

Kosova Trip - June 2009

This was to be my 3rd trip to Kosova. On our earlier trips we had fallen in love with the Kosovan people. Also we had got to know and love the Goran people too. Joan didn't go with me this time, firstly because of cost and secondly she had the option to spend the week with our grandchildren Joel and Isla...no competition.

At Gatwick airport I met up with my 2 "partners in crime" Ray and George. These 2 guys work for 2 other Christian charities and we meet up each time we go to Kosova. We had the most exciting, challenging, fun packed and blessed time. We had no agenda and were depending on The Lord to open up His opportunities for us. Between the 3 of us we had 12 suitcases (276kilos) filled to the brim with goodies for the people there. My cases were packed with hundreds of CDs, DVDs, flip charts and picture books. Two per cent of space was for my clothes haha! My kids always laugh at this. Ray was able to get all our suitcases on for 18 pounds each...good old British Airways.



When we arrived we were met by our local contact, pastor Faton who we work alongside with. He arrived in a VW van which was great as we got all our stuff in no problem. I think by the noise of the van it was a 1973 model, but it went well!

We arrived in Jakova late in the evening and settled into our accommodation above some shops, which is to be their new church in the coming months. Pastor Faton and his wife Lena were so happy we had come and did everything for us.

Next morning we met our good friend Bertie, an Albanian church planter who had 2 free days to taxi us around. We had met him last time and he is a brilliant guy. We headed for the Goran region, where we were to meet our friends there. I had some new recordings on DVD for him to check before distribution. On our way there Bertie asked us if we could spend a short time at a local village school and play games etc with the children. We had a





splendid time with the children there and just showed our love and care to them. We didn't preach or mention The Lord but just blessed them and encouraged their teachers. One of the team we met there told the kids to be good students and do their best and respect their parents and teachers.

We then spent the rest of the day in the Goran village drinking cola and coffee (it's a hard old life eh!) with our friends and one guy who is the director of a school there. He is the one who allows us to speak to the children and play games with them. We told him we love the Goran people. He is now our great friend and wants us back to visit anytime and also to record some Goran songs for our next recordings on CD and DVD. They have over 200 songs they would like to record...I said I will be happy with 12. I will then inter-mix them with the Good News in their language. I hope to go again in Sept/October if the Lord allows us.



The rest of the week disappeared in doing all kinds of ministry, but I suppose the joy of the whole trip was to visit and spend time in the Romany (Gypsy) camps. I had never been previously as I was always recording, but this time my eyes were opened to the many needs of the people there. We gave out lots of

aid and things that Ray and George had brought and we included our recordings in Albanian. Pastor Faton who visits every week, sometimes daily, took us to the poorest of the poor. Most have large families, like 15 or 16 kids. One grandfather I asked how many grandchildren he had, said "I'm not sure maybe 25..." his wife nodded in agreement. We spent time with them and sat in their makeshift home and gave out sweets to the kids and



groceries and some money to the parents... not rocket science, but it was all about spending time, to show someone loves them, and especially Jesus. We prayed with each family and many are believers. In the Bible in 1 John 3 v 17 it says, "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?"

During the week we gave out a lot more than we intended to give but we had only a short window of time (our week there) to bless these dear people, so we did. It's a joy to give and we love to do it.

One young girl who looked about 18, although was probably 25, had 5 children and a new 2 month baby. I could see the despair on her face, the hopelessness of it all. We asked her what we could bring her the next day. She said Pampers (baby nappies). With no income for her family, this was what she wanted for her wee baby...how could we say no? We went and bought 2 large packs, but for her at a cost of 13.5 Euros per pack, she would never afford them. Her face lit up next day when we arrived with the pampers. She said she had her house full of people last night, all listening to our recordings in their language...wow!



For the rest of our time we helped with a kids club for the Romany kids and this is hard work. Lena led the program and used our flip charts to present the story of David and Goliath. The children listened so attentively and answered all the questions afterwards. We also visited several handicap centres and asked how we can help. They have very few facilities and too few trained staff - nurses and doctors. They were all encouraged that we showed interest in them and all accepted our Good News recordings. We praise The Lord for this.

During the week we were able to encourage the local church and believers just by turning up. Many of the small churches have so many young people involved in the leadership and this is brilliant to see. Many of the men and young teenage boys were murdered during the war in 1999. Many of the bodies have never been recovered and this is still reflected in these lovely peoples' lives. Despite all the despair there is hope through Jesus and many are turning to God and know that He is The Way, The Truth and The Life.

If you would like to know more about our work in Kosova or maybe you'd like to support this work or even come on visit with us, please let me know. Thank you for those who sent money towards this trip...we used every penny and more.

God Bless you and bye for now.

Kenny.