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August 2017 – ITALY

It was eight years ago that we baptized brother Festus in Naples. He is a long-term resident of Italy. He and his wife are deeply grieved at the appearance of so many desperate African migrants on the streets of Naples, but it seems that the Lord is paying attention to this particularly desperate group within society. Most of them were conservative Christian women from rural Africa who were totally unprepared for the traumas of the journey to Europe, the abuse in Libya, and are now penniless on the streets of Italy, again vulnerable to abuse. Drug dealing and selling their bodies are the only options for many of them in order to simply keep alive. The scale of the problem is huge. Italy really can't cope with thousands of migrants entering an already weak economy, from which many local Italians have already out-migrated in recent years.

All we can do is to offer the hope of the Gospel and do what we can to alleviate the obvious material needs. We are really inspired to do this by these African women who are throwing themselves upon the Lord. Festus and Rosa have been teaching some women the gospel, and it was a pleasure to help them to baptize six women and one man. For women who have been sex workers and/or rape victims, there are huge long term psychological issues. Another sister we baptized from that background shared her story with us, but we believe that the Lord is able to repair broken souls, for this is the clear good news of the most basic teaching of Jesus in the sermon on the mount. And it is to such that the Gospel is so attractive.

We transported them out to a beach and baptized them with great joy. It was lovely to see them just lying around in the water afterwards, chatting and laughing. These are women who saw many horrible things and have been abused terribly. It's just wonderful that the Lord has given them each other as well as the great hope of the Kingdom.

April 2017 – UNITED KINGDOM

At our house church in Croydon, we were pleased to baptize two Iranians who have lived in the UK for some years, having got here via the infamous Calais jungle, stowed away in trucks. Asylum seekers are given a place to live and £34 a week in the UK, but if after two appeals they are turned down, many become part of a growing underclass of people who have no income and cannot legally work. We are involved with several such and try to provide food and transport expenses. It's being stuck in such a no-win situation that such people turn to the Lord Jesus.