

Dear fellow saints,

This is a brief update regarding the Lord's Work we are privileged to be involved in.

Pakistan

Pakistan is now back in a period of severe rains and flooding. Sohail and the local brothers have been working hard to protect believers from the effect of the flooding. So far, many of the homes that were rebuilt and given a measure of flood protection have survived this year's flooding. However, other homes have been destroyed, such as the one brother Samuel who serves the Lord in 'F lives in'. At the moment, only three homes have been damaged. This week Sohail hired a boat with an outboard motor, and a couple of the young men (Qasar and Nadeem) rescued 90 older people who were stranded and 40/45 women and children. One of the positive outcomes of these trials is the love and care the believers show for each other - those with dry homes share them with those who have been flooded. People given tents last year are using them to help people in need this year.

Things are going well spiritually in terms of conversions, but persecution continues. Sohail told me today about a sister (Nabella - there are two sisters with this name) who was saved three years ago. This week she decided to visit her sister in the city of 'D'. She made the mistake of meeting her in the Muslim area where her sister lives instead of meeting her in the Christian Quarter of the town. When she was leaving, she was followed, beaten and murdered (and her body thrown into the flood waters) because she had converted from Islam and refused to deny her faith in Christ. The price for getting saved is still high. There have been a series of murders recently and several false accusations of blasphemy.

Recently Sohail and Saul have been invited to talk to a group of ten Hindus interested in hearing about the gospel. The gospel's progress is unhindered by persecution and physical tragedies and problems. We can praise the Lord for this.

The believers would like me to visit Pakistan later in the year, but this depends on whether things have calmed down by then. Sohail regularly liaises with the police, and we take their advice on when it is safe to go. Sohail may come to the UK for a few weeks at the end of 2023. I would like him to attend a couple of New Year conferences and visit a couple of assemblies during that period. It will be good for him to meet believers who support the work of the Lord in Pakistan.

China

Please continue to pray for Arthur and May Wei and their daughter Alice. They are very isolated in the city of Jinan, Shandong Province. There are no assemblies/New Testament churches they know of in their city, so they have very little fellowship apart from believers they meet online. Alice is pressured in school to ignore anything she knows about God and the Bible. Please pray for the salvation of Alice and the witness of Arthur and May as they seek to reach out to colleagues and business contacts with the gospel. I continue to have a weekly Online Bible Study with them, and they come on to observe (via Zoom) our Breaking of Bread meeting and Sunday Lunchtime Bible Class.

Uganda

I was in Uganda in January, and we were encouraged to see the believers' enthusiasm there despite their poverty and simple lifestyle.

Sanya and Aloysious (one of the other elders in **Musoto**, Mbale) are currently working with believers in four different places. To varying degrees, they are interested in learning about New Testament Church doctrine and practice. It would be good to pray about them and for wisdom and strength for these brothers as they continue to travel, visit and teach the Saints.

There is a gathering of believers in a place called **Butebo**. There are over 40 believers there, and they have recently identified three men to oversee. They need wisdom as they learn to shepherd the people of God.

Another place where souls have been saved through the Radio Work is **Sakia**. There are 16 believers here, and Sanya visits them weekly to teach them from the Scriptures.

The third place is **Kwappa**. I visited this group of believers in January this year. While they are willing to listen, there is quite a bit of resistance to accepting the New Testament pattern of gathering. Sanya feels that there could come a time when he needs to focus on other areas of the work if they continue to refuse to obey scripture. Please pray for wisdom.

The fourth group of believers is in a place called **Lwanjungsi**. There are 40 believers here. They have asked Sanya to visit and teach them about how a New Testament church functions. There could be a need for a lot of change in how they gather. Pray for wisdom for Sanya.

The weekly radio program in Uganda continues each Wednesday for an hour. It has been a source of great blessing and encouragement.

Kenya

In February this year, the Lord brought me into contact with two groups of saints seeking guidance on NT church truth in Kisii, Kenya. The two groups did not know each other but were asking the same questions. I've put them in touch with each other.

It's another case of genuine saints looking for help. They are listening to recorded messages on 1 Corinthians. I am meeting a couple of the believers online when I can.

Victor Makori - the believers he is in fellowship with now understand that they need elders (instead of one elder/Bishop as they had). They have identified four men, and we are starting to look with them at the various passages in the NT about shepherding God's people.

Robert Morara - His wife is ill /dying of leukaemia. He needs our prayers. The believers he meets with have just discovered the truth of baptism by immersion and the Breaking of Bread. I couldn't believe that they had never broken bread. We are just teaching them these simple principles at the moment.

In conclusion

Back in Liverpool, we are kept busy locally in Huyton, local assembly work, preaching in schools and on the streets and online Bible Teaching and Gospel. We get quite a bit of abuse for preaching online, so I conclude that the Lord must be speaking to some of these dear folks. Please pray for a man called Peter Bayzl, who has been giving us quite a lot of online abuse recently.

Carole regularly contacts several families from Syria, Sri Lanka and Yemen. This is quite demanding on her both physically and mentally. Her work with mothers and individuals locally is vital as we seek to build bridges and seek opportunities to share the gospel. Most of what I do is only possible with her input and support.

We had a week of open airs in Liverpool, Southport and St Helen's in early July. Andrew Hutchinson, a brother from NI, came to help me, which was really appreciated. We made many contacts. Please pray for Nathan in Southport, who told us he was returning to work but would put his trust in the Lord immediately. He has our contact details, but sadly we don't have his. That day Janny, a Romanian, was troubled initially and then became very resistant to the message. Pray for Mohamed, who tried to stop us from preaching in Liverpool and was very aggressive and angry that we were on the streets. Kieran in St Helen's felt that God was speaking to him (we have to leave him with the Lord), and good chats were had with Matthew (an ex-boxer) and Carole (a shopping centre attendant).

Please pray for 'C' in Liverpool. He professed faith in 2020 and has done reasonably well. Recently he has dipped back into an addiction to prescription drugs and is struggling to get back on his feet.

I am currently in Birmingham for their Muslim Outreach Week - on the streets during the day and teaching scripture in the evening. Later in August, I go to Orkney and Wick for meetings (DV). God willing, I will have gospel meetings planned in Huyton with Paul Jenkinson from Kilmarnock in September.

Thanks again for your interest in the work of the Lord. Your prayers are invaluable and the source of great strength and blessing.

Yours through Grace,

Stephen

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'Preaching peace through Jesus Christ' (Acts 10:36 -the Bible)