



Report 2019 • Report 2019 • Report 2019 • Report 2019

December 2019 - TURKEY

We were able to provide support to a visit to Denizli, an industrial city in Turkey, which led to the baptism of 34 Iranian refugees who were largely taught the Gospel by fellow Iranians. The visit began with a message on the theme "The Truth will set you free" (John 8). A lively question and answer session followed an exposition of Romans 6, and covered a range of important issues such as Law and Grace, Satan and the devil, our attitude to Islam, and some of the more difficult ideas in the Old Testament. In all this we stressed the importance of baptism, particularly that it implies a lifetime commitment to following the Lord Jesus. After sharing a meal together with those to be baptised and enthusiastic local brothers and sisters, the joyful baptisms took place, one by one, as they all responded positively to questions concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and the kingdom of God.

December 2019 - AUSTRIA

About three years ago, an African living in Salzburg, Austria received from us a *Bible Basics* and a Bible. He attends a small group of other Africans who come together to search the scriptures. They had realized the need for baptism and he asked for more copies of *Bible Basics* so that they could have a baptism class. We sent these, and in due course, more Bibles for them. The group meet in an area over a workshop on the very edge of the city. They are a mixed group. Some had been long settled in Austria, now established with jobs, homes and cars. Others were migrants who arrived in Italy and then were forced to move further north looking for work. We spent the Saturday going through the Gospel with them following which, on the Sunday, we were able to baptize four men and five women.

It was quite an effort to enable the baptisms. We brought a large paddling pool from Latvia, together with hoses and various fittings. Blowing it up was quite a challenge without a pump, and then we soon drained all the hot water from the boiler in the kitchen we used. Then the fittings didn't quite work. All we had was a kitchen bowl to get the water in - and more to the point, out again back into the sink. It took a huge amount of work to get a few hundred litres of water in and out without spoiling the rather nice flooring, despite a tarpaulin we got especially to preserve it. All this was to avoid the very expensive cost of renting a large property with a private pool; hotel pools were not going to be appropriate for various reasons, and the spas in Austria have a rule that users must be naked, and share the spa with other users. Thus we were driven to be "fools for Christ's sake" with all our baptismal technology.

June 2019 – SICILY

For some years now we've supported the work of brother Godson in Sicily. He and a few other settled migrants from Africa (he has been an Italian citizen for 15 years) are doing what they can to help the huge mass of African migrants who are all over Sicily now. They typically come from West Africa across the Sahara, where many die; then they are typically kidnapped in Libya, where they are often tortured by the people smugglers until they call home and get funds transferred to the smugglers. They then risk their lives crossing the Mediterranean to the shores of Sicily. Those who make it are therefore all traumatized. But they are also very open to the true gospel of the Kingdom of God, and the simple love of God in giving His Son, as our representative, who knows all our sufferings. They find Sicily unwelcoming; the nationalist Government has closed most of the refugee camps, and large masses of Africans are just on the streets with no state support, unable to work and often without documents to return home. The island is famed for its brutally high temperatures and dry weather over the summer months, with global warming contributing to a severe water crisis on the island. So distribution of water was quite a theme, with two of the sisters, one of whom is herself a long settled migrant and not an asylum seeker, showing great strength as they lugged 30 litre water containers around, sometimes on their heads.

We assist Godson in renting a small room, a former shop, where at least the migrants can come out of the oppressive heat and get water, clothing, some food and, most importantly, the good news of the Kingdom. Many copies of *NEV Bibles* and *Bible Basics* have been provided, and they are well used by these sad and desperate folks. We spent some intense days there, providing water, food and clothing to the needy, twice visiting a refugee camp which is still open, far out in the badlands of central Sicily; and then teaching people. We rejoiced to baptize five people, three women and two men, one of whom had had much of their toenails burnt off by a cigarette lighter whilst being tortured in Libya. We gave financial support towards the continued rental of the room, and further provision of food and water. Despite the dire situation, they sung a lovely hymn in the rented room, with such passion. And vowed to continue "*in the spirit of this baptism*" as one sister put it.