



Report 2023 • Report 2023 • Report 2023 • Report 2023

During the year, the charity worked – either directly or by supporting others - in the UK and in many other countries. One of the most important outcomes of this work is that over 300 individuals in about 40 countries, supported by us, committed themselves to Jesus Christ during the year, many of them through baptism. A number of these were refugees and asylum seekers, some in the UK and others in countries such as Turkey, Germany, Israel and Italy. Others still live in countries where as Christians they are liable to persecution, such as Iran and Afghanistan. Indeed we know of at least 140 individuals who have been baptised in those two countries alone as a result of our work. Online support in particular remains very important to these folk, though this has become increasingly difficult as the local authorities have blocked direct internet access to our (and many other) websites and apps. This forces people to use Virtual Private Networks, which are unfamiliar to many and mean that online meetings on platforms such as WhatsApp or Zoom are very challenging owing to the inevitable reduced bandwidth.

Our very effective *Bible Companion* app has been a crucial tool in our work, and we have continued to advertise it widely. The app, which is cost- and advertisement-free, comprises a full Bible text including audio; deeper commentary on every verse; basic devotionals, an audio and a youth message on every chapter; a daily sermon and thought for the day, a reading planner; a *Bible Basics* study course; and powerful search functionality. We believe that this app offers more features and resources than any other free Bible app. It is available in English, Russian, Farsi, French, Spanish and Ukrainian. There have been about 2.4 million downloads of the app in its various versions since it was launched and, as far as we can tell, has been used in every country in the world. Around 7,000 people each day use the app for an average of six minutes each, compared with less than a minute for many apps.

Alongside the development of the app, we have continued to run a 'Virtual Church' (www.virtualchurch.cc) which is a gateway to both pastoral support and to regular online communion services along with Q&A sessions and talks. Carelinks also has a well-used YouTube channel, with more than a million views over the year.

A major development this year has been a two-phase project in the borough of Croydon in south London. This started with a weekly 'Church in a Pub' which we started in June 2022, where those attending are given lunch as well as being able to enjoy a low-key Bible talk. This idea was expanded with the start of 'Croydon Lunchtime Church' early in 2023, where a similar approach is taken from Monday to Wednesday each week at a town-centre venue. The meals are much appreciated by

attenders – the average attendance is about 30 per session - some of whom cannot afford to eat decent meals regularly. We also provide other material help such as clothing, food and even a tent, as well as friendship and moral support. More than 70 people have committed themselves to Jesus Christ through baptism as a direct result of this work,

We are glad to have been able to deliver some direct aid to those in need overseas. In Ukraine, we have helped some families to leave the country and have provided much-needed firewood to those who cannot leave. We have also provided support to African migrant workers in Israel, to families affected by the serious earthquake in Turkey in February, and in other ways.