

Subj: **Close to Re-opening The Nest?**
Date: 6/18/2006 5:28:06 P.M. Central Standard Time
From: scott.mccracken@iteams.org
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Dear Praying Friends,

God continues to show Himself active in reaching the nations through Athens. Several refugees from different countries have come to Christ recently, many of them desperately needing a safe roof over their heads. As you know from previous updates I have sent out, we are asking God to help us re-open The Nest ministry this year (if you need to, you can read (or re-read) the original message below.

UPDATE: We only need \$335 USD/month more to launch out in the balance of faith and wisdom in re-opening this ministry of temporary shelter to homeless refugees. Of course, this will only put us at 50% of what we will really need each month, but we already have all the set-up costs pledged and trust that God will provide as He continues to guide.

Thank you for your prayers and/or any investment the Lord leads you to make.

Grateful,

Scott

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Web pages:

www.ITRefMin.org (click "Teams", then click "Athens")

www.iteams.org

<http://refminathens.blogspot.com> (some refugee stories)

www.geocities.com/scripturecalligraphy (purchase beautiful art and support our teammates)

www.helpinghands.gr/en/default.htm

www.helpinghands.watchmyshow.info

Our ministry is striving to be a FULL-SERVICE station on this exit ramp of the Refugee Highway by partnering with churches to offer practical services which demonstrate the love of God for the refugee as a whole person, and which invite the refugee to be a part of advancing His kingdom among the nations.

NEST--a temporary domicile for creatures of flight

Dear Praying Friends,

One year ago, it was unfortunately necessary to TEMPORARILY shut down our shelter/discipleship ministry (called "The Nest). There were two primary issues that forced this decision: #1--management issues, #2--financial matters.

We have been seeking the Lord since that time about its re-opening, and we are asking if the time might be now.

We believe that some of the major management issues are able to be resolved

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at this time. However, our local ministry has a financial policy that tries to balance faith and wisdom by requiring that any NEW MINISTRY (or resurrected ministry) must have at least 50% of MONTHLY costs pledged, and 100% of initial start-up costs on hand before beginning. At this point we have 0% of the monthly and 0% of the start-up costs. We are estimating that monthly costs will run about 2000 Euros (\$2,400 USD), and start-up costs will be around 4,000 Euros (\$4,800 USD).

Although our previous Nest ministry was primarily devoted to temporarily housing and discipling young men, our hope is for the new one to provide temporary shelter for mainly women, children, and families as they are the most vulnerable, and there is such a growing number of them.

If this is something God would lay on your heart to invest in, you can make out checks of ANY AMOUNT to International Teams, with a note clearly designating it for "The Nest/Athens", and send to: International Teams, 411 W. River Rd., Elgin, IL 60123 USA (or to the I.T. organization in your country, if you don't live in the U.S.).

I know that there is NOTHING in this letter indicating that I know anything about fund-raising, because I do not. No tricks, no psychology, no stories, no guilt. However, I KNOW what is very passionately in my heart, I KNOW what is very passionately in God's heart, and I BELIEVE that you care about this ministry that God is using to reach the nations. So I am simply asking you to ASK GOD how He may want you to play a part, and then be obedient. Please pray for His will to be done as we seek to be a blessing to the nations in Jesus' name.

If you are not familiar with the Nest ministry as it was, there is more information to read below. The resurrection of the Nest ministry will be similar in purpose, only slightly different in practical management issues. One of the major losses this past year was not only the ability to help homeless refugees find shelter, but also a significantly less impact in the area of discipleship opportunities. The Nest ministry was one of our most powerful opportunities to combine proclamation with demonstration. We hope and pray that this can continue again.

THANK YOU FOR ALLOWING GOD TO USE YOU IN THIS HIGHLY PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION OF HIS LOVE FOR ALL PEOPLES!

Grateful for you,

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In February 1998, HELPING HANDS rented a three bedroom apartment to temporarily house homeless refugees. Furnished with bunk beds, it housed up to twelve people at a time. Initially, it was used for sheltering Kurdish believers who were the founding members of the Kurdish Christian Fellowship in Athens, but others in need also found a place of refuge, new life, and nourishment in what has been called "The Nest" ("nest" -a temporary domicile for creatures of flight).

The shelter ministry of HELPING HANDS has proven to be very effective in meeting physical and spiritual needs on a small-scale basis, although very limiting in terms of the high cost and the low number of people who may be sheltered. In March of 2005, due to prohibitive costs, it was necessary to close this aspect of the ministry. We hope to open it again in the near future.

These shelters are NOT just apartments. They are places of fellowship for believers, places to hear and experience the Good News; places where refugees who come to Christ can be prepared to be "sent out" as "missionaries" to other lands. This is not simply a nice theory, rather it has been the reality witnessed for more than 7 years.

To better understand the effectiveness, here are a few (among many) examples of residents impacted by the Shelter Ministry:

A Palestinian Muslim, "A", who had been living there (and witnessed to by the Kurdish residents) came to Christ and was baptized. For a time he was the house leader before leaving Athens.

"M" and his wife and young old son (Iranians) became residents of one of our Nests. "M" came to the Lord almost immediately while his wife took longer but also eventually put her trust in Jesus. "M" was a house leader and one of our most faithful workers, winning him the "Helping Hands Volunteer of the Year" award for 2002.

A Kurdish brother, "D", who was discipled while he lived in the "Nest" for 8 months, now lives in Holland where he is evangelizing Muslim refugees.

Another Kurdish Muslim, "D", came to Jesus through this ministry and was the house leader at one of our Nests for two years. "D" was also quite active in helping with other ministries of HELPING HANDS, including personal evangelism, translating materials, Bible studies, and special programs before moving to England.

An Iranian believer, "N", and his wife "E" (Filipina) were the house leaders of one of our "Nests", where new believers and sincere seekers from Iran and Afghanistan were housed for shelter, evangelism, and discipleship. It was "training ground" for "N" (who is also the leader of the Persian Christian Fellowship). "N" and "E" are now full-time team members of the IT/Athens Team.

"N", an Afghan refugee, came to Jesus and stayed in our Nests for some time until the Lord provided for him to run his own "hotel" business which he used as an opportunity to share Christ with Muslim residents.

"M" and "M", Iranian refugees, stayed for a long time in one of our Nests. Now they are both sharing Christ with Muslim refugees in other ministries in

Athens and in Crete.

Kurds, Iraqis, Iranians, Albanians, Romanians, Afghans, Nigerians, Palestinians, and others have been sheltered, brought to Christ, discipled, and/or "sent out" to tell others through this important and strategic ministry.

Because most of those who stay in the "Nests" are believers (or become believers while there) and because ALL of them will only stay there temporarily before moving on, these places are not only physical shelters from the elements but also places of spiritual preparation where they can be strengthened and nourished before "spreading their wings for flight."

Thank you for praying about what part God may invite you to play in the re-opening of this strategic opportunity to reach the nations for Him!