

November 2015 Refugee Feeding, France, UK

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Hebrews 1 and 2 and there is an MP3 file about these chapters at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/heb1.mp3>

You can see the archives of our MP3 files at <http://aletheiacollege.net/archives.html> and on iTunes at <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/podcast/christadelphian-bible-talks/id987163468>

REFUGEE FEEDING, MACEDONIA-SERBIA BORDER

As planned, our team of Debs & Jon and Cardia from Erith and Andy from Windermere joined Duncan to continue the feeding / warmth program to the thousands of refugees arriving at the Macedonia-Serbia border, mostly from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, having arrived in Greece by boat. Words are not enough to express the scenes. Trains carrying between 500 and 2000 refugees, arriving in freezing temperatures at a remote spot near the border from where they must walk 2 km. on the railway tracks to the registration point in Serbia. As the doors are opened and the people come off... there are scenes one will never forget. A mother and her sister distraught her baby has lost consciousness, convinced he is dead, frantically worrying where to bury the body [the baby was revived]... sick children needing wheelchairs, with just thin clothes on... people with soaking, inadequate shoes, some having escaped with their lives from the dinghies with which they crossed the sea, having lost literally everything into the sea... men in flip flops emerging onto the freezing platform... children desperately hungry... old men in boys' clothes... children crying and screaming everywhere in that brutal Balkan night, some clinging desperately to a toy or dolly which was about the sole family possession and remnant of a middle class life in Damascus... people draped in blankets shivering from the cold, appearing ghost like in the hard Eastern European Winter night... the clanking of the railway wagons, men with endless questions, people not knowing where they were, not even which country ["*Are we in Germany?*"], one of the few Afghan female dentists, now fleeing the Taliban, struggling to translate for everyone... a lost little girl separated from her family group... shivering people gathered around the fire in the middle of the platform, which we fed with the cardboard boxes in which we had brought our supplies... The scenes kept recalling to mind the work of CS Lewis, *The World's Last Night*, in which he writes so powerfully of Christ's second coming as the Christian hope, and of how humanity is not evolving into something better but rather degrading into a final crisis only resolvable by the Lord's return. Those nights on the platform it really felt like the Lord Jesus must come soon, and that maybe that night really was the world's last night, as the humanity we witnessed and sought to help were truly at the limits of humanity. And if He doesn't, for sure the Europe we have known will never be the same. And one night shall indeed be this world's last night, for He that shall come will come.

Provision of warmth as well as food was important. We distributed several hundred blankets, plus toothpaste, tampons and countless wet wipe packets, and Debs and our local brother Kicho handed out countless soups and milk cartons for the families. All our material had our *Carelinks* sticker on, welcoming the refugees to Europe and urging them to consider the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ through visiting our website. Many of the refugees have phones, and it seems the Lord worked with our desire to reach out to them in this way- for since our last time here, an aid organization has provided free WiFi on the platform! What an amazing example of the Lord working with those who wish to work with Him. After they had warmed up and eaten something, they then had the chance to look up our website, which was written on all the material.

We have produced a video of some of the scenes, at <https://youtu.be/l4tqDT37pl8>

Here are some stills from it:

Cardia welcoming people as they get off the train- you can just see the sign on the pole to the left which says there is free WiFi:



Deb providing soup and milk cartons:



The fire on the platform; a man tries to dry out his shoes



Children in wheelchairs- note the toy



Andy with wet wipes, and struck with a moment of sadness at the tragic scenes:



A Syrian woman's first encounter with Jesus in the faces of Jon and Cardia:



Jon rugged up against the cold as he distributes items with our labels on in the early hours of the morning:



In the gaps between the trains, back at the motel room sticking our preaching labels on all the material we distributed:



We are aware that there is much fear and many conspiracy theories around about the refugee crisis. The right wing media wishes to present all these people as terrorists and part of a plan to Islamize Europe. That Europe is being Islamized is beyond question, with all that implies for Israel in Bible prophecy, but we consider it totally wrong to consider these thousands of desperate people as all jihadists. Such may be embedded amongst them, but the sheer scale of human need ought not to be dismissed so lightly. We feel strongly about this, and in the middle of the night on the platform we shared our impressions of the refugees, after one trainload of them had begun their walk down the tracks. We hope this will be interesting to secular people fearful about what's happening, and may encourage them to click through to what we have to say about the Gospel.

That brief video is at https://youtu.be/k-Ua64IU_Q

So a huge thank you to all who are enabling this work, by donation and prayer. Without that we would not have been able to do what we did. We finished off with a breaking of bread with the small ecclesia in Skopje whose idea this work was, focusing upon the One we serve and for whose sake are all things in Heaven and earth, and vowing again to have this mind in us, which was also in Christ Jesus.

UK

We appealed for assistance in following up on the group of Iranians baptized in the North West, and amongst others brother Stuart Webster of the Wigan ecclesia has come forward and been a great help. He reports the baptisms of another four Iranians this week after talking with them about the Gospel:

MILAD, ABBAS, NASER and his sister SOLMAZ.

There are others hoping for baptism in the region, and also other Iranian contacts in the UK including one currently in Glasgow, Scotland. We intend to get to all these folks in due course. The tempo of the Lord's work entrusted to us at this time has increased dramatically, let us know if you'd like to be involved. Here's brother Stuart and the newly baptized:



FRANCE

Carelinks readers will be aware that a group of us spent a month in the Paris-Melun area in June, resulting in the development of a group there. Jon & Debs visited them last weekend and were pleased to meet with them and find them continuing in the faith, and were able to assist brothers Kingsley and Steven in baptizing JOSEPH, breaking bread with them afterwards and giving them more literature, kindly provided by the *Christadelphian Advancement Trust*:



PRAYER POINTS:

- For the thousands of Syrian and Afghan refugees reached with the Gospel through the refugee feeding program
- For the newly baptized in the UK and France
- For wisdom and resource to follow up on the explosion of interest in the Iranian community in the UK and Europe

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks