

December 2024 Australia, France, Portugal, UK, Ukraine

AUSTRALIA

A report on the prison work, from brother Luke Beard in South Australia: "Just a quick update on how things are progressing in the prison. AMAZING. To put it simply. We have had 13 music sessions, and also on another day I took 3 blokes for truck driving lessons (also amazing Jesus' discussions in the truck). Numbers in the music sessions vary, depending on sickness, other commitments in the prison etc. No baptisms yet. Looking forward to that day though. One extra cool thing ... our music lessons have been moved to the chapel.

The ways of our Lord are being shared. The boys are very grateful for the music. Nearly all of them shake my hand when they arrive, and especially when they have finished a session together. I do wonder what the prison officers think when they see the blokes shaking my hand. Lesson for me, they show respect and gratitude to volunteers with a heart, rather than "mate, remember what side of the fence you're on" (a warden actually shared what she says to them!!) One bloke actually apologized last Friday ... he swore and said "sorry". As you could guess, I have never said "I don't like swearing" but it's the way the lord lives are how we live, and they notice it. So many examples to share ... here's one

After one lesson, prisoner "B" went to the office for some reason (a small glass window, a bit like McDonalds drive through, was in the wall) ... he's standing at the window ... "Lady" officer in the room, not being the most cordial to prisoner "B" I also rock up at the window also standing beside prisoner "B", shoulder to shoulder, as the window is quite small (I'm wearing dark blue clothes also, same colour as prison clothes, looking like a prisoner) ... "lady" officer says to me (no smiles present, gruffly spoken) "what do you want?" ... I hold up my ID card (around my neck, with a small red lanyard) "I'm Luke Beard, wanting to hand in the attendance paperwork" ... upon realising who I was, a volunteer, her face lights up, smiles come, "Oh Luke, come into the office" ... a great deal of partiality ... after I emerged from the office prisoner "B" eyes and mine meet and we both roll our eyes. At the next lesson I shared this story with the musicians and said "she doesn't know Jesus yet. He doesn't show partiality; we are all equal etc.

"Esteem others better than yourself" ... This is what the retired prison chaplain shared with me, when I asked him "any words of advice for me". Simple lesson, and many other stories to share. The other quick story which broke down any barriers with the boys was on the very first day (and I've shared this also with other blokes who later join) ... one prisoner asked me (in front of everyone) "so why are you here? (picture as he says this, that he has a hand movement like someone doing an "under the table deal" ... meaning from this question was ... "are you here to make some cash and help us out?" ... I answer "you really want to know why I'm here? Well I'm here to find Jesus (silence) ... and I proceed with a quick quoting of "you visited me in prison" (Matt 25 etc.) so Jesus is in prison, and I'm here to find him, and I'll find him in you ... soon after, prisoner "J" pulls out a necklace with a cross, "I'm a Christian too" ... prisoner "D" says "I go to the prison chapel" ... prisoner "K" says "me too" ... Could write a book. They are very grateful for your support. Hope this makes your day.

Soldier on bros. "By your fruits they will know you"

FRANCE

As mentioned in last week's *Carelink*, some French speakers gathered together in a Zoom room to online baptize SYLVAIN in Avignon, near Marseille. And what a wonderful meeting it was.

Sylvain had had long contact with us, asking so many questions, and coming to be of one mind with us on doctrinal issues. We started with a prayer, read from Romans 6, and then one-time French teacher brother Phil Martin gave the baptism talk, and then Sylvain's wife immersed him. Afterwards we had a brief breaking of bread. It was great to hear Sylvain explaining his decades of searching for Truth, and the difficulties quitting the Catholic church. His prayers and testimony were so sincere, it was just a wonderful moment. Let's pray his wife and family and friends will also come to the same happy commitment to the Lord in spirit and truth.



PORTUGAL

This week we made a quick trip to Portugal. Happy to tell you of the baptism of CARLO and also catching up with other longtime friends and contacts. Amazing how the large body of material we have online is being accessed by so many people around the world, often in unusual situations.



UK

On Saturday morning our online Zoom church looked at Jael in Judges 4, how she perceived the call to do something for God and grabbed whatever was at hand- a hammer and a tent peg. The lesson being that we should be ready and eager for service whenever and how ever. Sister Raquelle asked for such an opportunity. We mentioned we were doing two baptisms in Stratford [east London] later that day. Raquelle immediately got on the buses and travelled over an hour. And she was so needed. The candidates, MINA and her daughter AYLEEN, were so shy and conservative as Iranian asylum seekers. We did the baptisms at a public swimming pool. Without a sister taking them through the swimming pool changing room dramas and being a woman they were happy to let touch them... those baptisms likely wouldn't have happened. The swimming pool lockers no longer take one-pound coins... they require users to bring their own padlock. And Raquelle just 'happened' to have a padlock in her backpack. So, she was very much used by the Lord, in response to her prayer that morning. You can see her talking about it at <https://youtu.be/6JloJOCRX7I>

So do be inspired to ask the Lord what YOU can do for Him and His work, and He will respond and give you something to do... the good works set up for us to do from the foundation of the world (Eph. 2:10).



CAROLINE was introduced to us by one of our Croydon sisters some time ago. Some people really do have such complicated and painful lives. No wonder they turn to the Lord Jesus. Her three children are in total custody of her former husband, and he is now in a relationship with

her mother... and she's not able to see the children. She complains the children have been poisoned against her, etc. All so hard. We have simply shown her love and acceptance and encouraged her very strong desire to come to Jesus in spirit and truth. She finds the Bible app so helpful as well as the *NEV Bible*. She set getting baptized as her goal and has worked toward it quite a while now. May she now experience the Lord's healing power, in a situation that seems so impossible to heal. Things like taking her out to a shopping centre and getting her some nice treats in Costa... also mean the world to her:



UKRAINE

Decluttering Marcus's old documents we came across a list of the folk who replied to our first advertisement in "Pravda" in 1990, the USSR's number 1 newspaper, at the time the USSR came to an end. The story of how the Lord worked through us to get that advert inserted is... the story of providence in extremis. One of the names was [now] brother Misha in Ukraine. He was baptized soon afterwards and has faithfully attended our meetings ever since. Here he is with his winter firewood, living not far from the front line and with air raids a daily feature of his life:



Our distribution of firewood and other winter welfare will continue this week, Lord willing, in Latvia- appreciate your prayers.

Brother Al Hussey has produced another interesting book, *Hard Questions, Bible Answers*. He writes "Dear Brothers and Sisters, I am very pleased to offer my new book which deals with many of the very difficult questions that have affected our Brotherhood over many years. Having been involved in Ecclesia's who have wrestled with these issues, I have done a lot of prayerful research in order to be of some help in resolving them. Please join me in exploring Bible solutions to these questions and, with God's help, we can all be of greater service to His Family - The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ".

You can get it from <https://a.co/d/cgaNnTh>

PRAYER POINTS

- For those recently baptized
- For the very many for whom the Christmas season is a misery
- For our Winter welfare work in Latvia and elsewhere this week
- For brother Luke's work with prisoners in South Australia

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks