

## *Aaron and Annegret Bowes “And you shall be witnesses to Me...” in Germany*

Dear Praying Friends,

March 2024

A man who often comes into the Mission (Uwe) always likes to be greeted with a hug. He doesn't normally start any deep conversations, he just needs some human contact. **Loneliness** is one of the issues at the Mission. Another big issue is **addiction**. Why do people want to get drunk or high? Some reasons are: to try and find some comfort, to deal with hurts from the past, to help manage life and get through the day etc. Of course the negative side is that it can be very self-destructive and controlling. Christian, another guest at the Mission, was homeless and together with a drinking buddy had built up a camp under a bridge. Recently Christian died related to his hard life on the street. That was very sad, he was quite friendly and had wanted to come to our Sunday Fellowship but started deteriorating and didn't make it. Another issue at the Mission is **poverty**. Often guests who come in for the free meal really are down to their last change. They always seem to have many bags filled with refund cans or bottles that they collected, drinks and other stuff. And because they can't afford dental care, usually one or more teeth are missing. BUT that does not prevent them from smiling, and so you can't help but feel much love and compassion for these precious souls at the Mission!

A big **praise** is that we simply have this opportunity to serve (together with other volunteers) at the Train Station Mission in Halle and also for the open doors. When we first went there, they only had one service a year at Christmas. Since then our directors set the goal to have five services this year, on each of the German holidays. So our next service will be on **Good Friday**. They always ask Anne and me to help prepare the service. Anne picks out the songs and leads the music and I have a brief gospel message because of the short attention span. And when one of the directors speak, they even ask us to assist them in preparing their message. So we are thankful for our good training at Cedarville. We can partner with the Mission here and help them organize some gospel services. **Please pray** that Jesus will set people free at the Mission – from sin and unbelief. (Pictures: Rainer, a good friend, outside the mission with his “bags”. A previous service at the Mission, unfortunately we have just a small room. Often guests take Bibles or testimony books - unsolicited).



Our main project though is our **Sunday afternoon "Soup Kitchen" Fellowship**. (Although we no longer meet in the Soup Kitchen, but have since moved to larger rooms.) The move has gone well, the new rooms are filling up fast, at the time of writing we have around 50 people attending each Sunday. One thing that amazes us is how easily it is for our non-Christians friends to bring other friends with them to our gospel meeting. Each Sunday we usually have new visitors. Recently Steffen came from the Mission to our service and brought Connie along with him, she has a fairly rough background and said honestly, "I am just here for the food." Of course she was welcome too and she heard about the love of God and the Good News of Jesus Christ and afterwards said that she enjoyed the program too! One Sunday an older lady (age 90!) who lives on the same street just walked in and now attends every Sunday. Our new rooms are in a different location, so our team also does at least two Bus runs to pick up older folks from the apartment blocks. On **Easter Sunday** we are having a special breakfast and service together (a break from our usual *afternoon* meeting). We invited people to sign up and bring something for the buffet breakfast and we were amazed at how anxious they were to participate, the list filled up very quickly. Everyone is excited about our Easter breakfast. As we share the message of Easter, **please pray** that JESUS will be lifted up and draw people to Himself (John 12:32).

(**Pictures:** picking up people from the apartment blocks, fellowship dinner in our new location)



**Bibles for Halle:** This project has been amazing – it just keeps going and going! At the beginning of the year we gave a "10-minute challenge" in our Sunday Fellowship. We invited our guests (most do not have a Christian background) to take a free N.T. and read it for 10 minutes each day and say a prayer to God. At least 5 people took the challenge and then we ran out of Bibles. One man was disappointed that he didn't get one, but we said, don't worry we will order some new ones. We didn't see the man again for several weeks. But then one Sunday he just walked in and asked right away, "Where is my free Bible?" This is just one testimony, not to mention the different guests at the Mission who often politely ask if they may take a Bible from the rack, or at the Public Library book exchange where we often place a free Bible. **Please pray** for people to read the Word of God and be saved. And thank you so much for all who sent in donations for our literature ministry.

And finally the big **family news** is that Philip and Laura are planning to get married on May 11th at the Willingham Baptist Church in Willingham (near Cambridge), England! We are so excited and happy for them and are praying for a nice ceremony honoring to God. Please pray for God's blessings on their married life together. Of course we are looking forward to another family reunion, this time in England.

Thanks to all for your wonderful partnership in Missions, may God richly bless you!

**Happy Easter!**

Aaron and Anne Bowes

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