

September 2015 Cyprus, UK, Botswana

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Luke 5 and there is an MP3 file about this chapter at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/lk5.mp3>

You can see the archives of our MP3 files at <http://aletheiacollege.net/archives.html> and on iTunes at <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/podcast/christadelphian-bible-talks/id987163468>

UK

Our gathering at Hebden Bridge is set for next Saturday , 19th September, do come along. We are planning another session stuffing Bibles in envelopes at the Chelmsford Ecclesial Hall in Chelmsford, starting late morning on Wednesday 29 September. Do try to come and help.

BOTSWANA

Response to our websites and video channels continues around the clock from around the world. As a result of the videos about Bible prophecy, a man in Botswana contacted us. He read and listened to much of our material, and had many questions; Brother Roy Boyd, not sparing his blushes, did a great job in answering at length and quickly. There are just a few brethren in Botswana and they along with our beloved friends and co-workers Paul & Leonie Verster were able to baptize HENRY BRITZ last week. We looked back at our emails with him and saw how things had developed:

Henry Jerome Britz wrote:

Hello there please mail me events happening in the world according to bible prophecy and any other material of interest thanks...I am a Bible student in Botswana... just enjoy the enlightenment I have received so far, nothing that I have known before. Just curious as to why or how one can stay for such a long time thinking they are in the truth only to realize later that all along they were far from it. I have been an adventist for the past four years since 2009 and stopped attending church all together when I discovered that their doctrines are not Biblical and that was towards end of 2013....

Other things I would like to point out and understand is 1. have been listening to some of your audio presentations on the Bible and learning a lot but ... how can a person understand the Bible for himself/her without the influence of another's interpretation, how does one achieve that like you seem to have. 3. Since God put the tree of good and evil in the garden and the serpent deceived Eve, what is to be understood from this since God also brings evil as well as good. Did God use the serpent to test Eve and then curse it also. Is all evil that man can indulge in from God or is some evil our own concoction....

Here's our brother's baptism last week:



CYPRUS

We reported earlier that Cyprus was used as a convenient place to meet up with and baptize contacts from Iran who wished to respond to the Gospel. Those baptized have now returned to Iran and we need to pray for their safety and spiritual growth. Brother Steve was able to go out

from the UK and meet with another group, and baptize another 7 people. Steve travelled by train to the airport in London, and was able to meet up with Josh & Heidi from Florida USA, whom he had taught at the *Carelinks Missionary Training Program* in Latvia in 2012. They in turn have baptized several other people in the USA. So it was a very special thing to begin this trip with intense prayer and spiritual conversation together in a crowded Costa coffee bar:



But those prayers were heard. Steve's trip was amazingly blessed; here is his report: Where is the country with a hot climate, where English is not spoken much, abandoned vineyards and olive orchards are everywhere, they drive on the left and use the UK standard electric sockets and have Muslim flags and messages 100 yards long painted on the mountains? It is here in Northern Cyprus under Turkish control where a group of friends are gathered for a holiday with a difference. They have all come from Iran - about 20 of them. Iran is a repressive country where you have to state on your identity papers what your religion is. If you are born into a Muslim family then you are officially Muslim and you have no choice. All present here in Cyprus are officially in that category. It is impossible to change without making a public declaration, and persecution or death is the likely outcome. It is illegal to distribute the Bible or be a Christian if you were previously Moslem. Sites on the internet with a Christian connection are systematically blocked. Emails and Facebook are monitored. Post is censored. Discussions must be in secret. Gatherings are impossible. To break bread it must be done surreptitiously, privately, perhaps at the end of a meal in the presence of those in the family who would denounce you if they realised what was happening.

Fear is always close to the surface for a follower of Jesus. Truly when Jesus says '*I will be with you always, even to the end of the age*' it carries a real meaning to those who swear allegiance to the Son of God. They know they may literally be laying down their lives for Him. Yet the atmosphere here has been one of intimate friendship, of trust, joy, excitement, laughter and praise. When is the last time at a breaking of bread when everyone spontaneously applauded? There have been two particular ways in which the gospel of Jesus has penetrated the barriers. One is internet material, video, audio and text files. Jesus has penetrated the barriers to many of these people. The second way is the faithful teaching of brothers already baptized, brothers M, B and S particularly. They are refugees from Iran who found Jesus in an asylum seekers camp in rural Latvia. Their passion for bringing the true gospel to their country fellows is bringing forth much fruit, both here in Europe and at home.

The villa where we were staying had a swimming pool and it was here with joy and tears and laughter and applause that 4 new children of God put on the new life in Jesus. Yasaman, Parinaz, Arezoo and her teenage son Kiarash shared in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Such emotions! The teaching of the new life in Jesus carries huge significance in their thinking.

Perhaps their country of death and fear feels like a grave. It is the personality of Jesus, who is irresistible to these people. They hunger and thirst for him in a way which gives new meaning to the words, '*Whoever comes to me shall never hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.*' There is something difficult to define about this encounter with Jesus. His mysterious influence throughout the Muslim world makes him either the object of enquiry or fear. Who is he? He appears to be hugely significant, yet who is he?

So for our new brothers and sisters he is central in their focus on their search for the Truth. And the promise that he will never leave or forsake his disciples becomes a compelling attraction. He may not be seen obviously but he is always there. His character is one who accepts and

chooses his disciples. He loves them, and he is very approachable. We come to him as the friend we always wanted.

For the sisters, it is very significant that Jesus wanted women to be his disciples. the encounter with Jesus at the well, the discussions and most of all the fact that Jesus entrusted them with the first evidence of the resurrection. Women in Iran feel they are very repressed, and long for acceptance as people in their own right, and find Jesus' invitation to them very attractive.

Ahmed, an older man, also desired baptism, but his family will not approve. I found a quiet beach, and there in the presence of Jesus and the heavenly audience he joined the body of Christ.

It is so easy for us in the safe free world to say those words, but for our 1st century brothers and sisters it was treason and potentially the start of persecution and death. Yet they queued up on occasions to be baptised! Perhaps we would do well to associate with the thinking of people who saw Jesus as The Way of escape from this life, without purpose or destiny, and into life. eternal.

Later we sat by the pool chatting. Then one of the women asked for more information about the Holy Spirit. What followed was a discussion and experience that will live with me always. 5 seekers after truth needing urgent answers to pressing questions. As the time passed one or two drifted away as the meal needed preparing, but 2 remained, wanting to know more and more. Even when the meal was in preparation, one kept coming back with an odd piece of food on one occasion - just a lettuce leaf, for the rest of us, but just an excuse to listen to more. It was like Mary sitting here and listening to every word, whilst Martha left the kitchen because she was more hungry for the bread of life!

Samaneh and Mitra, two professional young women, desperately wanted baptism, but come from families who are strict orthodox Muslims. They are at real risk from their fathers and brothers back home if their baptisms become known. When the early Christians were baptised it was after a declaration that Jesus was Lord (as opposed Caesar) or that Yashua HaMashiac (Jesus was the longed for Messiah.)

For such people who face similar problems we asked 'Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world?' And with joy and tears they put their lives at risk by saying 'Yes.' So after the meal I announced I was going swimming, and using the pool at the villa next door where some of the group were sleeping, together with Mohammed, we casually entered the water. And so Mitra and Samaneh became your sisters in faith. They have gone back to Iran by the time you read this. Pray for all these people and pray that we can manage to smuggle a Bible to Mitra and Samaneh probably in electronic form.

Jesus said, ' Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'



PRAYER POINTS:

- For the Iranians returning to Iran
- For all the people responding to our preaching and considering baptism
- For more workers to go out and baptize people

- For the continued growth of the Gospel in the UK, and praise to God for so much interest appearing in the UK

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks