

# Baptists aid refugees in Europe

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FALLS CHURCH, Va.—Baptists continue to provide assistance to more than 300,000 refugees who have streamed into Europe—the largest mass migration since World War II.

The [Baptist World Alliance](#) sent an initial \$15,000 grant through [Baptist World Aid](#), its relief and development arm, to Hungarian Baptists to aid refugees entering their country.



Migrants, mostly from Syria and Iraq, set out along a highway on the Danish-German border. (Creative Commons License) Bela Szilagyi, vice president of [Hungarian Baptist Aid](#), informed the BWA his agency's temporary shelter is filled to capacity, and health care professionals extended medical assistance to about 700 refugees.

“Most migrants who are ill suffer from upper respiratory issues, skin diseases and swellings,” Szilagyi said. “Thirty percent of those seeking medical attention were children, and 70 percent were adults.”

In addition, the Hungarians have distributed water and food at the Nyugati and Keleti train stations, as well as hygienic kits, medicine, disinfectants, diapers, baby food and toys.

“Many of our churches are busy responding to the challenge in many different ways,” said Thomas Klammt, commissioner for immigrants and refugees with the Union of Evangelical Free Churches in Germany.

Congregations in Germany are “offering language courses, assistance in practical needs, even opening their houses and rooms for refugees to stay or find protection,” Klammt said.

### **‘Welcoming Christ the Stranger’**

In May, Baptists in Germany passed a resolution titled “Welcoming Christ in the Stranger.” Klammt noted the Baptist union has appointed a representative to the church commission directly addressing the government department for migration.

“Right now, very many refugees are arriving into Sweden,” said Inga Johansson, coordinator of church and society for the Uniting Church in Sweden, which includes Baptists.

Many Uniting Church in Sweden congregations are supporting refugees, she noted.

“We from the Uniting Church in Sweden urge congregations to open the churches for meeting places where refugees can receive support, counseling, language training and more,” she said, noting the Christian Council of Sweden has a committee in place to work on migration issues.

“We as a church are very keen that we, together with other organizations, support refugees and asylum seekers.”

The immigration crisis will be a major topic of discussion during meetings

of the European Baptist Federation, one of six regional fellowships of the BWA, to be held in Sofia, Bulgaria, beginning Sept. 23.