

## August 2017 Italy, Pacific Islands, France

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Mark 1 and there's an MP3 about this at <http://www.christadelphia.net/audio/mk1.mp3>

and a video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIBMIWGN44&t=883s>

You can see the archives of our MP3 files at <http://christadelphia.net/audio.htm>

and on iTunes at <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/podcast/christadelphian-bible-talks/id987163468>

Download the *NEV Bible* with commentary and *Bible Companion* bookmarks at <http://n-e-v.info/NEVBIBLE.pdf>

### ITALY

It was eight years ago that we baptized brother Festus in **Naples**. He is a long term resident of Italy. He and his wife, like brother Joseph in Cesena, are deeply grieved at the appearance of so many desperate African migrants on the streets of Naples. We mentioned last Carelink of the baptism of some African females in **Sicily**, and it seems the Lord is paying attention to this particularly desperate group within society. Most of them were conservative Christian women from rural Africa who were totally unprepared for the traumas of the journey to Europe, the abuse in Libya, and now penniless on the streets of Italy, again vulnerable to abuse. Drug dealing and selling their bodies are the only options for many of them in order to simply keep alive. The scale of the problem is huge. Italy really can't cope with thousands of migrants entering an already weak economy, from which many ethnic, local Italians have already out migrated in recent years.

All we can do is to offer the hope of the Gospel and do what we can to alleviate the obvious material needs. We are really inspired to do this by these African women who are throwing themselves upon the Lord. Festus and Rosa have been teaching some women the Gospel, and it was a pleasure to help them to baptize sisters MARY, ENDURANCE, PERPETUA, MARIA, ROSEMARY and DOLLY and brother BRIGHT. As with similar women in Sicily, we helped them to have white clothes for the baptisms and to do all we can to give some sense of occasion to this wonderful moment when they entered the bride of Christ. The vast majority of African migrants are males, and indeed most of those we've baptized are brothers; now the Lord is clearly working to provide sisters. Even though they are located the other end of Italy from most of the brothers. These sisters just love the *NEV Bible*, and expressed gratitude for the easy to access commentary next to the text on each page:



For women who have been sex workers and / or rape victims, there are huge long term psychological issues. Another sister we baptized from that background shared her story at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xC\\_YIVR5ulg&t=313s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xC_YIVR5ulg&t=313s)

But we believe that the Lord is able to repair broken souls, for this is the clear good news of the most basic teaching of Jesus in the sermon on the mount. And it is to such that the Gospel is so attractive. We transported them out to a beach and baptized them with great joy:



One of the nice things was to see them just laying around in the water afterwards, chatting and laughing. These are women who saw many horrible things and have been abused terribly. It's just wonderful that the Lord has given them each other as well as the great hope of the Kingdom. Hopefully the pictures will help you share in the joy there was in Heaven at the repentance of these seven people. And again, thank you all for your prayers and donations in various ways which enable all this good work to happen.



### **PACIFIC ISLANDS**

Brother Rex from Australia has been doing ground breaking work, taking the true Gospel, *NEV Bibles* and *Bible Basics* to those who have not heard in "the isles of the Gentiles". After all, who of us has heard of "Goodenough Island" in the Pacific? The spread of the Gospel of the Kingdom into literally all the earth is required before "the end shall come", and we are seeing in his work a true sign of the Lord's soon return. He reports:

"In May I went to Goodenough Island off the eastern tip of **Papua New Guinea** to be with some of the students doing the Bible course... I am now in Alotau, on the PNG mainland... On my visit to Goodenough Island I think they'd really benefit from Bible Basics... a guy from Goodenough Island attended the seminars in **Alotau** and signed up for the Bible course... the church buildings are constructed of local materials -- coconut palm or pandanus thatch and bare earth floors and walls made of woven mats or split pandanus...

Anyway, he has been reading our leaflets and also our Bible course material and he has told me (and his pastor confirmed it) that the pastor is happy with our doctrine... the big plus factor is that he believes in the literal return of Christ and His reign on earth, so when he gave me opportunities to speak to his church during their services, I kept emphasising this and also our human nature being the devil we must fight... He has invited us to come back at the beginning of August and said we could have three days to speak to his church... There could be about 100 people attending this week, so a lot of people will be exposed to true Bible teaching... I have had the opportunity to talk to some of them and been through the question of what the devil and satan is and the purpose of God with mankind and this earth, and they responded with joy.

They don't seem to be wedded to the idea that there has to be an evil spirit around, even though they come from a culture that believes in such things. I feel your *NEV* and your *Bible Basics* would be really helpful for these interested people... he doesn't collect his mail often because of the expense of travelling from the island to the mainland. It would be cheaper to take all the books with us as extra baggage... Even here in Alotau, internet access is intermittent, so if I don't reply speedily to your emails, it is because of this difficulty.

... Travel to and from the island (about 200km from Alotau) is by dinghies or by small cargo boats that take passengers who sit on the deck or on whatever they can find to perch on. The dinghies take from about three to six hours depending on engine size and departure point, and the cargo boats up to 25 hours depending on the cargo and the weather. The voyage is not particularly comfortable. Getting about on the island is by foot or by asking someone with access to a truck to take you. Some of the villages are accessible only by foot or dinghy.

To go from **Bolubolu** where the government guest house is, to **Mt Horeb** where Benjamin lives is a two-hour walk. Hiring a vehicle to take you there costs about \$25 each way. It's much the same to our student Steve's village except that only 4x4s can get there so walking at least part of the way up the steep and rugged sections is necessary.

Cellphone coverage is sometimes available by climbing about an hour up the ridge behind Bolubolu or by taking a dinghy out to sea, which is expensive. However, reception at these places is not guaranteed, so effectively you cannot contact people on the island except by mail... There is no electricity, no internet service and no phone signal unless you climb the mountain, so the people there are pretty isolated.

What is encouraging is that the word was heard gladly. The people are eager for true Bible teaching and their eyes light up when Scripture is presented to them. In the context of discussing human nature and temptation, one of the pastors said to the effect that it is really "good to know who our enemy is".

The difficulty, of course, is communication. Many do understand English but have difficulty in following a native English speaker. They find it easier if they are spoken to in the way they themselves speak English .. simple words in simple sentences that are not necessarily grammatically correct. Those who have no knowledge of English have to rely on others to pass on the teaching".



Brother Rex plans to return in August so we do pray for blessing on his trip and also for his personal safety on the dinghies and other insecure means of transport.

## FRANCE

Travelling on holiday or business? Do what Mike & Betty are doing, put an *NEV Bible* or *Bible Basics* [or any statement of the Gospel] in these tiny libraries springing up all over the place. Who knows who will get to read this French *NEV New Testament*... the seed is sown in northern France



## PRAYER POINTS:

- For those recently baptized
- For the many who encounter our literature in libraries and other places
- For the spreading of the Gospel in the Pacific, and brother Rex's personal safety
- For the spiritual, psychological strengthening of those baptized who have had traumatic pasts

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