

August 2023 Italy, Latvia, Turkey

ITALY

The group near Torino [Turin] continues to grow, and we were able to spend a day with them further encouraging them and also baptizing EDDIE and JULIETTE. Juliette had so wanted to be baptized on our last visit, but her employer refused to give her time off. He promised to give her time off this time but then changed his mind at the last minute. She wanted so much to be baptized and so she came and was baptized anyway... she has such a strong desire to identify with the Lord Jesus. She brought a special white dress to wear for her very special occasion. We went again to the river Po but walked along the river this time to a quieter place, although with strong currents. The weather was really hot, but the place is idyllic, in its own way. You can see the video of the baptisms and the service, based on parables of the lost, at

<https://youtu.be/SgzvL3neFR8>

As usual one continues to hear reports of the racism against Africans in Italian society, the continual difficulty in finding work, health care and accommodation. It's a real struggle for them to live Godly lives in this environment, and yet also there is a great attraction to seriously commit themselves to the Lord knowing that He will never test us beyond what we can bear. Racism however is a theme that recurred this week in our experiences in Latvia.



LATVIA

We've spent an intense time visiting brothers and sisters and contacts throughout Latvia and Lithuania. It's the most amazing experience to meet those baptized 30 years ago and see them so strong in faith despite isolation from other believers. How wonderful to again be with Normunds and Anita... the young people baptized so long ago now are now grandparents, with believing children who are a credit to them. This is fellowship in Christ, this is the power of the Gospel, fully believed and fed by daily Bible reading, these days made easier by the app:



We held a breaking of bread meeting and meal for those in Riga and were encouraged that 25 attended. As usual there was news of those who have fallen asleep in the Lord, but truly to die in Him is mission accomplished for all concerned:



We were as ever delighted that brother Vladimir came along. Completely blind, we worried whether he had got the message. But just as we were going into the venue for our meeting, a bus arrived and he climbed off, to warm and respectful, loving welcome from everyone:

We were concerned to hear that he along with other elderly Russians have been threatened with deportation as a result of the Russophobia racism that is all too apparent. Russian people are Russian people and most of them in Latvia are ashamed of Putin and the war, but this doesn't

stop racism and primitive racial profiling. Our brother has been offered a place to live in Russia but it's just impossible to believe the promises made by the Russian government to their many beleaguered citizens in other countries. He and others who have been made this offer could well find themselves totally without any help, in old age and on the streets in Russia with no family- and in Vladimir's case, blind. It's terrible that old blind people in their 80s are being treated like this. It's one of the many awful side effects of the war. So... that is a prayer request, to pray for those experiencing Russophobia, and all forms of racism. Vladimir as ever gave a short talk to us all and stubbornly refused to be taken home or to have us call a taxi for him, or indeed to have any other offers of help:



We were also delighted to have contacted with two middle aged couples who have come in middle age to serious commitment to the truth of the Lord Jesus, and we were able to baptize RUDITE and JANIS and ARMANDS and IEVA. Janis first came to our meetings 13 years ago when we were still meeting in the basement hall. And now the seed has come to full fruit, in a changed life, baptism, and his relationship with Rudite. And so, we baptized them in the Baltic Sea [on the hottest day of the year in Latvia] just as so many have been baptized over the years:



Later that week, we went to the registry office and attended the wedding of Janis and Rudite, with brother Armands and sister Ieva as the legal witnesses. It was a truly lovely occasion, and we did what we could to make it extra special:



We can only give true thanks to the Father and the Lord Jesus for the operation of His love, His Spirit, His truth, in the lives of men and women in Latvia.

TURKEY

This week we were able to baptize OMID and KOBRA online, in a service well attended by Persian speaking brethren from Germany and Canada:

PRAYER POINTS

- For those recently baptized
- For our Russian brethren experiencing white on white racism and Russophobia
- For our African brethren experiencing white on black racism in Italy
- Thanksgiving for the amazing progress of the Gospel in Latvia

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks