

September 2017 UK, Italy, Georgia

The Bible Companion readings for this Sunday include 2 Corinthians 1 and 2 and there's an MP3 about this at <http://www.christadelphia.net/audio/2cor1and2.mp3>

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

Download the *NEV Bible* with commentary and *Bible Companion* bookmarks at <http://n-e-v.info/NEVBIBLE.pdf>

UK

We plan this Sunday afternoon God willing to go with some Iranian brethren to distribute *NEV Bibles* and *Bible Basics* at the *Mela festival* in *Gunnersbury Park, West London*. This is a huge Asian festival which attracts large crowds. Let us know if you'd like to come along.

ITALY

We really want to thank all who prayed and donated so that 2 weeks of wonderful work could take place here with the migrants. Without the Lord's special empowerment and your support, as "the backroom boys", those of us on the ground here could not have done this. It was a super team of dedicated, hard workers as well- Dave & Liz, Russell & Dawn, Duncan & Cindy, Steve & Robin and Roy & Jane were really all just supporting our absolutely dynamic brothers Tony and Joseph who are permanently in Italy. We taught many hours of Bible truths to attentive audiences of up to 40 migrants, as well as many one to one sessions. The teaching was very capably shared with Joseph and Tony. Joseph is so solid in the Truth and utterly dedicated to taking the true Gospel to the many migrants who have ears to hear, and benefitted much from coming to the UK for the *Carelinks Conference*.. Tony was badly beaten recently as we mention on a *Carelink* and has lost most of the sight in one eye; we gave him funds to get some more attention to it:



Very many *NEV Bibles* and *Bible Basics* were distributed, and over the period there were 27 baptisms including 12 this week, of brothers DESTINY, ODION, GEOFFREY, DAVID, WISDOM, FRANK. PHILIP, PETER, SUNNY, SHADRACK, IYARE and EDOS. It's not that we are waving some large and irresistible carrot to the migrants which makes baptism attractive. All we're doing is giving some food and Bible literature. The food is only basic, and the only nice extra we sometimes offered was Evia pouring them a cup of cold coca cola, or yams- which this week were cooked by Cindy with Dawn reading out internet recipes to her from her phone [they are rather hard to cook]:



We can make no promise of helping them very much materially. They are stuck in Italy with no work and only short stay accommodation in the camps, after which they must make their own way with no further support. All of them gave the same story- of horrible experiences on the journey across the Sahara and in Libya, seeing death close up during the sea crossing, and vowing to God to give their lives to Him if they survived. And these who did survive arrive on the

shores of Italy deeply impressed with God's grace and wanting to know more about Him. And then they encounter us, with our food and free Bibles and Bible teaching sessions. It's no wonder they are eager to join the dots and get baptized once they grasp the message, and they all say that their experience of God's grace motivates them to return to the camps and spread the message further. There is much anti-immigrant sentiment in Italy. They find with us that we treat them as persons and genuinely care for them:



You can see a video of our preaching, teaching, feeding and baptizing this week at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RkvL1gUFqg>

And a more lengthy video of Liz and Duncan explaining the Truth doctrine by doctrine to a group of Muslim migrants at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTQRmNnBkwI>

We are not Pentecostals, looking for miracles; as brother Robert Roberts put it, we look for "*the ways of providence*" rather than the "*visible hand of God*" in terms of miracles. But just consider some of their accounts of God's hand; you can hear them explaining it in their own words in the video links provided:

Wisdom nearly died on the boat crossing. Brother Tony saved his life by heaving him up out of death, when his eyes were already rolling and very close to death. Some time later, Tony was walking along a street in Italy when a man came up to him and hugged him as his saviour. It was Wisdom, the man he had saved. And so Tony lost no time in telling him the true Gospel, introducing him to Joseph who taught him further, and then it was such a joy for Tony to help us baptize Wisdom;

the testimony is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hAauUJmuUsQ>

Here are some pictures of Tony, Wisdom and Joseph:



Another brother spoke of how he left Libya on a boat with 440 migrants on it. Their compass broke, then their engine, and the boat started leaking. They were adrift for four days. The Libyan Arab smugglers then said that the boat was cursed because of the sins of the people on board, exactly the situation with Jonah in the storm. Over the course of two days, the smugglers threw overboard the migrants in groups of 10 or 20 to lighten the boat and because they didn't want to have to return to Libya with them. Of the 440 migrants, only 40 remained, and our brother was amongst them.

Hear more at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RozkVrqZXK8>

Another brother speaks of being hijacked at sea by pirates, another gang of smugglers, who then put them in a prison and tried to torture them to get them to call home and get money sent by Moneygram- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORxkvc2nmH8>

Another brother has a similar testimony, but explaining how he was seated on a boat which was

one of three boats which set off. The Arab smuggler for some reason at the last minute told him to move onto one of the other boats. He did; and the other two boats didn't make the crossing, one they saw capsize with the loss of everyone on board, over 200 people- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rC97rdc82Q0>

And finally another brother reveals the wounds he received at the hands of the smugglers as they tortured him to get money sent to them before they would release him, and he makes a wonderful testimony to God's grace and his commitment to it- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1tQ95WpgQo>

Without doubt God is at work; we put all the testimonies together in one single video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHC8fQdiOs8>

But please pray especially for those who are now out of the camps. We found brother Austin sleeping behind a railway station, very hungry, weak and with a fever. We gave funds and did what we could to help, including giving him the first hot meal he had had for a long time:



Please do pray for them all and for all the ongoing work.

GEORGIA

Steve Gretton has been in Georgia to baptize an Iranian couple and he reports: "Georgia is a small country sandwiched between Russia and Turkey. To the west is the Black Sea and to the east is the Caspian Sea. There are the spectacular Caucasus mountains to the north, significant to Bible readers as the location of Mount Ararat -the resting place of Noah's ark. It is a country which is very welcoming to visitors and tolerant of different religions. Georgians are basically Christian (Orthodox), but in the capital Tbilisi, one street houses a church, a mosque and a synagogue peacefully! It is only one hour flight from Tehran.

Visitors from Iran can come here easily and there is no requirement for a visa. And this is how I met a couple in their early 30's who have been seeking baptism for some time. BIJAN is an expert welder and his wife MAHSA works at a pharmaceutical factory as she studies for a higher degree. Mahsa is a friend of sister Maboube and her husband, brother Mohsen who are asylum seekers in Germany and it is they who have been teaching them and encouraging them to come for baptism, making the suggestion that we meet in Tbilisi.

Mahsa told me that she had read parts from the Bible as a teenager, although it did not make a deep impression on her at the time. However the desire to know more had led her and her husband to find the Lord. Using a relatively secure internet App, they have been talking with brother Mohsen and they decided to take the risk of coming to a safe place to be baptised.

Meetings with people like this always take my breath away by their sheer enthusiasm for our God and for His promises, and their determination to defy the rules of man to follow their Lord. Within minutes of meeting they were telling me about the wonders of the love of God, about the joy of having sins forgiven, and about the opportunity to have a new life - eternal life. They know that Jesus is in heaven, but that his return is imminent and that they will meet him. He will rule in the kingdoms of men and bring love & peace to this world. All this came from them before we had had a cup of coffee!

During the previous week I had been sending them a few pages from Luke's gospel by email - encoded for a degree of security, and they have been reading it with great enthusiasm in their own language. This is always a risky thing to do because all internet activity can be intercepted in Iran and the punishment is severe. This couple are certain they are not on the government's list of suspects and so are very determined to continue learning from us.

However, rather than risk taking a Bible with them into Iran we spent time downloading the App YouVersion onto their phones and then the Farsi translation of the Bible so they can take the Bible with them electronically without it being noticed. To download this in Iran would be asking for trouble.



In the hours we talked together we covered many subjects. I was able to quickly determine their understanding about the humanity of Jesus. I warned them that others had other ideas about the nature of Jesus, but they found the concept of the Trinity quite astonishing and irrational!

I found that all that I was teaching them was fully in line with the ideas that they had already developed by themselves. The Lord is at work with the people from Iran and it is such a joy to find that the gospel we teach finds such willing hearts to accept the saving truth. I think we sometimes forget the hand of God in such lives and think it depends on us. But we are small cogs in a much larger machine.

Jesus said, *"And they shall all be taught of God. Everyone who has heard and learned of the Father comes to me."* [John 6:45]

The internet connection at the hotel was quite good so we were able to make a video link with Sue back in UK who was therefore present at the Baptism and the Breaking of Bread the next day. She managed to take photos with her camera of the computer screen. She captured two very moving moments. As bother BIJAN rose from the waters -he knelt in prayer, as his first response, even before meeting my eyes or taking the towel I offered him.



We must pray for this couple who are very determined to share the news of their re-birth with their friends in Iran who would also like to be baptised. It is clear that there are many of this generation who are resentful of the state religion being imposed on them. They are prepared to take huge risks to share the gospel of Jesus.

I am reminded of Daniel and his friends who were captive in a close-by country. They were equally determined to remain faithful to their God despite the obvious risk to their lives. I feel humbled by their act of faith and it has been a privilege to be part of their transition from darkness to light, from death to life".

PRAYER REQUESTS

- For those recently baptized
- For those brothers in Italy whose 3 month period in the camps is ending and must soon move

onto the street

- For the safety of them all
- For the safety of the new brother and sister from Iran
- For outreach in west London this weekend
- For thanks to God for all He and His Son are doing

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks