

## February 2023 Afghanistan, Australia, Iran, Turkey, UK

### AFGHANISTAN

Our websites are now being blocked by the Taliban in Afghanistan. Surprising it's taken them this long to notice us! many people there are ignorant of how to use VPN to bypass the blocks or they fear they'll be noticed doing so. And VPN reduces bandwidth so it makes it very slow and difficult to participate in online meetings on WhatsApp or Zoom. It really is a return to the dark ages there. Our brethren and contacts there send us screen shots like this of what happens when they try to access our sites:



Despite this we were able this week to baptize SAMIA online, good attendance with 3 from Perth WA including our elderly sister Connie Hawkins . She introduces herself as follows:

"I am Samia an Afghan woman who has always struggled with life's problems. I was born in a science-loving, poor and Christian family, but unfortunately our society was royal. My problems started when I was fifteen. When I was fifteen years old, the Khan of our region forced me to marry them. They did all kinds of injustice against me. I endured this cruelty for three years. I had to flee from there to Kabul. They had taken my family hostage to find me. After a lot of effort, I managed to get a divorce. I started studying medicine in 2017 and progressed successfully. Besides studying, I also worked with Christians. In late 2020, I became friends with a Christian man. My son was born in 2021. When the Taliban came, life in Afghanistan became difficult for us. The Taliban threatened us every day. We changed our house every week. Finally, we had to flee to Pakistan. My boyfriend was arrested on the border of Pakistan for being a Christian. I was under the tent and the Taliban did not recognize me or my son. We are in Pakistan. My son and I are not safe in Pakistan. If anyone finds out that we are Christians, they will execute us. I lost my whole life".

But in the words of the late, great Jim Elliot, "He is no fool who trades that which he can't keep for that which he can't lose".

### AUSTRALIA

Brother Mark Hawkins has been getting out on the streets of Perth with a display advertising the *Bible Companion* app, offering *NEV* New Testaments and free candy to passers by- with surprising interest. See the video at

<https://youtu.be/jyxsVM6wX5Q>



You can see another of Mark's preaching videos at

<https://youtu.be/5tj88PvqOUI>

inviting whosoever will for a coffee and chat about the Gospel anywhere in Perth. Listen to it and you'll feel like saying "Yes" to that offer.



We are provisionally planning some *Carelinks Conferences* and other evangelism work in Perth

and Adelaide. Dates to note would be, Lord willing, Saturday 1st April in Perth and Saturday 15th April in Adelaide.

## IRAN

WhatsApp group video calls are now banned in Iran unless you use VPN but this makes the bandwidth so low. However we did manage to see MORTEZA baptize himself. And a big shout out again to Brother Arash for being so always ready to translate for us.

## TURKEY

The huge earthquake in Turkey and Syria has left tens of thousands dead and unaccounted for, millions long term homeless, a huge number handicapped, and yet a further wrecked economy. The scale of destruction is vast. It was in around the year 2000 that we first visited Antakya [Biblical Antioch], one of the worst affected areas, and baptized a [then] young couple, Mehmet and Necva. They've kept in touch with us on and off over these last 23 years. Here are some file photos of them reading Romans 6 at their baptism, and Mehmet studying the Bible:



Most of Antakya is now flattened, and our brother and sister lost their home and were on the street some days, sleeping with many others in the stadium, which as you can see from these before and after photos, was relatively unaffected whilst the rest of the city was flattened:



They have now been evacuated by bus to a town some way to the west where they will have to live in a camp. Their livelihood is of course ruined. We have managed to send funds to them but their longer term future is very unsure and bleak. We are open to donations for this kind of work. We may possibly try to visit them where they are at some point.

Over the years we did re-visit Antakya a few times. In November 2008 we were there and baptized brother Hassan:



He is unaccounted for. We repeat that the scale of destruction in Antakya is simply massive as you can easily verify from the media:



In other news from Turkey, we hope to baptize some Iranian people in Denizli, Turkey this Monday 13th at 9 AM UK time God willing in our Zoom room

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6697401754?pwd=K0VWNDlScGwzaThPM2tiU0didmNyUT09>

Meeting ID: 669 740 1754 Passcode: XPb9Sz . All welcome!

## UK

Absolutely huge blessing is apparent at our Lunchtime meetings in central Croydon, and our continued Sunday service at "Church in a pub" in East Croydon. We have had a wonderful local lady called Shay come forward to help us, she is such a huge blessing, and we give thanks for her being clearly sent into our lives. She writes on social media:



There's absolutely huge scope and need here for helpers- to buy, heat and present precooked food, to look after the hot drinks and snacks, to chat with people, to pass out fliers, to clean up afterwards, and there's work at least 4 days / week if you wanted to come and stay with us long distance. Who will rise to the challenge? And if you're more local to south London, do consider offering a day / week, or even just come when you can. Please do pass around this appeal. We do need more help on the ground. Response and blessing has been just amazing.

LINDA, sister Karen's mum, was baptized this week, despite arthritis in both knees at 74. Another victory for the Lord Jesus in the life of another cockney woman, see video at

<https://youtu.be/742Z6YylPtI>

Thanks to sister Dana for helping her so nicely.



We now have quite a number of Iranians attending our Wednesday Lunchtime church. Some are newly arrived, staying in hotels provided by the Home Office with seriously inadequate food, little access to clothing etc.- which is an issue in the cold weather at the moment.

Leggings, jackets, and especially shoes are needed, we made a note of the sizes on one of the disposable paper plates. Likewise men's shoes sizes 8 and 9, including trainers. There is so much need. Let us know if you can provide footwear for them. Their stories are quite harrowing and we have no doubt of their truth, knowing the background of persecution which there is in Iran. Again we really could do with more helpers to engage with and assist these folks.



## PRAYER POINTS

- For those recently baptized
- For our brethren, their families and so many others suffering in Turkey and Syria
- For all those in need of warmth, food and clothing even in London UK
- For more "boots on the ground" helpers in London UK
- For our Winter welfare work in Latvia planned for this week, Lord willing

**With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks**