









STAYING CONNECTED IN CRISIS

"We see that you did not forget us."

When the coronavirus pandemic was declared back in 2020 all the countries where we work were quickly affected.

In Eastern Europe there were restrictions on meetings, travelling and visiting people in their homes. Schools closed with children expected to connect online, something that was not possible for many of those we work with.

Food prices increased, people lost their jobs and felt increasingly isolated. Just when we were needed the most by those we work with, we were unable to be physically with them. But, our teams are both committed and creative!

Where we were unable to run our soup kitchens we handed out meal packs for people to prepare at home, a lifesaver for those who were struggling even more so to feed themselves.



On the streets of Sofia in Bulgaria our Street Mercy team were handing out masks to help protect the homeless people, alongside the hot meals we bring. The masks were sewn at our vocational training centre where people freely gave their time to help those who were struggling.

We continued to deliver food and essential items to families, many of whom told us that without that, they would have had nothing. As one grandmother in Romania said, 'We see that you did not forget us. Thank you and God bless you.'

Valeria is in her third year of studying medicine thanks to a scholarship from Mission Without Borders – and in April 2020 she started volunteering for 12 hours a day at the newly opened COVID-19 centre in Chisinau, Moldova.

Valeria said, "I'm not afraid because I'm going to be a doctor in the future and I know that not only easy times await me. This is the reason I'm studying medicine. I want to make a change in this world through my own example, to serve God and thank Him for all that He has done in my life."



Stephen Young
International CEO
Mission Without Borders

If there is anything that we have learnt during the coronavirus pandemic it is that none of us can succeed in isolation from each other. We are stronger when we work together. That's why "connectedness" remains an essential theme to all that we do.

For over 60 years, Mission Without Borders has connected lives. Our generous supporters, moved to help others, have given generously to support people who are living many miles away, poor and marginalised in Eastern Europe, and continue to do so.

This spirit of connectedness flows from our supporters to our fundraising staff, to our programme staff in the field, the people we serve, and back to our supporters. Connectedness is at the heart of all that we do.

This is one of the reasons why it is so important to us that all our staff are local to the countries in which we operate, they understand and appreciate the real issues that we are seeking to alleviate because they see them every day. It is also why we seek to build strong partnerships with local churches and church leadership in the communities in which we work. Multiple lines of connectedness help ensure we are stronger together.

Our desire for connectedness is built on the fact that Mission Without Borders is founded on Christian principles and our core purpose is Reaching People for Christ. Alongside the humanitarian work, we seek to journey emotionally and spiritually with people, sharing the hope we believe is offered through a relationship with Jesus Christ. We are confident that God has led the Mission over the last 60 years; we desire that God will continue to lead us for countless more years.

This is only possible when we recognise the Lordship of Christ over the Mission and over our own lives and we seek to remain connected to God in prayer, in listening to him and in seeking his guidance in all we do.

John writes in his gospel in John 15:5, "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

As a Mission, we only make a real difference because God is working through us and we can only be really effective when we remain connected with Him, with our wonderful staff, supporters and the people we work among.

Thank you for your support in prayer and in financial resources and we would value your continued prayer in ensuring we continue to seek first and foremost, God's plan for our lives and for the Mission.



No longer "stuck in a vicious circle"

"I was so nervous at school. I felt as if I was stuck in a vicious circle, where I couldn't grasp the material, I had no one to help me, and I kept getting poor marks."

Eleven-year-old Bilyana is Roma and lives with her family in Krupnik, Bulgaria. Her parents left education without any qualifications, and poverty has been a constant battle. In the Roma community in Bulgaria, many children drop out of school early. Around 22% of Roma are illiterate and only 9% have a secondary education even though it is compulsory, a recent study showed.

"My husband and I didn't have the chance to finish school, and I don't want my children to be like us," said Lyubka, Bilyana's mother.

"Lyubka is thankful that as a result of being enrolled on Mission Without Borders' sponsorship programme, Bilyana now attends After School club, where she gets help with her homework.

"I love going to after school club," she said. "The atmosphere is very relaxed – I feel free to ask any questions I have. The teachers there are very patient and kind, and they're always available to help us. The teachers at school have noticed my progress and started praising me. Thanks to the help I receive, I'm getting very good marks, and that makes me feel very proud."

Now Bilyana has the confidence to make plans for the future – and her dream is to study at university and qualify as a kinesitherapist.

We are like a big family

Kirilka is a teacher at the after school club in Krupnik, Bulgaria that Bilyana attends.

Children from Roma backgrounds are often neglected or rejected by their teachers at school here. The widespread notion is that they're not as capable as children from a non Roma background.

At after school club we are like a big family. My goal is to



motivate the children to move forwards, working hard, to fulfil their dreams.

My greatest reward is the change in the children.

The teachers at the school have told me that the children from the after school club are different from the others, not only in their grades but also in their behaviour. Working with these children is inspiring, and it is so rewarding to support them towards a better future.



One of the most challenging boys in the community

"The teacher told Cristi he could not come back to kindergarten because of his dirty clothes and his wild, trouble-making behaviour."

Seven-year-old Cristi lives with his family in a Roma community in Laslea, Romania. It is common for children like Cristi to struggle to fit into the school system. And teachers often lack sympathy for children from Roma backgrounds and do not attempt to understand them or help them overcome their difficulties.

As well as discrimination and poverty, Cristi's family's life has been marked by violence – like many other families in the community. Fortunately, he, his brothers and his mother have found a safe refuge in Mission Without Borders – a place of love, acceptance and provision. A place they can turn to for help where they will be welcomed and treated with dignity and respect.

Cristi is enrolled on MWB's child sponsorship programme and now attends the After School programme, where he is given a healthy, nutritious meal each day, and then has the chance to do his favourite things, colouring and singing. He is also taught Bible lessons and receives support with his school work. His mother never attended school herself, but lately she has come to realise how important education is.

Paula Boruga, the MWB staff member who supports the children in the area and is like a second mother to them, said, "Cristi is one of the most challenging boys in the community. My hope is that he will not drop out of school. I hope he will learn to love school and he will feel more equipped for the challenges he faces there."

With the help of our supporters, MWB can help children like Cristi to find their place not only in school – but beyond that, in the amazing plans God has for them.











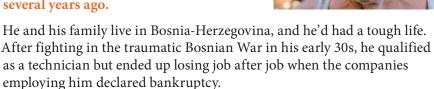
119 families became self sufficient with help from MWB.





"I have no job, my cow died...
I have nothing."

Suad Music, 57, was desperate when he phoned Mission Without Borders several years ago.



MWB began supporting the Musics, providing them with a chainsaw so Suad could earn money cutting firewood. Later they were given a pregnant cow so they can sell dairy products, as well as growing and selling crops. They also receive emotional and spiritual support through the visits of staff member Nermin, who works with the family.

Their teenage son Sakib has enjoyed MWB's summer camps and has also attended the Mission's English classes; he now speaks English beautifully.

Suad said, "Nermin is like my brother. We drink coffee together. For me, he is the best. He's helped us a great deal to improve our lives.

"It's very difficult to find the words to express how grateful I am. Everything in my life has changed."



When the hard times come, Mission Without Borders is there to help families back on their feet. Whether it is the earthquake that struck Albania in November 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic, or a tragedy such as a fire or bereavement, MWB is often first on the scene to give families the support they need.

The Mission is there through the everyday struggles too – the ongoing battle with poverty, the freezing winter that comes every year with its extra expenses and challenges, the need for tools or seeds or advice to help family members take the next step forward.

When we're connected to families, that's when we are best placed to understand both their sorrows and joys – and be the support they need.

Nevila Kapxhiu, 45, is thankful that she and her family all managed to escape their home and run outside when the 6.4 magnitude earthquake hit Albania.

"When the earthquake happened, everything was being shaken and we couldn't even stand up from the bed. Everything around the house was breaking, the walls were cracking and the roof from the next room was breaking and falling down. There was dust everywhere in the house and glasses broken on the floor."

Her son, Igli, 20, knows how fortunate he is to be alive. He said, "I was sleeping in the same room where the roof got destroyed and started to fall down."

MWB helped the family fix the roof and cracked walls and replace their window. In total MWB help 31 sponsored families in Albania complete their reparation works and replace damaged household goods.



One of our family workers in Ukraine visiting and supporting a mother who has a new baby.



"A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

Prov. 17:17





"When I first met the elderly people, I was distressed.

"I saw people who stay at home for months on end and can't take care of even their most basic needs. They literally just exist and survive."

Nina is 17 and volunteers at MWB's Soup Kitchen in Sarny, Ukraine. The Soup Kitchen has been running for over 14 years, providing meals to the elderly and disabled. Meals are delivered to those who are housebound, and there are currently 49 homes who receive visits every weekday from the Mission.

Nina added, "Social institutions do a miserable job of helping the situation of these elderly people living in such poverty. Then I realised that God wants us to take care of them. He needs us to get involved, to help them practically and to care for them as people. We receive so much love in return!"

Antonina, pictured above, is 92 and has been housebound for about seven years. Her house is older than she is, and it is cold even in summer. Antonina is rarely visited by her son, who is 67. He has a disability and can hardly walk.

Antonina always meets visitors with a broad smile and a sparkle in her eyes. Although she cannot hear well, she loves to talk and to listen to everyone's news.

Volodymyr, the staff member who runs the Soup Kitchen, said, "Older people need to be prepared for eternity. I try telling people about the Lord wherever I go. But more than preaching with words, we preach with our works."

"Winter time is a painful period for many of the elderly and disabled people we work with.

"Their living conditions exacerbate their poor health," Volodymyr continued. "Most of these elderly people live in old, very cold houses in poor repair, heated only with wood stoves. The temperature outside drops to -3C (25F).

"Older people just stay at home all the time. Often, they don't have appropriate clothing or footwear. Their isolation gets even worse than usual. Going outside can turn into a dangerous adventure, as the roads are covered with snow and ice."

Each elderly person living in poverty receives winter support such as firewood, and donated goods such as blankets, warm clothing and footwear.

Pictured above is Kateryna, whose electricity was cut off when she couldn't pay her utilities bill out of her small pension. MWB provided her with firewood.

She said, "These people say that God inspires them to do these things for others. I'm not strong in faith, but their attitude shows me what Christian faith looks like."



Galina, an elderly woman MWB supports in Moldova.

"The loneliness was eating me alive.

"I had very few visitors and I was always looking for somebody to talk to. My three children live abroad and only manage to visit once every few years. I understand their situation. They have their own families to look after and it's not easy to find enough time or money to come."

Now in her mid-70s, Granny Rista thought nothing would change – but one day, she saw people arrive on the field by her house in Bosnia-Herzegovina, beginning to work the land.

Mostar Brankovac Evangelical Church had purchased the land, and Granny Rista immediately invited the church volunteers into her house for a coffee. That first coffee was the beginning of a great friendship between Rista and the volunteers. Mission Without Borders partner with Mostar Brankovac Evangelical Church and were looking for ways to develop Granny Rista's village and build a sense of community there.

Granny Rista became involved in the activities at the community centre, she began helping to plant and harvest potatoes and cabbages – and she continued to make everyone coffee when they took a break from work.

Claire, a church volunteer, said, "Granny Rista gladly keeps an eye on our property for us, calling us if she sees people there she doesn't know, and answering our phone calls enquiring about how much rain has fallen and whether we need to irrigate the potatoes that day."

MWB have been able to help Granny Rista, providing her with food parcels and help with her electricity bills. She was provided with chickens and she is now able to sell a few eggs to subsidise her pension.

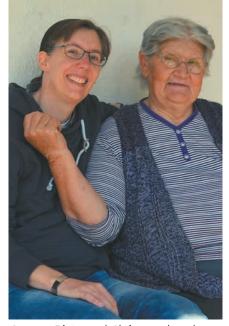
Claire takes a group of elderly members of the community, most of whom live alone, out for lunch before Christmas and Easter.

"I'm not alone for the holidays anymore," said Granny Rista. "When I returned home, I was on cloud nine."



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Granny Rista and Claire, a church volunteer.



"All the mean words I heard were not going to kill my dream."

When Rahela's father died, she and her siblings were told by people in the village where they live in Sibiu, Romania, that because they were now fatherless, they would never amount to anything worthwhile.

Rahela, 22, who refused to listen to them, said, "Before my dad died, I was getting ready to apply for high school, and we would talk about my future plans and how I dreamed of becoming a doctor."

Her father and two of her sisters died of the same genetic condition, dilated cardiomyopathy, which affects the heart's ability to pump blood. Rahela's grief has driven her closer to God and led to her trusting him more deeply in all her struggles.

Rahela's family battled poverty after her father died, but have also experienced many miracles of God's provision in their everyday life – and continue to do so. Rahela continued to pursue her studies with determination. Rahela managed to get a place at college where she is studying to become a nurse, but it's very expensive as she has to pay for her studies and also rent a place in the city while school is in session.

Her life changed when she was accepted onto MWB's scholarship programme.

"I am so thankful that the Mission values education and comes along to help when it's so much needed," she said. "I've never wanted to be a burden for my family, and receiving help from MWB takes away that concern. Thank you so much for believing in my dream!"



Alina, studying sewing at MWB's vocational centre in Ukraine, where young people are equipped with the skills they need for work.



"I come here not only for the food. This is my family.

"Here are people who really love me, who give me their friendship and who show me concern, compassion and sympathy. I haven't found this kind of acceptance anywhere else."

Metodi, who has lived in Sofia, Bulgaria, all his life, has been homeless for five years and is receiving support from the Mission's Street Mercy project.

As well as hot meals every day, Metodi has received warm clothes and shoes, gloves, a hat and life-saving medicine from Street Mercy, and the Bible readings shared at meal times have helped him find faith in Jesus.

"I was living, but I felt like I was dead."

Fahrie is 40 and lives in rural Albania. Since the beginning of her marriage, Fahrie has experienced terrible physical and emotional violence.

Then she came across Mission Without Borders.

"When I first met Arjana, the MWB staff member who supports our family, I felt love that I'd never felt before," Fahrie said. "She said to me, 'Despite the situation you're going through, you can make it. Our Lord knows and cares for you."

Arjana visited Fahrie frequently, spending time with her and her children and getting to know them better. She encouraged them and spent time in prayer and fellowship with them. Fahrie was given material support too, and started growing crops on her land.

"I started to change inside," Fahrie said. "I started to feel strong in God, to feel secure in my salvation, to read God's Word and to go on with my faith. I started to understand that I must live and not die, for my children and myself."





"It gives me such peace in my heart to see this. I had nothing to cook for Christmas. Seeing this food gives me hope that we'll celebrate the holiday like other people."

Number of Operation Christmas Love parcels delivered:

41,800

Every year our Operation Christmas Love boxes bring the gift of love to families struggling across Eastern Europe, but the winter of 2020 was harder than most. The pandemic saw unemployment and loss of earnings for many, in addition the price of basic food and hygiene items increased due to shortages. Our response as a Mission was to increase the number of OCL boxes distributed to 41,800, our largest distribution yet.

Albena, lives with her partner, and two children in Dabnitsa, a village in Bulgaria. In the past, when she had money, she would cook a good dinner, decorate a Christmas tree and buy some presents for her children. "But there were years when I couldn't afford such luxury. I couldn't buy any food, let alone presents."

The COVID-19 restrictions were tough on the family. Albena and her partner



were unable to work for many weeks, and all they could do was earn a small amount of money by gathering walnuts and picking mushrooms in the woods. Although Ventsislav, their family coordinator, had to keep distant from the family when he visited, he left regular food parcels at their door. Albena said, "I am very thankful both to God and to the Mission. Everything comes from God, and He gives me strength to carry on, no matter how hard things get."

"I'm so happy now, because MWB helps us to have everything we need for a good Christmas celebration. And not only the food, but the children always get sweets and chocolates and it just makes them so happy."

"The OCL parcel not only provides food, it also has a spiritual impact," added Ventsislav. "On one of my visits to Albena, I was surprised to see an old lady in the room. Albena told me that she was a neighbour of hers, and that she'd been telling her about the Mission and Operation Christmas Love. This lady wanted to learn more and we had the opportunity to tell her the good news about God, His love for us and how we, from MWB, try to show this love in Dabnitsa."



60TH Anniversary

Mission Without Borders was founded in 1960 in response to the needs of people living in poverty or suffering persecution in Communist Europe.

Our work began when the Cold War was at its most intense and where Bibles were desperately wanted, but difficult to get hold of. In Eastern Europe, a rigid political system often demanded strict loyalty. Those who dared to disagree could suffer imprisonment and death. Millions of Christians were persecuted for their beliefs, many paid with their lives.

We still operate in Eastern Europe as an international network of Christians who journey with the poor and marginalised, bringing practical and spiritual support with hope of a better future. Enabling and encouraging people to lift themselves out of poverty, we share the hope that is found in Jesus Christ.

At the heart of all we do are incredible people, all over the world and throughout our history. We have documented 60 stories that show how God has blessed what we do and the people we encounter.

All 60 stories are available on our website www.mwbi.org/60th-anniversary

I would never have let go of my granny's hand had I known that she would leave me

My parents died when I was nine months old. All I have left now are memories of the house where I was born. It had one room, a clay floor, a leaking roof and a single bed which I shared with my granny, my only family. She was my universe and I felt peace in the middle of the night any time I was frightened. When she lost her health and couldn't take care of me anymore, she took me to an orphanage. That oppressive feeling of being abandoned in an utterly alien place clung to me for many years.

All the children looked the same, had the same clothing, followed the same routines. We all had to adjust to the dull lessons and constant hunger. All of us missed home, cried at night and were thankful for a fleeting hug or a kind word from a tutor. After many years I returned to the walls I knew so well, but this time as a staff member working for Mission Without Borders.

The living conditions had greatly improved; still, the children's souls were going through the same motions as mine did.

Just like any other children, orphans need love. I'm so grateful that I found the source of love in the Most High. This is the most precious advice I can give to these little souls.

Olga, one of the first staff member of Mission Without Borders in Ukraine.





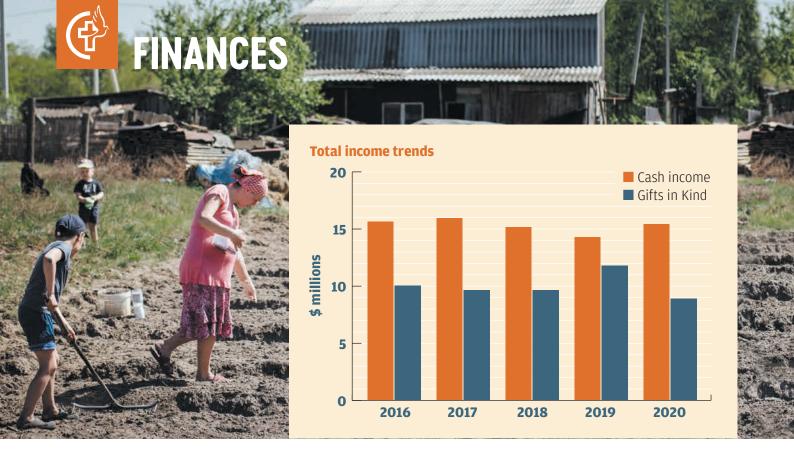
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Through family sponsorship	Albania	Bosnia-Herzegovina	Bulgaria	Moldova	Romania	Ukraine
Supporting 2,087 families	300	151	195	535	440	466
Reaching 4,679 adults	760	291	577	1,417	874	760
and 7,541 children	653	404	412	1,632	1,440	3,000

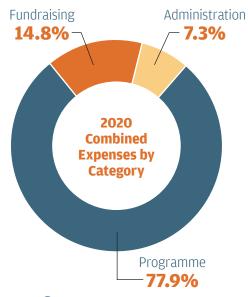
Through child sponsorship

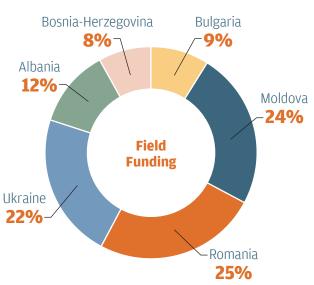
Working with 5,544 children in communities	3,423	2,121	
and 4,060 children in government institutions	705		3,355

Supported by 218 staff	22	14	21	65	34	62
and 1,017 volunteers	60	71	258	258	125	245











Total cash income \$15.4m

Total value of donated goods \$8.9m



GIVING THANKS FOR THE HARVEST



My first full year as chairman was very different from what had been anticipated. Nevertheless, there have been many successes, some in ways that were planned and others arising out the changed circumstances.

The resilience of the staff teams in adapting to the changed opportunities has been truly impressive. We are deeply grateful for the commitment and adaptability of each one of them. Their support and witness is key in our working with families and children and it has been encouraging to hear stories of those who began attending church and even took a step of faith during this challenging time.

We are truly grateful to God and to our faithful supporters. Early in 2020 we were unsure how the various impacts of lockdowns would affect our income, but we give thanks that our income was in line with what we had planned for and even grew compared to 2019.

I am conscious that there are very many people around the world who gave to Mission Without Borders for the first time in 2020. Thank you for your trust in us.

Gifts in Kind, or goods donated to be used in our work, are an essential part of our work and enable us to do

far more than we could if we had to buy items locally. Food, clothing and shoes are always needed and for many families, items of furniture like beds and wardrobes make a significant difference to their living conditions. Something as simple as a backpack and some school materials can mean that a child will carry on with their studies.

Looking forward in 2021, our hope is to rebuild relationships, with families and children and with our supporters too. This rebuilding will grow out the many strengths that already exists in the hearts, mind and spirits of all who serve with us and those we serve. In all things we trust the Lord to lead.



Michael Thomas Chairman **Mission Without Borders**





THE VALUE OF PARTNERSHIP

One of our key values as a mission is to be rooted in the local communities where we seek to make a difference. All our staff are local and so connected to the communities we work in. It is also important that we work in partnership with the local church.

When the Mission began 60 years ago, we delivered Bibles and Christian literature to pastors and their churches, who at the time were operating illegally, risking their lives and their freedom. Now those churches operate in the open, grow and flourish it is just as important for us to continue to work in partnership, building one another up as the body of Christ.

At a practical level churches know their own communities. They know what's going on, they know the people and the families who are struggling and what will help to support them.

Working through churches also helps create a community hub, meaning that our work is seen to be present in the everyday life of people. It also means that when the time comes for us to move on to new communities, we are leaving something more resilient than when we arrived.

Churches are well placed to provide much needed resources for the work. They are often full of that most valuable resource of people; people who are passionate about helping their neighbours. Volunteers who give generously of their time and skills are crucial to the success of our projects, helping out by cooking meals, helping with after school support or visiting homes. For us as a Mission and for the churches we work with, it multiplies what we are able to do many times, and means that we are able to do so much more with the resources we are given.

PARTNER CHURCHES IN EACH COUNTRY:

	Albania		23
**************************************	Bosnia-He	rzegovina	25
	Bulgaria		20
W	Moldova		70
	Romania		83
	Ukraine		40
1	†	Number of partnumber churcher 261	er es:
	umber of blunteers:		



EASTERN UKRAINE

Eastern Ukraine is an area of huge need: mortar shells embedded in the buildings, empty playgrounds and people crammed into poor accommodation. Since the civil war began in 2014, many families have become displaced, fleeing violence in the buffer zone and rebel-held territory.

Mission Without Borders has a history of working in the area, delivering goods such as mattresses, beds and wardrobes, as well as our Operation Christmas Love campaign. We now believe there is an opportunity to do something more significant. Seeing the need and an opportunity to use our strengths to make an impact, we are slowly beginning our work.

REACHING MORE FAMILIES

We are excited to be growing our family programmes in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Bulgaria. This is the first time we have established new communities for a number of years, and we believe this could become a significant programme with the potential to reach 10-12,000 more children, families and grandparents.

Our local staff have identified these as locations where we already have a good link and can build on the existing relationships with churches and local communities. Part of our vision is to include the increasingly vulnerable elderly people who may find themselves isolated if their children have moved away or emigrated. We believe we can give them respect, dignity and hope, even after a long and difficult life.

Eastern Ukraine

We live only 60 kilometres from the front line. The towns and villages that are closer to the conflict are mostly abandoned. There is a lot of pain. I hope that this infection of war and destruction won't spread further. Many people need emotional and spiritual support and counselling as they are in despair. Most of us are scared, but also strengthened with the Lord's promises and His comfort.





Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' Matthew 25 v 37-40



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