

Subj: **McCracken Ministry Update--Sept. 2005**  
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 From:  
 To:

Dear Praying Friends,

A thousand apologies for this greatly delayed ministry update. Only a few people received the one I tried to send out this summer. Many computer and e-mail/internet problems prevailed, but now we are back in Athens with a working computer (due to some generous friends) and things seem to be functioning again. Below is a ministry update (a slightly edited version as it was originally written by some of our teammates), but first a word from Scott's father who lives in Mobile, Alabama. Many have asked about my parents--they are doing well--no serious damage to their house from Hurricane Katrina. But here is what my father recently wrote (my mother is currently in Montana caring for her ailing mother)...

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We are still trying to recuperate from Katrina. Looks like it's going to be a long haul. They are just now beginning to collect the bodies in New Orleans. Mobile has become something of a disaster relief hub with the president and cabinet members flying in and out (I watched the president fly over our house as he came into Mobile last week) and all kinds of insurance teams, FEMA and other aid groups operating out of here. I spent my first week with the Mobile Baptist Association working the telephone for disaster relief, fielding requests as well as helping to coordinate volunteers from all over the country. Had one FEMA agent stay at the house with me for four days (he had been sleeping in his car as no motels are available); he finally quit in disgust with FEMA and went back home to Jacksonville (he's a contractor by trade). Nice Irish guy who moved to Ft. Lauderdale from England in 1985 to tend bar during Spring Break. Eventually got saved at Calvary Chapel a few years ago before he moved to Jacksonville. Might have two couples from North Carolina stay here this weekend; they're bringing an 18-wheeler full of food today, and want to get involved in a cleanup project over the weekend. Our SS class will be working on a cleanup project tomorrow (older guy in our class has terminal cancer and his house was flooded). This afternoon I'll be back fielding the phones at Mobile Baptist Association for a few hours.

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September 2005

Dear partners,

Well, the summer is over and cooler weather is upon us. Many new and exciting things are happening in the ministry. Let me first give you a brief recap of our summer.

Our team was a bit understaffed throughout the summer months, but we had a busy ministry schedule. We continued serving food to over 1000 people a week, many of who heard and saw the Gospel for the first time. Four summer short-term teams and two interns were a great help in running these meals. It is truly amazing what God has been doing amongst the Iranian and Afghani refugees here in Athens. Just this past week an Iranian man accepted Christ at the Monday night prayer meeting, and last month we held a baptism on the beach where two Afghans and two Iranians (and one Filipina) gave their testimonies and were baptized.

This summer we were able to send 15 children to a Greek Evangelical camp outside of Athens. The children had a great time and the leaders were amazed how well the kids adapted and got along with the other kids. The kids had a blast, and they got to hear the Gospel and memorize scripture. Last week Helping Hands held our own children's camp. Thirty-five refugee children were treated to a three-day camp filled with games, song, swimming, and good food. Brant Community Church from Canada sponsored the camp and did a great job with everything. It was hard work, but all were blessed by the

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experience. Some comments from the parents:

"We will never let our kids go with anyone, but we trust Helping Hands".

"Thank you for taking our kids. This was the first time we were alone as a couple in years".

"When are you going to have a retreat for the parents?"

Unfortunately, this summer our ministry funds dried up. We had to close some of our Tea House programs for the months of June and part of July, and we gathered daily as a team to pray and worship, and to seek the Lord for guidance. It was a blessed time for us as the Lord provided focus and guidance for our team and the ministry. One of the results of this financial slowdown is a cutback in our overhead ministry. We have food giveaways twice a week now, rather than three times, and we've stopped the Nest ministry for the present. We have converted it into our new Guest House, where short-term teams will stay. Please pray for the finances of Helping Hands, that God would continue to provide.

I am very happy to tell you that we have finally opened our medical clinic, after going through a long legal maze full of red tape. Last Sunday our first patients came to see the doctor. A generous amount of medicine and supplies has been donated, and our doctor is legally able to write prescriptions. We are hoping and praying that more doctors will donate their time and resources now that we have our clinic set up in the old Nest.

Another exciting answer to prayer is the continued involvement of the local Greek Evangelical churches. One church I frequently visit has asked us to come and have a food program at their church once a month. They have done giveaways in the past, and these were a great testimony to their non-believing neighbors. Our first meal will be in October, so please pray that it goes well and that we will have the continued support from the local churches here in Greece. (We were also recently "adopted" by the synod of the Greek Evangelical Church as an "official" ministry of theirs).

Update on Nader and Ella

As I told you last month, our Iranian teammate Nader's asylum request was rejected and he was given three months to leave the country. He has one month to appeal, and he is in the process of doing just that. He is also asking the Canadian government to reopen his file to reconsider his request for asylum in that country. He was rejected by Canada in the past because of his pending Greek asylum request, but now they may reconsider since Greece denied him. God is working in this, and we want to continue to pray for our brother and his wife Ella in this very difficult situation

I want to thank all of you for your prayers.

In Him, Tim and Donna Sirinides

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THANKS SO MUCH FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP IN THIS MINISTRY!

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