

October 2017 Italy, Sicily, Latvia

The *Bible Companion* readings for this Sunday include Acts 7 and there's an MP3 about this at <http://www.christadelphia.net/audio/acts7.mp3>

You can see the archives of our MP3 files at <http://christadelphia.net/audio.htm>

Download the NEV Bible with commentary and Bible Companion bookmarks at <http://n-e-v.info/NEVBIBLE.pdf>

ITALY

For over two weeks, Brother Peter and Sister Dae Ventresca from the Kitchener-Waterloo ecclesia in Canada have been in Italy working with brother Joseph near Bologna, visiting those baptized, preaching and teaching in the migrant camps, and baptizing six people. They were joined by brother Duncan and baptized JOSHUA and from there Duncan went on to Sicily, where another six African migrants were baptized.

The situation for our migrant brethren and contacts in Italy is really very bad; and yet there is therefore huge interest in what we have to say, from humble people who are Christian but generally without any experience of serious Bible teaching. They are an ideal group to preach to; their traumas on the journey coupled with the miserable existence in Italy have lead them to seek the Lord in spirit and truth.

Peter and Dae worked tirelessly, visiting the camps and also individuals, some of them already baptized, who are literally homeless. It would be ideal for a missionary couple to be based there to provide daily teaching sessions and coordinate what we are trying to do to provide food and shelter. Let us know if you feel moved to respond.



Here you can see Peter and Dae ministering to various groups, one of them in a beachfront hotel that the Government had seized from a Mafia figure in a 'proceeds of crime' operation and is now used to house the migrants:



Note the bicycles in the background; the migrants are to be seen everywhere cycling around looking for casual work. Giving them internet access and a bicycle is the most helpful thing we can do to help them get work:



Brother Joseph works shift work in a factory, but spends every other hour he can ministering to the brethren and sharing the Gospel, food and clothing with the migrants. He is really a wonderful brother. He is good at preaching but not confident in pastoral work. Ideally the situation needs someone, or a couple, who are able to teach and pastor, to come over for 3 months or so. Let's pray someone suitable comes forward, and do consider it yourself:



Peter and Dae explain the situation as follows:

" The prospects of the seed of God's word taking root in any country are dependent on the

sower, the type of soil, and how often and how much water of the word is used. Italy, long blanketed with the dark teachings of the papacy, is showing light in various regions. The reality is that Italians in general continue to show little or no interest in the truth of God's word.

The continuing economic slowdown continues to witness an exodus of students and citizens to other countries in search of employment. Shops and businesses, once bustling with business and a sign of a booming economy, lie empty and boarded up. Town after town, city after city, the economic distress is taking a toll in many ways. Add to this the daily influx of migrants, and the cost of housing these newcomers, is severely weakening a one time economic powerhouse.

Oddly enough, these newcomers continue to show the only interest in and respect for the word of God - the bible. Housed in abandoned government buildings or seized compounds until gov't processing is complete, these migrants are a ready audience for preaching the word of God in truth. Added to this, they have all day to read the bible and to examine bible teachings more closely. One can walk into any compound/"camp" at almost any time of the day and preach the gospel.

Problems, and there are many, do exist. Some include a shortage of brethren willing to take the time to come to Italy and visit the various 'camps' (refugee housing facilities) and preach and teach. Admittedly, this is a time consuming venture with brethren visiting several camps in a single day....sometimes on more than one occasion. These camps are scattered everywhere in virtually every town or city. This has been our experience in the Bologna area.

The new "babes in Christ", have difficulties in many ways in this "first world country". You see, these migrants are for the most part non academic and have come to the mainland to seek a better life. The gov't provides shelter, health care, and food until they are processed and (if given gov't papers to stay) a migrant in general is told to leave the shelter, their daily food allowances are cut off, and they must attend language school before they find employment.

For many, like some newly baptized brethren, having received the official gov't papers to stay presents a dreaded reality. They become homeless, without income, no shelter and CANNOT go to any gov't shelter for food or sleep. They must seek shelter in the underground railway or seek any dry, warm shelter until they find employment. This poses a real test and a possible threat to their new life in Christ.

So, the reality is that whatever state these folks are in, they need to be fed with the truth of the word of God on a continuous basis and when/ if possible, be fed.

The harvest is plenty but the labourers are indeed in short supply.

Your prayers and assistance are needed."

SICILY

The situation in Sicily is significantly worse than in mainland Italy. Many thousands of Africans are roaming the island, homeless, penniless and destitute. It's mainly just women and children [a minority of the migrant population] who get a place in a camp. And the Mafia are clearly using those camps as a source of sex workers, drug peddling and other criminality. We continued to support brother Godson in the rental of a small hall which is a place where he can distribute food and clothing to the migrants, and frankly where the women can come in the day time and be safe. We have funded hospital fees, medicines, emergency shelter, clothes, food and the expenses for children for the single mothers.

Like brother Joseph, he has a wonderful heart for people:



We gave support to enable the work here to continue in this way. He also distributes our

literature to the migrants, and this visit we were able to baptize brother MOSES and five women, JULIETTE, BLESSINGS, HAPPY, JULIE and VICTORIA, all baptized in a painfully rocky inlet near Syracuse:



These are all Godly, conservative African women who passed through really terrible experiences at the hands of the traffickers in Libya and are now in a similar vulnerable position in the camps. No wonder they are turning to the Lord with all their hearts and gratefully reading His word from the NEV Bibles provided:



Some are pregnant, not from their choice, because of these experiences:



We also bought a lot of food and also many cans of Malt drink which is full of vitamins.



You can see a brief video of the various baptisms at <https://youtu.be/fFzKG2KyOcs>

LATVIA

The Winter feeding scheme has begun, with good attendances, as snow begins falling. Please pray for all involved.

PRAYER POINTS:

- For those recently baptized
- For the Winter feeding work ongoing in Riga
- For some to come forward in response to the need for a longer term presence
- For those who are homeless as Winter approaches
- For the new sisters and others like them who continue so vulnerable to abuse.

With love from your brothers and sisters of Carelinks