

January 2023 Cameroon, Iran, United Kingdom

CAMEROON

Here are some updates from brother Craig about the machete attack:

"We received this lovely photo from bro Zebedé this morning, following his return home (sent thanks to sis Safira, via bro Wilfried). Bro Zebedé is seated in the front, wearing yellow, and behind him standing on the far right, is sis Safira's father, the neighbouring village Imam, who got bro Zebedé to the hospital following the attack. Below is a translation of the message sent by bro Zebedé, via bro Wilfried:

Bro Zebedé spoke and gave thanks to God, he continued by saying that every trial in life has a positive purpose in the life of the believer. A few years ago, he could not gather his family together, but thanks to this battle for Christ, today he can feel very happy because his family and some kind-hearted neighbours wanted to pay him this tribute. In some things bad is good because he testifies to the love of all those who from near and far, and those of other races whom he has never even seen, have supported him simply by witnessing to the goodness that is in Christ. He then says that justice comes from God. As for him, the aggression shown towards him because of his conviction, because of his belief in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, which he will not renounce because he has seen the light, his fight remains to teach peace to all those who persecute him. He did not die because of this attack because it was not God's will. He is waiting for the great day of victory that awaits him in the Kingdom of God, with Christ himself, where he will receive his reward, far from the hatred that cannot save. So he forgives his relatives all the evil they have done to him because he who is in Jesus, the Son of God, lives peace and gives peace.

He then asked God to bless bro Wilfried, bless all his family in Christ, not forgetting bro Craig and his family, and those who had so kindly come to his aid with his medical treatment. He finished by saying let's move on because we have the truth in our hands, we are on the right track and God will continue to bless for the advancement of His work."

And here is a wonderful testimony from brother Jean who was taken by piggy back to his baptism due to his invalidity, as reported last week:

"Brother Jean has just called me to testify how he is finding peace in his heart at this very moment. He said that before his baptism, he was very pensive, depressed and he blamed himself a lot for his old life. He sometimes wondered how he could clear his conscience and turn over a new page. He did not consider himself worthy of baptism and he worried how he could be baptised with his injured leg, and as a result nothing was easy for him. He did not sleep well because all night long he was thinking about how to find answers to all his questions. He was afraid and he prayed with tears.

He testified how we loved him to the point that I carried him on my back, without complaining, like a baby because he was unable to walk. While some would have expected him to make a lot of effort, we accommodated him at every level. He saw and testified how the children of God all consider each other to be on the same level. He also appreciated, since the operation on his leg, all the support that had been given to him. He said it often played in his memory like a film and all this he keeps in his heart. This witness of love from others has helped him understand and he feels he has been animated by the spirit of God who called him to live in his joyful simplicity. Today he gives thanks and he sleeps well and he feels at peace because before his baptism many things were missing in him, but not any more because he is far from his worries.

He said he was very anxious on the day of his baptism, that he could feel his heart racing and he felt conflicting emotions inside himself. After his baptism is says he felt a perfect calm and gives thanks to God. He says he reads his Bible every day. He gives thanks to all those that have helped him, with special thanks to Carelinks for holding his hand to show him the way to salvation because he is saved and he is living this grace already. If he would die now, he would rather have good rest to wait for the great day because he himself is convinced in his heart that he is saved."

IRAN

This week we were delighted to baptize MOHAMMED online. Despite the difficulty in holding video calls on WhatsApp due to the regime clamping down on some aspects of WhatsApp and other platforms.

UK

The outburst of interest in our church meetings in South London is just phenomenal. Over 2000 likes on our "*Croydon Lunchtime Church*" Facebook page and lots of great comments, hundreds of them- do visit the page and give us a "Like" and follow us,

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100089245961237>

Clearly the Lord is working mightily and "has many people in this city". In addition to our Sunday meeting at the pub, we are holding "*Lunchtime Church*" in central Croydon on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Attendance rises every day. We offer a warm space with snacks and discussion with our pub church members [who are just great at supporting], followed by a Bible study and a church service and then a meal. Our brothers and sisters are out on the pedestrianized area with tracts and encouragement to attend from early morning on those days- despite the bitterly cold weather. Interest is very genuine.



One local London man attended, liked what he heard from the Bible, and then texted offering to take us out for a coffee if we'd explain the Bible more to him:



No fewer than six of our members at "*Church in a pub*" put on the visibility vests and go out with fliers inviting people to come in. It was an amazing experience to be doing this work alongside sister Karen, when suddenly who should she offer a flier to but her father whom she had not seen, for various reasons, for many years. They had a brief chat, and she explained she'd become a Christian and was inviting people to her lunchtime church... without doubt God's hand was in that. Here are father and daughter chatting on Croydon North End... for the first time in years.



We had a wonderful time after Monday lunchtime church baptizing ROB back at the Heaster's

home. What we offer was exactly what he was looking for and he is very much on fire for the Lord. The baptism service is worth listening to- we're blessed that some of our group have become really mature mentoring figures, and are so keen to do this work. Do have a listen to the gentleness, humility and down to earth practical spiritual wisdom and honesty of brothers Spiro and Kevin and sister Corinne as they encourage Rob before his baptism, and you can view the baptism itself... in the upstairs bath tub in South Croydon in which at least 200 people have been baptized.

The video is at https://youtu.be/JNSjL_m6Bnk

Good to have Marcus in on the action too.



And then again after Wednesday Lunchtime Church, a group came back home for the baptism of GEORGE, originally from Ghana. Brother Marcus was able to tell George about his own missionary work in Ghana dating back to the 1950s:



Unsurprisingly, Sunday's "Church in a Pub" had a record attendance. The pub couldn't provide all the food needed, so some quietly went without. We used all the chairs and bar stools, so some stood or sat on the floor. Afterwards, about 10 came to the Heaster home to witness the baptism of GHEORG, originally from Romania, and suffering with chronic back pain. You can see him eating at the pub along with everyone else, and at the baptism service:



We also made a trip across London to baptize PARSA who is unable to get to our meetings but so wanted to be baptized:

Outside of London, there's a lot of interest in our Persian and Russian language lunchtime churches, even if folks can't attend in person. We have users of the *Bible Companion* app throughout the UK. We made a visit to a group in the Midlands and are delighted to report the baptisms of three very earnest men currently in hotel accommodation. We spent a wonderful time of fellowship together, getting them some decent food as their food needs are contracted out to contractors who apparently supply them with little apart from curry and rice three times / day. This is a common problem for asylum seekers. So here are MANSOUR, MAJID and MEYSAM outside the swimming pool, and then very joyful after their baptisms in the pool:

We're in contact with so many other app users interested in baptism and working towards it.

PRAYER POINTS

- For those recently baptized
- For continued guidance in responding to the great interest in South London

- For more boots on the ground and catering support in Croydon
- For all those working towards baptism, that they not be distracted by whatever issues they have
- For the situation for our brethren after the machete attack in Cameroon

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks