

August 2018 Mayotte, Latvia Women's Camp

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Mark 7 and there is an MP3 file about this at <http://www.christadelphia.net/audio/mk7.mp3>

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>

Helps for the *Bible Companion* readings this week:

Jeremiah: <http://n-e-v.info/JeremiahNEVCommentary.pdf>

Mark: <http://n-e-v.info/NEVMarkCommentary.pdf>

MAYOTTE

We mentioned in previous *Carelink* emails the extraordinary situation that has arisen on the tiny island of Mayotte, a tiny outcrop of rock in the ocean between Madagascar and Mozambique which technically is governed by France. A group of Congolese refugees who had lost their families in the terrible violence gripping eastern Congo fled to Tanzania, where they attended a *CBM ecclesia* in a refugee camp. They were given the French version of *Bible Basics* and got a good grasp on the Truth. Like many Congolese, they were then ejected from the camp and told to return to Congo. They have a genuine fear for their lives if they return, so they made their way to the coast of Tanzania and stowed away on a cargo ship bound for the Comores Islands. Persecuted there by the local islanders, from there they travelled by pirogue, dug out canoe, over the sea [ocean] to Mayotte. They witnessed the drowning of many on the terrible journey, with testimony of their seeing children and pregnant women drowning before their eyes. They arrived with nothing at all.

Any western country would diagnose these people with Post traumatic stress and put them on a pension. But they have no support at all; and in Mayotte they are also not welcome. Although the island is technically governed by France, there is little law and order and the local islanders are very aggressive toward the Africans. The French have installed a network of cameras throughout the island to try to Police it but they are ineffective. They are given no assistance by the French government there. Some of them have been given some kind of ID document, but it's unclear whether with that they can travel to France metropole, i.e. France itself, in Europe. Others are still waiting for that document. Mayotte is a tiny place and everything is very expensive as it must be imported there. There is no public transport, only taxis, which are expensive. There is little work and not much land to cultivate. The island hardly gets a mention in tourist guides as it is so hard to get to and so small. It boasts the world's best scuba diving, largest lagoon and plenty of coral reef and the beaches are indeed very pretty. But the islet is full of garbage dumped everywhere, much of which is apparently just dumped in the ocean:



So these folks are stranded on this tiny island. They contacted us some months ago and we wouldn't have contemplated the long and arduous trip there unless we were pretty sure they had a good grasp of the doctrines of the Gospel. And we were not disappointed. They were delighted to be reunited with French *Bible Basics* and explained that they had been saved from death in the sea so that they might be baptized and truly give their lives to God in spirit and truth:



We also gave them French *NEV New Testaments*, they proudly wrote their names in them as the only books they possess.

Duncan [in his terrible French- D.H.] went through all doctrines with them and you can see a video of some of this, in French, at <https://youtu.be/CkR1QDyJGZU>

They were a lovely group of people. There are ten of them living in one room which we are renting for them for 250 Euro / month, it is constructed of boards with corrugated sheets on top of them for a roof, with no water or toilet, and with the room divided into male and female sleeping by a curtain:



The owners and neighbours are quite active Muslims. Our group don't attend other churches but have their own meetings, singing quietly so as not to provoke the Muslims. We recorded about an hour of testimony from the group about their journey, their lack of food, the racist attacks and their spiritual perspective; it's in French, at https://youtu.be/q1Q_uP8RVsQ .

When asked them what their favourite song was, and they rose and soberly sung "Il n'ya que Toi, Seigneur", a little song which says to the effect "I have nobody apart from you, Lord". And indeed they don't. You can hear them singing it at <https://youtu.be/ioTOlaA9t30>

Five of them were baptized, brothers DAVID, KASUKULU, CELESTIN, PAUL and sister REHEMA. We got a ferry to another islet for the actual baptisms, as it was the beach where they first arrived by canoe and walked up the beach to the rocky mainland... and they felt it was a significant place for them to now be baptized into the Lord Jesus, ever mindful of how He saved them from that same sea:



Although the tide is at a different place, this is the beach where the French Police and medics frequently meet the arriving refugee canoes, often removing bodies from the sea there in body bags:



We simply marvel at His active work to seek and save humble seekers for Him, wherever they are. Their experiences clearly were part of the good shepherd searching out His sheep and rejoicing when they were found. You can see a video of the baptisms at https://youtu.be/Sv8VxRE_ofQ

At the end of the video, they explain [*in French*] their deep gratitude for our help and their determination to give their lives to the God who saved them on the ocean.

They gave a lengthy explanation [*in French*] of their experiences and the situation with documents, with one sister [who has a baby] explaining how she was beaten in Mayotte and how the islanders cut off the arms of some other Africans with machettes, similar to what is going on in Congo.

Her description of it is at around 20:20-40 in the video:



The media seem to not be advertising what is happening as the French obviously don't want a situation to develop as is now in the Mediterranean, with Africans trying to cross the sea to Europe with huge loss of life and the receiving countries like Italy unable to cope with them. And the size of Mayotte alone means that it can't cope with any influx of immigrants.

This is really a terrible situation, affecting very genuine believers who share our faith and are now an absolutely legitimate, regularly meeting ecclesia. They explain in the video that their main needs are for food, transport, accommodation and of course to try to get out of Mayotte. There is an international airstrip on Mayotte from where they could fly out if they have the right documents:



The one true Gospel has indeed gone to the "isles of the Gentiles", to the ends of the earth, and it is for us to try to do what we can for our brethren.

We do need donations towards them, especially as they clearly have ongoing needs. And it really needs French [or Swahili] speakers to go out to Mayotte and pastor them further, as well as trying to ascertain:

- When and whether they can actually leave Mayotte for Paris [France proper] with their existing refugee documents
- If they can, will the French Government assist them with social welfare when and if they were to arrive at an airport in Paris
- Whether we could provide some level of support for them on arrival in Paris
- If there is any way they can be set up with some form of self sustaining employment where they are, given the lack of land, competition for work and indeed all resources

This is all a lot of homework, and requires an organization larger than *Carelinks* to take it on. But as ever we will go on with it as best we can. But we need your prayers, and your resources in whatever form. We gave about 500 Euros in support and are looking to pay 200 Euros / month to rent that room for them so they will not be literally on the street. Please do donate as you can, and pray for them.

LATVIA WOMEN'S CAMP

Cindy plans to run another of her Summer camps for women and children at the large property in northern Latvia which *Carelinks* support. Not sparing Cindy's blushes, over the years Cindy has brought a number of secular younger women to baptism into Christ through her witness in daily life. They all have children, and they all have friends to whom they in turn are sharing the Gospel. They will spend four days or so together, with Bible studies, breaking of bread and activities for the children. And other sisters in Latvia are also invited. As not everyone can contribute towards the food nor the transport there, we're appealing for 400 Euro towards this. It is planned for the end of August, God willing. Any long distance visitors are of course welcome although it's not conducted in English. Duncan & Cindy and family are now returning to Latvia for a year, Lord willing. If you'd like to come and assist with the work, do let us know.

PRAYER POINTS:

- For those recently baptized
- For the physical safety of the new ecclesia in Mayotte
- For wisdom as to how to help the refugee brethren
- That the brethren are able to get documents permitting them to travel
- For Cindy's women's camp in Latvia

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks