

## **IRANIANS, TURKEY March 2005**

There are still a number of Iranian brethren seeking asylum in the West, who are currently based in Turkey. A visit was made to them, and also to a contact in Izmir.

Six years ago, a young Evangelical called Fabian in Honduras [Central America] was chosen to leave his native Honduras and work for Campus Crusade for Christ in Turkey. He eventually became unhappy with their doctrinal position, and began working for an independent Evangelical church in Izmir [Biblical Smyrna] as an evangelist. He learnt Turkish and did his work, and yet he was growingly uncomfortable with the idea of God being a trinity. He obtained a Turkish copy of *Bible Basics* and has been in contact with us for some time, although not willing to break with the church. However, he decided that he fully accepts the Biblical truths about the nature of the Lord Jesus, death being unconsciousness, hell being the grave, the Kingdom coming on earth etc.- and started preaching those doctrines. He was soon expelled from the church, and then started thinking about re-baptism. He became convinced of the need for re-baptism, and it was a great pleasure to interview this dynamic young man and baptize him.

He has obtained part time work in a hospital, but is in a hard financial position as his previous relationship with the church has now ended totally and he has no support. However he is actively preaching and already has a number of others seriously interested in the Truth and studying *Bible Basics*. He's also keen one day to spread the true Gospel to his homeland of Honduras, and as there are no brethren there [to our knowledge] we see this as yet another opening to spread the Truth to the whole planet.

He's in touch with the local brethren in Turkey and between them they're planning a campaign in Antakya, Biblical Antioch. They've got permission from the local Police to display a bookstall in the town centre- Antakya is the most 'Christian' city in Turkey and the most tolerant of Christian preaching.

Our new brother believes, based on 6 years preaching experience for other churches, that the best way to establish an ecclesia is to invite Turkish people to regular meetings in a home, having first engaged their interest on the street or in cafes, and having given them literature to read. The CCM stand totally behind him in this initiative. And so if anyone is interested in funding the rental of a meeting place for a few months, please let us know. We suggested that he invite a more experienced brother or sister to stay with him for a while if indeed this project goes ahead, and he was most supportive of this idea. So... if anyone is willing to spend some time in Turkey working together with us and him, do let us know!

We were able to deliver him many copies of the Turkish edition of *Bible Basics For Moslems* but he needs more. We're grateful to the Christadelphian Advancement Trust for their initiative in producing this book in Turkish, and for their generosity in providing so much literature so freely. He also asked if we could provide 200 Turkish New Testaments. They cost around \$1.50 each if bought bulk from the Bible Society in Istanbul. However, we're wondering if anyone would take this project on board. What is needed is to search the internet to see if there are any sources of free or heavily discounted Turkish New Testaments, and then to arrange for them to be shipped out to him.

Above all do please pray for this knowledgeable, talented and capable brother as he embarks upon his mission to establish ecclesias in Turkey- in the very cities where there once were ecclesias in the first century. We were able to provide him with welfare funds.



Photo:

Photo: Bro. Fabian with a Turkish New Testament- he's looking for another 200 of them



Photo:

Bro. Fabian with his Turkish *Bible Basics* and the latest delivery of Turkish *Bible Basics For Moslems*.

### **IRANIANS IN TURKEY**

We continued on to visit our dear brother H and sister C. They are Iranian refugees, persecuted for their faith, who are threatened with deportation to the supposedly 'safe' area of Northern Iraq. A huge amount of effort is being expended by various brethren and sisters in order to reason with the UNHCR and other agencies, and to help get them to Canada. Please do pray for these efforts. They're very and genuinely appreciative of your petitions and support in many ways. The refugee life in Turkey isn't at all easy. Not allowed to work legally, hassled by the Police and a Moslem Government ever eager to deport Christian asylum seekers, threatened by Moslem and racist vigilantes, frequently having to move home, not knowing the language, aggressive and unsympathetic officialdom, endless red tape, no free medical care, far from your family, some of whom are leading the persecution against you in your homeland... the stress and emotional pain is incredible. Please spare a prayerful thought for our Iranian brethren and sisters in Turkey. Brother H and Sister C all have significant health issues that need our prayers.

Brother S and Sister C are still awaiting approval to leave for Canada, where they are already in regular contact with the ecclesias. But they face a host of significant problems. One of them is that their residence permits in Turkey expired recently, and if they're not renewed, then they can be instantly deported by the Turkish Police, regardless of their status with the UNHCR or eligibility to emigrate to Canada. We arrived the day their residence permit expired, and were able to do what we could to persuade the Police to extend it. We give true thanks to the Father that this was eventually possible, despite a 3 hour interview, and very abusive and needlessly intrusive fingerprinting and body checks by the Police.

Photo: not available

The expired residence permit. You can see by the date stamp on the photo that we were with them the very day the permit expired. You'll also see the price- 380 million Turkish Lira. The Turkish Government have raised the price from 135 million Lira which it was previously- as witnessed by the previous residency extension in their permits [see photo below]

Photo: not available

This price rise is another indication of Turkey's frustration with the many Iranian and Iraqi refugees which they host. Not allowed to work legally, the refugees have to provide for themselves financially- and this is where our support for our brethren is so vital.

There are some problems which humanly speaking only hard cash can solve. And so it is with paying for the extension of the residency permits. We were able to give them \$300 in order for them to get the extensions.

Here's a photo of our very relieved and grateful [both to God and you] Brother S and Sister C, with their blue residency permits and the cash.

Photo: not available

Incidentally, we try to get receipts for any item over \$10 , and so as usual we got a receipt from them [we've obliterated their name and signature for security reasons]:

Photo: not available

So we continue trying to prayerfully support them as much as we can, and ask your fellowship with us in this. So we continue trying to prayerfully support them as much as we can, and ask your fellowship with us in this.

It was a pleasure to interview and baptize MUCHTABA, another Iranian, to whom our brother S has been preaching for around a year. He is an Iranian Christian who fled Iran 20 months ago after major persecution. Since coming to Turkey, he has learnt the truth about the nature of Jesus from Bible Basics and from our local brethren, and desired to be re-baptized. His situation is really tough. His [supportive] wife is still in Iran, and his appeal to the UN for asylum was turned down in January. He subsequently appealed the decision, and was turned down and had his case file closed, with the tough words "You are therefore not a person of concern to UNHCR. As a result, we have closed your file and are unable to assist you". The letter goes on to say that his temporary asylum application to the Turkish authorities is unaffected- but Turkey only allows refugees to stay in Turkey if their case is ongoing with UNHCR! So that's meaningless comfort.

Photo: not available

Our brother is very earnest in his beliefs, forehead already heavily lined, and clearly suffering from great nervous stress. Please do pray for him. We are pressuring UNHCR to re-open his case file and we can only pray for that to be granted and for them to consider his very genuine case more. Please also pray for our wisdom as we try to patiently wade through a jungle of red tape with officialdom who appear disinterested and biased against Christians.

*With love from your brothers and sisters of CCM*