

Work in Bosnia and Croatia June 2004

The newly baptized brothers from Sarajevo wanted to spend a few days together with their contacts, so we went down to a Croatian resort town and had a wonderful time around the Word and the Lord Jesus, with 7 young men. They were all dead keen, and we spent time going through what images we have of the Lord Jesus, the meaning of the crucifixion, a review of The Passion, which they'd all gone to see together in Sarajevo the week before, and discussing the theme of the Believer and the World, especially as they all face army service issues.

We turned down 3 young men interested in baptism, they still needed to make more of a break with their Moslem background, which is very hard in Moslem Bosnia. However we baptized RENATO, a fine young man with an excellent Bible knowledge. Brother J baptized him, he was just ecstatic with baptizing his first person and eagerly seeks to bring more to the Lord. The only quiet spot we could find on the coast was near a sewage outlet- you can see it swirling around in the photo. But they preferred to do the baptism here than on the crowded beach.

All of them had survived the Bosnian war with huge trauma, we sat up one night as they each recounted their experience of the horrors. Each family lost loved ones, one saw his mother shot in front of him, others felt they couldn't even speak of the traumatic loss of their relatives. Again and again we realize the need for many of the folk we deal with to spend time with a brother or sister more qualified to help people through trauma.

However we could only do what we could which wasn't much, just trying to reflect to them the human face of Jesus.

This is easily one of the corruptest parts of Europe. We need to help brethren get the right documents to get out of army service, and we gave funds in this connection. It was amazing to see the bonding between the 3 ethnic groups, Serbs, Bosnians and Croats, all living in their designated ethnic sectors of Sarajevo, brought together solely by the power of the Gospel. We rented a house for the few days and cooked and slept together, it was a truly wonderful experience.

They all say that the ethnic tensions are mounting again, as witnessed by the T-Shirt snapped below [not worn by any of our group!]. Bosnia has three presidents, for the three ethnic groups, and if the UN and NATO peacekeepers are withdrawn it seems the bloodshed will start again. It's such a tragedy- this country is absolutely beautiful and there is something very likeable about the people. The response to recent press adverts has been good- as well as the growing group of contacts here centred around our brethren. So we give thanks for the work pressing ahead here.

Following is a mail from a brother who attended, who needs our prayers:

I am sorry that i didnt answer before, as soon as i got in sarajevo, i get a call from my family,my mother is very sick and she was on the bed for last three days, she has a epilepsy- and it has been the worst ever. So as soon i arrived to sarajevo i went to her,my cellphone died (i droped him) so i couldn answer on your sms. everything is broken including the a keybord. so i can only read messages.

We came as it was planed,guy came around 2 am and we left croatia and arived to sarajevo safely.I dont feel very well because of my mom,i spend two nights by her bed so i am tired. she is going to stay into the hospital two days and i'll be here with her.Please pray for my mom,she is a wonderfull woman and mother and i dont want anything ti happen to her. i feel bad because i was having a good time while she was sick, in all that panic nobody could call me because i wasnt available.I feel so bad about it.

But you know what brother, I trust God and i believe that he knows what is good for me. I may feel

bad about it but i truly trust him. I felt so good and proud when I baptised my friend, God wanted me there, i know that for sure. Our God is a good god. I am really sorry about not answering you, please forgive me. I just looked at the pictures and Auuuuu!!!! I loved them! I just can't wait to show them to others ... Thank you one more time for everything that you have done for me and my friends.



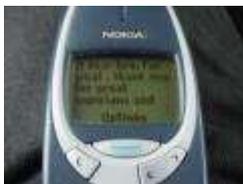
Photos: 1) Rising ethnic tensions



2) Baptism of Brother Renato by brother J



3) Brother Renato's 'baptism breakfast'- we had fun cooking for ourselves!



4) Text message of thanks

The Bible Basics Follow Up Team

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