

## October 2015 Migrant Crisis Outreach

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Acts 1 and there is an MP3 file about this chapter at <http://www.aletheiacollege.net/audio/acts1.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>

### MIGRANT CRISIS OUTREACH

From time to time we've reported trips to **Macedonia** and various baptisms from the family and friends of brother Kicho and sister Aleksandra, who are very ordinary folks who love the Lord and want to serve Him. There are thousands of migrants passing through Macedonia each day at this time, mostly refugees from **Syria** and **Afghanistan**. Like anyone who has experienced the Lord's grace, they wanted to reach out to these people, but didn't know how. Neither did we. We prayed about it and decided the best thing to do was to give the refugees food and sanitary items with a sticker on them with a simple statement of the Gospel and our website.

Many of the migrants have mobile phones and here and there, there is free wifi access- our hope was and is that they will remember the Christian folk who met them at the borders and gave them help, and use their new freedom to turn to the real Christ.

The first day we decided to scope out the situation. We drove up tracks to a railway line on the border where we had heard the migrants got off the train. We found a lot of litter around some rail tracks, and waited there. The sun was setting and the three of us were lost in our thoughts, wondering whether this was the right thing after all. There was a great silence there. Then a car came along the track and a woman asked us what we were doing. We told her the truth- we want to help the migrants and are just scoping out where and how to do so. The woman told us to cross the tracks and turn right and we'd find some people doing as we wanted to- *'It's their last night, go to them'*. With the enigmatic phrase *"It's their last night"* in our wondering minds, we went. *"The world's last night..."* as CS Lewis wrote. We believe she was some kind of Angel- an ordinary secular woman of course, but surely directed by an Angel. We walked about a kilometer along the tracks, full of litter and tracts in Arabic from the Jehovah's Witnesses... one has to take their cap off to their missionary zeal, even if their beliefs are so sadly misplaced.

We found about four local volunteers cooking soup- the train was to arrive in 30 minutes. It would've gone right by us if we'd have stayed where we were. That was where it used to stop. There were three policemen standing well back who could radio for more support if needed, and that was it. The volunteers explained their funding had finished. The trains arrive every few hours with about 400-600 people on board each one. So we were led by the Lord to this perfect opportunity to serve as we had wished to and prayed to- we walked in to a pre-existing situation all set up for us by the Lord who knew our hearts, where we could distribute food and welfare and also on the packages distributed, place adverts for the Gospel.

The drill was the same every time. The train arrives, and two railway staff unlock the wagons. We explain to the confused, exhausted people where they are and that they had to get off- and we would feed them. And that then, they have to walk 2 km. along the tracks to the Serbian border, get registered, and then continue their journey northwards towards Germany. Once they got the message that there was soup and bread for them- there was a surge of humanity towards us. The younger men wanted to grab everything. It was quite a mission to get the food to

the women, elderly and children who were at the back. There was no chance to video it much. The need to try to stop a stampede was too urgent- bearing in mind many of the men were carrying knives or pistols. We were pleased to fund further sessions- 200 Euros to feed and give water to 500 - 700 people [including disposable bowls etc.] .

Although the trains arrive every few hours, and around 10,000 people were crossing each day whilst we were there. We also gave tampons, wet wipes and baby stuff to families we saw. We just hope that those folks will remember us Christian people who met them on arrival and helped them, and will have noticed the stickers on the packaging, urging them to learn about Jesus Christ by going to our website.



There were harrowing sights. An old man scarcely able to walk, stopping frequently and in great pain; several men on crutches or with one leg; an invalid child in a wheelchair. A child who had lost their parents. A little boy so starving he ate not only the bread and soup we gave but also tried eating the polystyrene cup we served it in. Old men in boys clothes. A child asleep standing up. Mum and dad each with a child on their shoulders, along with a sleeping bag on their backs. A woman helping a single woman get strapped up with a pack on her back and a child around her neck on her front. They aren't allowed to use the roads, they have to walk 2 km. along the tracks to the Serbian registration point. And you can't push a wheelchair along railway tracks with gravel and sleepers. We captured some of this on the videos. But we had little time for making videos.

We also tried to assist at another border crossing point where about 50 Macedonian taxis wait around the clock to offer to take migrants across Macedonia. But only a trickle of refugees are crossing there- most are on the trains. The days we were there, around 8-10,000 were crossing by train alone. Seeing the old people, families etc. it was clear the majority of these people had a genuine reason to flee Syria. Sister Aleksandra works in a bakery, starting shifts at 5:30 a.m. - and we gave out around 500 breads each trainload.

Photo: Sister Aleksandra with the bread, soup and plastic cutlery awaiting the next train arrival



One feels so helpless- we did so little to address the need. But our hope and prayer is that at least some of those people will remember us, the soup, the bread, the tampons, soap, wet wipes, etc.- and somewhere may retain one of the packages with our simple message of Christ and website address. And in due course follow up. The greatest thing was to see Kicho & Aleksandra so blossoming under this outreach. Their enthusiasm is all the more wonderful when we remember that the average person in Macedonia and the Balkans is bitterly against supporting immigrants, and there is no word even for "grace" in the Slavic languages. For that reason please don't re-publish this Carelink message. But man is never better than when he has a cause to fight and work for. They, and we, wanted to serve- and the Lord opened a perfect path. How long Europe can allow 10,000 ++ migrants / day to pour in remains to be seen; there is a window of opportunity right now, but how long it remains open is unclear. Please be

inspired- to snap out of the mire of mediocrity, move beyond just having fleeting thoughts and wishes to be more active for Him in this world, and put your desire to serve before your Lord, and do something, anything, and He will lead you further. That is the takeaway lesson from all this.

Photo: Brother Kicho with anti immigration graffiti in the background; and the :*"A new life!"* leaflet we placed in the family welfare packs



It's possible we might be able to go back and help Kicho and Aleksandra in late November, God willing. They are looking into registering us as an NGO in Macedonia. Let us know if you'd like to come along.

The migrants we chatted with were for the most part educated, 'normal' people; Syria and Iraq are going to be left without any credible alternative to extremist government, because all the moderates are flooding into Europe. We believe this is all part of the last days prophetic scenario which will lead to Israel's invasion and the Lord's return. This world certainly needs it.

We had little time to take pictures or shoot video- the surge of 600 hungry people towards you, having smelt your soup and bread, is quite something to cope with when you are just a few people on a railway halt in the middle of nowhere. A dedicated photographer attached to us would've had plenty of great photo opportunities.

So our rather amateur 30 minute summary of our work is at

<https://youtu.be/YhfgrNHsVVs>

We really hope you will watch it and be inspired. There are some clips from it below.

But there are shorter clips of specifics as follows:

The migrant train arrives, and we tell the refugees where they are and that they must now get off the train [1 minute]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6NHrv-rYmEc>

Invalid child in wheelchair being pushed [1

minute]: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6zUT833-uk>

Old man barely able to walk beginning his 2 kilometer walk along the railway tracks [2 minutes] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oyoYaDr0J8>

The tragic and chaotic scenes on the platform after we had fed the migrants, as they begin their walk along the railway track [7 minutes] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=62FRFWNZbew>





### **MIGRANT CAMP IN GERMANY**

We reported recently the fate of some Iranians we baptized who are now in a migrant camp in Germany, threatened by fellow 'residents' who are ISIS supporters and who carry knives and pistols, and who in our presence when visiting mocked and verbally abused our brethren for their faith in Christ. Our brother writes:

*" i hope that you are fine. Unfortunately we are in same camp with the very bad situation. every days to happen Dispute between people. and our Personal safety is in danger. Please could you help our to transfer. My mother is not a good psychological condition. thank you so much. God bless you."*

There is sadly little we can do to persuade the authorities to release or transfer one migrant family from one camp to another. So please do pray for brother Farzin and his family.

We previously recorded interviews with them and explained the situation in videos at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFhnpRsRQwM> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzHRjcH0TpA>

### **PRAYER POINTS**

- For brother Farzin and family surrounded by radical Muslims in the German refugee camp
- For brother Kicho and sister Aleksandra in their desire to serve and witness to the Gospel further
- For the Muslim people from Syria who have now seen our challenge to learn about Jesus
- Thanks that we were led to do this work
- For wisdom and guidance as to how to proceed further

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