got our flight to the **UK**.

Finally, Duncan writes: "I'd like to pay tribute to my dear friend and fellow worker Mark who without raising an eyebrow stuck with me through all this and was truest friend, brother and fellow soldier in the Lord. Moreso because he has chronic sleep apnea; not only did we not have much sleep at all, but the power outages meant hard to plug in his C Pap machine, which he faithfully lugged with us around Ukraine - you can see it in the black carry bag in this photo, but nowhere to plug in, or, no power. This is what it is to be a middle aged missionary. No glamour at all, just service to the Lord and to His people. He was a long way from his home in Perth, Australia... in many ways. I challenge more out there to be like him.". Here's Mark desperately trying to get some sleep, with his C Pap machine in that black rectangular bag unable to plug it in:



PRAYER POINTS

- For those recently baptized
- For those without power and heat in Ukraine
- For sister Nana and brother Alexei as they try to fortify their home against the Winter
- For wisdom in how to help further in Ukraine

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks