

September 2019 Canada, Ukraine, Australia, Database help

UKRAINE

In the old days, we placed adverts and then sent out literature by mail and then engaged in lengthy snail mail discussions with people. Times have changed. Our material is all out there on the net- books, articles, video, audio etc. People view or read the material, often coming back to it over a period of years- and only then contact us. And by that stage some of them know all we have to say about the basic truths of the Bible, and a lot more too. In such cases, their knowledge of Bible truths is actually greater and wider than in the days of snail mail correspondence courses. ALEXEI was like that. He came to us having read so many of our books in soft copy, and with a wonderful knowledge and also appreciation of the Truth. We met him this weekend in central Ukraine and had a great, intense time together, culminating in his baptism in the hotel bath tub.

He's an unusually wonderful brother. At the break up of the USSR, when official atheism came to an end and the Bible could again be openly read, he was only 10 years old. He was determined to have his own Bible. So at 10 years old he wrote to an organization he heard sent people free Russian Bibles. And he got one. it was his pride and joy and he still has it. He made bookmarks for each book of the Bible so he could find them easier. And his Bible is covered with notes in the margins and underlinings, reflecting his growing spiritual maturity. At 15 he met the Jehovah's Witnesses and ventured to their great convention in Kiev- a long way for a teenager to travel in those days. He was baptized into the Watchtower. But reading his favourite Bible, which is the standard Russian translation and not the JW Bible, he came to thirst for true Christianity- for a relationship with Jesus personally, rather than the obsessive focus on "Jehovah God" and loyalty to the Watchtower organization which he found in the JWs. He brought his Bible with him, encased in a cover to preserve it, and read Romans 6 from it for the baptism service. In the picture you can see him showing where he wrote in the front of it what date he received it, and his name:



So here is a true Bible student, in spirit and truth. Never underestimate the worth of giving out Bibles and literature to kids. You are sowing the seed of the word in those young minds. His search for true Christianity took him out of the JWs, but having rejected the Trinity, he found himself unwelcome in other Protestant groups. And so he came across us online, and spent years reading our material. Now our brother is truly in Jesus and not an organization. Although a rather shy person, he gave his testimony in two videos, in Russian, which we've put on our Russian language YouTube channel. His testimony is truly from the heart and let's pray it gets through to people; and pray too for his wife and mother to respond as he has done:



Duncan adds:

I want to make a testimony to God's Angelic presence in my life. In travels in many difficult situations, I am convinced I have a guardian Angel, as we all do. Some entertain Angels unawares (Heb. 13:2). I flew into Kiev airport late at night and had to wait in line for passport

control. Passengers had to fill out a form with various questions, including "What was your incoming flight number". I found mine. But the woman in front of me was fumbling to find it, so I told her the number. She looked at me, caught my eye, smiled and thanked me. I had bought an online bus ticket, or so I thought, for a bus to Cherkasy, about three hours east of Kiev. Brother Alexei was also travelling through the night from his village in Kirovograd region, and we planned to meet at my hotel early in the morning. I got to the bus station from where the bus was supposed to depart. There was no such bus scheduled, and no buses went from that bus station to Cherkasy. The woman behind the ticket counter was rude and unhelpful and told me to phone the people I ordered the ticket from and get a refund. And, she was shutting her desk and the bus station was closing. I went to call the number, but my phone was suddenly out of credit. There was no WIFI in that bus station. So, I had no way of getting more credit or phoning anyone. I went outside and wandered around the arrival platforms, which were deserted. Suddenly, I saw the woman who had been in front of me in the line at the airport. I asked her if she could use her phone to call the number on my ticket. I showed her the ticket, and she said she had no idea where such a bus departed from. I didn't like to ask her what she was doing in the deserted bus station herself. She phoned the number, gave me her phone to talk to them, and they told me that a small minibus would pick me up, about 30 minutes after the scheduled departure time, from the now closed entrance to the bus station. I asked her "So is this for real? Are these guys just going to like drag me off some place?". It was nearly midnight and deserted, and the night was already cold. She breezily assured me all would be fine. And disappeared. The minibus came, I was the only person to board it, and I was relieved to find other passengers who had boarded at an earlier point. It was all legit. I soon went to sleep, praying for God to bless that kind woman. I awoke three hours later. The minibus had stopped, a woman had just got out of it, and the door was closing. I asked the guy next to me "Where are we?". When he said "Cherkasy", I bolted for the door and stumbled out. The minibus took off straight away. The street was deserted, it clearly wasn't the bus station, it seemed just some random street. There was not a soul about, no cars, taxis, nobody. And it was 3 a.m. I asked the woman who had also got out "Is this Cherkasy?". She smiled and said "Of course". I asked her where my hotel was. "Just keep walking down this street. Don't turn right nor left. Go to the end. You'll find it". "How long will it take me to walk?" I asked, and she smiled again and said "Seven minutes". I walked off, and I had gone only a few paces when I came to myself [I'd been sound asleep until a minute before]. It was that same woman I had already twice met that evening. How did she get into the minibus? I alone boarded it. If she was going to Cherkasy on the same minibus, why, when I showed her my ticket, did she not assure me that she too was on the same minibus? I whirled around to see her. And she was gone. No trace of her. I walked as she directed me and timed myself. She was right. It was seven minutes walk exactly, and that street ended at the river Dnepr, and the hotel was on the banks of the river.

No use praying for her, as I had done, that she would somehow come to the Truth as a kind of reward for helping me that dark Ukrainian night. She was some kind of Angel. She was there already, as it were. I am not a touchy feely person, I don't rate subjective testimony too highly, I am more on the pole of the phlegmatic intellectual than the emotionalist, wanting fact not feeling. If anyone else told me this story, I'd say "Well, you were tired, you imagined it". But I testify this happened. And looking back over the years, this kind of thing happened to me far more than once. Praise God.

CANADA

More good news from Canada... sister Pat Boutell has sent our *2020 Creation Calendars* to prisons in Canada. The chaplains have considered them, and so far they have had orders for

1500 *Creation calendars* from prisons throughout Canada; and they will need some \$\$ assistance for that. But it means a significant number of prisoners in Canada will have our calendar, and this year's edition has an extended doctrinal statement at the back of it. More news next week God willing.

And there's more good news about the preaching of Jim Anne Barton, Pam Simard and Ivan Stonnell and the distribution of more calendars, *NEV Bibles*, *Bible Basics* etc.:

The annual *International Plowing Match* was held in **Verner, Ontario** this year from Sept. 17-21. Anne and I set up the backdrop, tables at the booth arranged by *Ontario Advancement of Scriptural Knowledge* (ASK) on Monday, the day before the IPM opened and manned the booth on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning. We brought along a large supply of *2020 Creation Calendars*, Bibles and miscellaneous Bible literature. On Tuesday we displayed the *2020 Creation Calendars* out on the table and the people responded to them very strongly. We had a supply of about 120 but they were completely gone by the end of that first day. So Wednesday, we focused more on handing out a small leaflet titled: "Give you life hope and purpose through Jesus Christ." We used them as teasers to offer to everyone passing by. When a person replied "yes" to take one or "no" they didn't want one, we instantly, in either case, asked if we could offer them a free Bible. Then the conversation went one of four ways.

1. they said "no" and kept walking past
2. they said "no" they have a Bible and already read it everyday.
3. they said "yes" and we then discerned whether a full Bible or just a New Testament would suite them, explaining our reading schedule to them and encouraging them to follow it to draw closer to the Lord.
4. they said they already have a Bible at home, in which case we simply offered them either the full three part reading schedule or the New Testament only one.

The New Testament reading schedule only takes about 10 minutes a day, which for many new people to reading the Bible was very appealing. Many people were interested in reading the Bible but had struggled to do that in the past or always wanted to do it but didn't feel they could accomplish it. The Bible schedules seemed to be a welcome suggestion to many.

In the first few days we gave out hundreds of Bibles, Calendars and reading schedules. It was a very good campaign and we had countless good conversations with people about the Bible. I've handed out Bibles on the streets of nearby cities before and sometimes wonder if the people receiving them will actually read them. I felt that with the booth, we were able to engage many, many people in good conversations about reading the Bible and providing them with the materials to fill their needs. We felt very positive that many who received them were sincere in their effort to read them.

It was a very effective outreach program. Well done all those of ASK and the *North Bay Christadelphian Ecclesia*. Of course all those materials cost money so if you can help provide us with funding to continue doing this good work please help that many can be saved who might otherwise perish.

Much love in our shared hope,
Jim (and Anne) Barton

Here you can see Ivan, Pam, Jim Anne in action and actually talking to secular folks about the Gospel:



BIBLE APP

We are now in the final stages of developing this and would appreciate the help of anyone who is familiar with structuring and editing SQLite databases. Please let us know if you can help.

AUSTRALIA

We have over the last few years reported on the great growth of the Gospel through the work of brother Jafari in **Queensland**. Baptized many years ago in Africa, he has brought so many of his huge family to baptism. This week he has flown two hours north of Brisbane to Townsville QLD to meet with a Congolese brother Ebengo and his sister wife and their family of seven children who have just got out of a refugee camp in Malawi and have been settled in Townsville.

We've been in that camp several times and it is a hellhole, refugees selling their bodies to the camp staff just in return for maize meal rations they are supposed to be given anyway, it's awful and we are so glad for anyone who got out of that place.

The brother and sister are in good shape and some of their family are now interested in being baptized. So let us know if any are up to a trip to do this, Mike Betty Flaherty and John Thatcher are up to it but let us know if you're in the Townsville area. Here are our brother and sister, so happy to be in Australia:



PRAYER POINTS:

- For all refugee brethren when they arrive in the West with [to them] its bewildering ways
- For those recently baptized
- For the work in Canada
- For wisdom as we prepare to launch the Bible app- so many issues to decide