

August 2024 Australia, Israel, Latvia, UK

AUSTRALIA

Brother Mark has yet more good news of baptisms in Perth WA:

We praise God again for His grace toward Rick and Eri; we honour Jesus for his death of love, that has drawn Rick and Eri to God's salvation through belief and commitment to Jesus. Rick and Eri started seriously to search for God and meaning since 2008 and after all those years, God has led them to personally receive Jesus as Lord; to receive in him the humility of knowing we are sinners, and still yet lead us to his God and our God; his father and our Father. Rick and Eri have tried and tested all sorts of Churches and pastors and have found they all have feet of clay, and that there was always something not quite right in each and all Churches. They were forced by God into a situation where they just had to make their connection solely with Jesus and God; God narrowed their perceptions solely onto Jesus; and as we know from Jesus' mouth "He who honours the son, honours Him that sent the son; God". Rick and Eri are now the temple of God; they are the Church of God as are all of you. God is dwelling in them, as He is in you. Rick and Eri do not have a Church to go to; they are the Church that God dwells in, as is the case for all of you. So we pray that the good shepherd Jesus "Please shepherd Rich and Eri and all of us, into the spirit attitudes of you the good shepherd. Open the eyes of their understanding into the way we should walk; the way we should walk as we wait for your return Lord Jesus".

Video at <https://youtu.be/e-BV8AvN2VM>



Sister Miri writes from Ipswich QLD- they have regular meetings in person and online with so many interested people, especially the contacts of brother John Chol, originally from South Sudan:

We had an unexpected group tonight, an amazing story of how God gathers people together. Designed by the Spirit of God. The angels really are working. This is what happens when one meets up with a school friend from many years ago and talks to them... The group in the photo up until a few weeks ago didn't know brother Chol, and we didn't know them. Then tonight one new young man came... The young man in this photo on Phil's right, his father was baptised by bro Duncan's father in Africa many years ago. And this young man was baptised by bro Duncan, approx. 6 years ago. He left high school and life happened, and a family breakdown happened.... but last week Chol meet him.... they did not know who each other was, but Chol invited him along. And so, we all reconnected.



ISRAEL

Despite the many and real concerns about Iranian coordinated attacks on Israel, we were able to spend a short but spiritually intense time with our beloved brethren in the Galilee area. They are all students or migrant workers; many of those previously baptized have now returned to their homelands but have shared the Gospel with others who have come to replace them. Usage of the Bible Companion app is critical in all this- they work hard long hours on farms 6

days / week, and on the Sabbath, there is no public transport, and the farms are typically far from it anyway. So, it's their one day / week to rest and wash their clothes. The Bible Companion app is a lifeline for them, providing Bible teaching and spiritual encouragement in their very difficult lives. But despite Saturday being their day off, we began collecting the baptism candidates at 06:30 on the Saturday morning and got them all home again afterwards. No small logistical feat with only one car and 8 people to transport. We had so many spiritual conversations- sister Marie, originally from Rwanda and doing her Master's degree, lives near the Spring of Harod where Gideon was taught that the Lord saves by many or by few. And many other such places with Biblical connections. Brother Francis was especially grateful- he had wanted to be baptized on the last two visits, but his boss had at the last minute made him work on the Sabbath. But finally, he was free this time.

In future it'd make things so much easier if someone else could come and rent a car and drive around to the farms too. But all the same, we did the seven baptisms in the Sea of Galilee, against the very same backdrop the Lord had in His preaching. We had a lengthy open air baptism service sitting on some benches overlooking the lake, and then did the baptisms surrounded by some early morning local Israeli Sabbath breakers who wanted to have some fun in the water before the temperatures got too unbearable. None of this could have happened without the Lord's blessing and enablement- so many factors could've gone wrong. And there were no air raid sirens this time, although the baptism site we usually use is now closed due to security concerns. But the sea of Galilee was a wonderful alternative. We give thanks to the Lord for His insistent and very special work in the land of His birth and upbringing. Let us know if you would like to come on a future trip [if you're up to renting a car and driving around Galilee picking people up from farms and chatting with folks about the Gospel]. And we are open to your donations towards the work in Israel.

Video at <https://youtu.be/oijl-oUPB8g>

Whilst in Israel we drove inevitably not so far from Gaza, along the wall hemming in the West Bank Arabs, and then north towards Lebanon- and inevitably reflected that Israel is surrounded by her enemies. This is all absolutely fulfilling Bible prophecy, and some thoughts about this filmed on

location at <https://youtu.be/JWMbweS6tXI>



LATVIA

The history of God's Truth in Riga, Latvia has been an amazing one, the great efforts of God and the Lord Jesus working through the great efforts and sacrifices of His people on earth. It resulted not only in probably 1000 baptisms over the years, but much building up of those baptized to His glory, until they fell asleep in the Lord. One of the great channels of that work was brother Vladimir. Son of a Red Army officer, Vladimir became a school teacher of atheism in Soviet times [there was such an obligatory subject in all Soviet schools]. His job was also to keep an eye out for any pupils who appeared to be under any Christian influence and investigate further. In the course of his work, Vladimir had the humility to accept he was totally wrong, and actually doing evil. He dropped out of society as a result of resigning his job and returned to his Jewish roots. He read and studied the Bible for decades and became involved in the underground church, distributing Bibles and Christian literature underground. Some of it was typed out on

typewriters using homemade onion skin 'carbon paper' to make more copies every time it was typed. As a result of all this, he had an amazing knowledge of the text of the Bible. Those who came over to help at the Riga soup kitchen over the years will all recall Vladimir. At the corner of the block where Duncan and Cindy's apartment is, there's an old house on the corner with the upper floor overhanging the road. Vladimir loved to recall how they would hold meetings in that upper room with a look out in each window, watching to see if Police or other 'agents' were coming. The few times they did, they would run out of the house by the back door into the overgrown plot of land that was later cleared for the block of flats to be built where Duncan & Cindy lived.

Through all this, Vladimir came to understand the Truth as we do in many ways. He heard about our meetings and came along when we were meeting in the basement at Kalnciema street, the first hall we had in Riga before we moved to the larger one which many of you will be familiar with. We clicked immediately and very soon we baptized Vladimir in the bathtub we installed in the tiny "kitchen" under the stairs at that 'hall'. Always, Vladimir was reading the Bible, often in Hebrew. He'd arrive early when the hall was still closed and would squat down and get some more reading done- realizing even then that his sight was failing. This picture of him doing this has long been on the front cover of Duncan's verse by verse Bible commentaries in tribute to him and his zeal for God's word:



He became a regular attender and became Duncan's right-hand man through the long and happy years of running the soup kitchen / church at the larger hall on Vaidelotes street. Thanks to your kind donations, the back part of the hall was turned into a flat, where Vladimir lived. Vladimir gave countless talks about the Bible and had the amazing ability to talk off the cuff about any Bible chapter in a helpful as well as 'deep' level. He also was a good cook and handyman. He must have produced countless liters of borshch soup and fixed the leaky roof and ceilings countless times too. He led so many into that hall, and to Jesus Christ our Lord. And pastored and built up so many of them. When he went blind, he stubbornly refused any significant help. As a Russian and former Communist Party activist, he got virtually no pension. And resisted our efforts to try to help him live somewhere stable. He did odd jobs for people and squatted in various derelict homes or lived with those he assisted. His blindness was of course difficult for him, but he insisted on persevering. After the hall closed and Duncan and Cindy went to care for Marcus in the UK, he continued shepherding the increasingly elderly flock in Riga.

Here are some file photos of Vladimir leading the group over the last 2 years:



And so it was with some concern that we noticed his absence at our recent breaking of bread meeting in Riga. We heard various rumours but can only now confirm them. The evening before our meeting, he was attacked by a man with an axe who for some reason thought that Vladimir had money. Covered in blood, Vladimir fell to the ground and a woman called an ambulance

when she saw him [we have spoken directly with her now]. Vladimir went into a coma in hospital and fell asleep in the Lord a week later. The murderer has now been arrested and is in prison awaiting trial.

"Blessed are they who die in the Lord". "Their works shall follow them". We're all in shock, but it is a small relief that he fell asleep suddenly and not through any long, lingering illness. And we long for the great day Vladimir believed in and preached, when the dead in Christ shall rise, faith shall be rewarded.

Here's our last photo of Vladimir, with his white stick and spiritual flock of elderly folk following him as they arrived for a previous breaking of bread.... absolutely the old faithful pastor / shepherd. May his sleep be short. And may a new generation arise to be like him... but such men are in short supply in our mixed-up world.



UK

What a day of joy on the beach at Lyme Regis, Dorset. A long-married couple HENRY and STACEY have been reading the Bible many years, and more recently poring over Strong's concordance in order to study more deeply. They rejected the Trinity, left their church, and then encountered our videos from Croydon. After lots of discussion we spent some quality time together and great was their joy to be baptized into the real Christ. They have others amongst their family and friends with whom they have shared these truths and some of them are also moving towards baptism. It's so encouraging to find that there are British folks in small town England poring over Strong's concordances and really trying to find the Truth... and that the Lord leads us together. Afterwards we took a photo of us together by the big anchor on the front at Lyme Regis... "Which hope [of the Kingdom] we have as an anchor of the soul". May it soon be realized in the Lord's return.

Video of the baptisms at https://youtu.be/_mpR2rB8Zm4



We have been praying for
since far years to come to the
faith and now we have had
a breakthrough and good hope.
Thank you for all the ways to
get back to...

Then there was the baptism of our friend JORGE who lives in East London although his son lives in Croydon and he hopes to step up his visits. We went to Southend and did the baptism there in the sea / Thames Estuary in extremely windy conditions.

Video at <https://youtu.be/CrVWUa5wp24>

Jorge is originally from Portugal although has lived a long time in the UK. He's already working on sharing the Gospel with others he knows in London.



PRAYER POINTS

- For those recently baptized
- For the amazing work going on in Ipswich QLD and Perth WA in Australia
- For our brethren who are migrant workers in farms in northern Israel
- For all those seeking God's Truth that we might connect with them
- For our work this week in Italy with the African migrant brethren
- For our shocked community in Riga, Latvia coming to terms with the murder of brother Vladimir

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks