

TRACKING THE TABIENDOS



EFCA
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March 2012
Prayer Letter

Serving Refugees in Europe

Grace to you in Christ Jesus, the One and Only Lord of the Universe,



Much is happening here in Spain. Thanks for your prayers. There's lots to share that you're read from hopefully in near future letters. I (Sam) would like to focus on a trip to Malta that has an affect on Spain, Europe & much of the world. Here are a just a few of many things God did on my Malta trip:



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REFUGEE HIGHWAY PARTNERSHIP (RHP) EUROPE CONFERENCE:

This was a concentrated 4 days in Malta (Jan 26-29). There were over 18 countries represented for this conference. The number one takeaway is that God is bringing the mission field to Spain & Europe. The Refugee Highway is basically the general travel routes of displaced peoples forced to leave their home in order to escape war, religious or political persecution, economic or natural disasters. There were numerous testimonies of the Lord working

among these refugees. As the prevailing European post-modern worldview reinforces the Post-Christian society in Europe, the souls in Europe that are most open to Jesus Christ are the foreigners.

One refugee highway route is kind of like the old USA Underground Railroad in the 19th century from southern Africa northward to the Mediterranean coast of Africa. There are small, scattered "underground" house churches in Libya of all places. The Christians there are watching for, harboring, serving & sharing Christ with those passing through Northern Africa to seek safety in Europe. Haptom, from Eritrea, was so impacted by the church in Libya, that when he was



visited by similar Christians ministering in his refugee detention center in Malta, he could not resist becoming a follower of Christ. Years later, Haptom is now a Pastor in a Maltese church, serving foreigners & refugees.

During this conference, we went & visited a few refugee camps. Better photos would have helped you visualize what I experienced, but the refugees were ashamed to have their photos taken in their substandard living situations. Their housing conditions are much worse than USA prisons. Many have limited freedom, but have to return to their enclosed camps which are hidden away from normal society. Few nationals are even aware that these camps are around or where they are. It can take years to get asylum granted. Some men I talked to have been trapped there for about 2 years, helpless, discouraged, angry & defeated.

- ✦ ***Please pray for those in the refugee camps. May the light of Christ pierce into their bleak circumstances.***
- ✦ ***Pray that the church would be more compassionate to minister Christ's Gospel of love & hope to thousands who have lost family, friends & even their human dignity.***
- ✦ ***Pray that the Lord would replace racism with His love for others, especially amongst the Church. In our first church in Zaragoza, during a leadership training class, every student eventually admitted that they were racist. Some are presently leaders in their churches.***

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SPAIN REFUGEE & IMMIGRANT MINISTRIES: Spain is the western gateway for refugees into Europe. The eastern gateways are primarily Greece, Italy & Malta. In spite of the European economic crisis, they are far better off in Europe than their homelands. Yet Spain is the lowest per capita refugee receiving country in West Europe & few are granted asylum. Granted the economic crisis contributes to this challenge of helping others. Incidentally, the USA is the #1 refugee receiving country in the world. Part of my Spain research report showed that over half of the births in Spain during this last decade are from parents who are foreigners in Spain. This means that the face of Spain is changing & will be vastly different in the next few years. According to an Italian minister at the RHP conference, the foreigners are the hope for the church in Italy. I believe that may be the same here in Spain. The number of Christ followers who are foreigners (5%) far surpass the number of Spanish evangelicals (0.5%).

✝ **Pray for the refugees & foreigners in Spain, that the government would be sensitive to them & that they would be sensitive to the Gospel.**

✝ **Pray that the immigrants in Spain would bless & reach the Spaniards for Jesus Christ.**

✝ **Pray for Sam's role as Spain's RHP representative & our missions RHP coordinator. May he be an effective advocate & catalyst for ministries to the refugees in Spain & Europe.**



Olivia in Uganda

OLIVIA IN UGANDA: On another note. Our daughter, Olivia's financial needs for her trip to Uganda were met. She just returned from Uganda. We'll give details her mission trip, along with some other exciting developments for ministry here in Spain & beyond.

✝ **Pray for God's favor upon Olivia & her short term mission teammates from her college, as they serve & impact Uganda on behalf of our Lord Jesus.**

MINISTRIES IN CLOSED COUNTRIES: There was a far bigger conference at our hotel. It was the annual conference for missionaries & nationals serving in Muslim countries. I was surrounded by the warmth & fellowship of many Arab men who are madly in love with Jesus & passionate to see their people come to know Him too. There were numerous testimonies about what God is doing in their "closed" countries. This is an area of the world where there are many more open hearts & outpourings of the Holy Spirit. Entire villages & some small towns in these countries are coming to Christ. This is in spite of these people living in constant danger.

Another Pastor in Malta is the son of an imam. He was seeking Christ & because it was too dangerous to stay home due to the threat of death by his own family, he fled to Europe. He came to know Jesus & recently completed his law degree. He is now a lawyer & a pastor, serving the spiritual & legal needs of his congregation & refugees. Some of these refugees have become Christians & are now elders in his church. His testimony is so above reproach that the government looks to him favorably as an advisor & advocate with laws regarding the foreigners.

✝ **Please pray that these 2 conferences would better encourage us & help us to network & enlist others to reach out to the alien, the oppressed & downtrodden more effectively.**

✝ **Pray for more workers to "creatively" enter & serve in these "closed" countries.**

✝ **Pray for God's protection of the persecuted Church especially in closed countries. May more leaders emerge from among them.**

Thanks once again for your continued prayers.

*Yours in Christ alone,
sam & jill for the tabiendos*

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