

Italy July 2005

Some years ago we came into contact with Naizghi, a refugee from Eritrea then living in Sudan. We taught him the truth as best we could over the internet and he then baptized himself. He fled over the Sahara desert to Libya in an open truck loaded with other refugees. The axle broke, and several of the others died of thirst in the desert. Naizghi survived, and made it to Libya.



Photo:

Naizghi's over-crowded open truck crossing the Sahara desert.

We visited him in Libya and were able to re-baptize him there, as his knowledge of the Gospel appeared to have been deficient. We gave him funds to escape on a crowded refugee ship, which almost sunk in the Mediterranean, and he came ashore on a beach in Italy. From there he registered with the UNHCR and has been in regular contact with Christadelphians visiting Italy, assisting the CBM in their witness in Italy. However life as a refugee in Rome is difficult. UNHCR accept that he cannot be repatriated to Eritrea for fear of losing his life, but Italy won't give him citizenship, although he is allowed to work in Italy temporarily. There are over a million refugees in such a situation in Italy, many of them existing by crime, drug dealing etc. and living in atrocious conditions.



Photo:

Brother Naizghi and Duncan next to an abandoned vehicle which serves as home to other Eritrean refugees.

Due to the generosity of the brotherhood, Naizghi is living in better conditions than these now, although he was earlier living on a railway embankment. He shares a room with another refugee in a quite reasonable large house on the edge of Rome. However it's so hard for our brother to find work, and not being able to speak good Italian is another disadvantage. He noticed that some refugees make a living by selling second hand clothes near the metro stations. We always like to give brethren a fishing rod rather than a fish, i.e. a way to work to get an income, even if it means providing funds and resources to enable this. We therefore collected a large amount of second hand and new clothes from various sources in the brotherhood. It was quite a moving experience to put them all together- 2nd hand clothes from sisters [themselves poor] in Latvia, some very nice stuff freighted over from ecclesias in New York in the USA, other clothes from brethren and sisters in Walton UK, Germany and Luxembourg, and some end of line school uniforms from a brother's connections in the UK. It truly was a joint effort from all over the world to support our brother. We drove these down from Latvia.



Photo:

Approaching Rome with the clothes.



Photo:

Our brother received us with great joy, and it was a relief to be able to hand over the clothes to him, the boxes making a pile from floor to ceiling in his room.



Photo:

Handing over the clothes to Br. Naizghi.

We went with our brother to a metro station and found the immigrants selling such clothes, just as he had said.



Photo:

Brother Naizghi is very active in sharing the Gospel with others, and it was a pleasure for us to meet with ASMAIT, an Eritrean woman currently working as a domestic servant to a wealthy family in Rome. Naizghi has been teaching her the Gospel using the Amharic version of Bible Basics. He would make good use of an old laptop, as he'd like to translate it to his native Eritrean. We had lengthy discussions with Asmait through Naizghi as our translator, and are delighted to report that Cindy was able to baptize her in the sea near Ostia. We encouraged them to read daily according to the Bible Companion and to meet together to break bread, along with the other Eritrean brother whom Naizghi has converted in Rome as reported in an earlier carelink. We also made very brief telephone contact with a Moroccan brother also in Italy seeking asylum.



Photo:

Cindy baptizing a nervous Asmait in the Mediterranean.

We give thanks for all this, praying for God's blessing upon our brother and many like him in the precarious lives they live, as they with us journey onwards towards the return of the Lord and the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth.

With love in Christ

Your brothers and sisters of CCM