

JUNE/JULY 1990

Dear Teamies,

A couple months ago a Muslim from Afghanistan named Abraham became a Christian. He was baptized a few weeks ago (along with five other former Muslims). Since then he's had verbal abuse and threats leveled at him from devout Muslims in the camp, and Sunday he came to the Oasis with a cut and bloody face/head asking us to take him to the hospital because he had just been attacked by an Islamic fanatic. Please pray for Abraham's protection and spiritual growth, for the other Muslims coming to Christ, and for the Muslims still in bondage to Islam--held captive by Satan.

In our last letter we mentioned Mirek and Beata. They are on their way to Canada this week. Please pray for their continued spiritual growth and for their future (they're praying about returning to Poland as missionaries).

No further progress in our adoption process. We got a letter recently from the American Embassy in Romania stating that no new files are being processed until further notice, so it looks like more delays. Thank you for your prayers. God's will be done.

We continue to become even more excited about opportunities to begin a new refugee ministry in Greece. We've been advised that if we want a chance at cheap housing we need to move to Athens in early September before the University begins. Housing costs there are comparable to here so we don't see that our MONTHLY support will need to be increased. However, because our monthly income cannot begin to help cover our initial set-up costs, we are trusting God to provide for these needs. We know that He may provide through something extra you send in the next two months, or He may choose another way that we haven't even thought of, but may we ask you to pray about it?

Initial set-up needs include:

- 1) Language School... About \$270 total for Vicki and I
- 2) Housing deposit... About \$2500
- 3) Moving Costs... About \$3000 (We're still looking for cheaper alternatives. We've been advised by people living in Athens that it would be less expensive to move our things than to buy new things there. Discount stores and second-hand shops don't exist in Athens. Appliances are generally twice as expensive as in America).
- 4) Vehicle costs... We've lived here for almost three years now without a car because we believed that it wasn't an absolute necessity. However, after checking out the situation in Greece, we now consider it necessary to own a vehicle for personal and ministry use. Because of a very generous gift from our church in Mobile, we've been able to purchase an old VW diesel van to take to Greece. However, insurance and maintenance costs will be an additional burden (insurance alone will be at least \$500/year).

Our desire is to be responsible stewards. We have been, and are, looking for the most expedient and economic ways to live and minister in an inexpensive society. Please understand that all we ask from you is that you'll be obedient to whatever GOD says to you, and to pray for us. This move will be difficult for us in many different ways and will require several adjustments.

We are extremely grateful to God and you for all the ways you've been an asset to our team and ministry. It's been over a year since our account has been in a deficit, and with thankful hearts we trust that it will continue to be in the black. Thanks so much for your loving support, prayers, gifts, and letters.

In the Vine,

Scott + Vicki

P.S. Correction: In our last letter, "Philippinos" should've been "Filipinos."

Also: If you desire to send a gift to help with our set-up costs, please send to International Teams, P.O. Box 203, Prospect Heights, Ill. 60070, and clearly indicate to be used for "McCrackens' Greece set-up".

THIS IS THE TESTIMONY OF A POLISH
COUPLE SAVED HERE, WHO JUST
FLEW TO CANADA A FEW WEEKS
AGO.

I. LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We are a Polish family:

1. Szczesnak Wojciech - Born 8.13.58 in Kielce
Speaks some English
2. Szczesnak Helena - Born 3.2.58 in Miechow
Speaks English well
3. Szczesnak Szymon - Born 8.18.83 in Miechow

In Austria, we do not have asylum or any social help. From time to time, we do get black work which can be dangerous. We must pay all our own expenses.

I, Wojciech, am a forestry engineer and my wife is a zoological engineer. In Poland, I worked five years in a forestry firm. During my study and work, I became convinced about the catastrophic ecological situation in Poland. We joined an ecological organization and, printed some handbills about the situation in Poland. In addition, we stepped forward publicly to speak about the poor technology in this field, the improper disposal of waste, etc... The local political authorities began to persecute us for taking this stand.

In November, we applied for a holiday in Yugoslavia and fled from Poland. One week after our departure, our apartment was searched as the police began to investigate our situation. It, therefore, is impossible for us to go back to Poland.

We came to Austria on 16 November 1988. For the first two weeks, we lived in our car, and in a horrible hotel. On 30 November, we got help from one Austrian family. This family is a very good Christian family. Later, we found out that this family had received guidance from God to take in a Polish refugee family.

We have lived with them since November. They prayed every evening, but we did not, at this time, feel very near to God. During this time, we went often to the Oasis in Traiskirchen. There, we heard beautiful stories about God, about His power in people's lives, about a relationship with God, and what the Bible says. We began to read the Bible. Some parts of it were very interesting for us, but we had doubts about much.

In Poland, religion is forbidden. For some people religion is funny, and we met many people who felt like this. I doubted many parts of the Bible but felt like I should read it.

The evening of Good Friday, I had a dream. In the dream I saw a shining face, like the face of God. Around the face were shadows and clouds. I saw the image of the face, but it was grey and white. I was sure that this was God, and from this face came one shining yellow ray of light. I felt that ray and was frightened. I had doubted the Bible but, see God, I exclaimed, "I know that God indeed exists." In the morning when I awoke, I saw a very similar cloud in the sky and was again frightened.

I trusted that the people we were living with and so, Easday, I described for them the dream, because I did not understand it. They told me to pray and that God would give me the answer. After praying, I let the Bible fall open, and the verse Judges 6:17, "If now I found favor in Thy sight then show me a sign that it is Thou who speakest with me. Perhaps this was the answer from God that we should trust the Bible.

Six days later, I had a second dream. I saw many stars falling from the sky so quickly I could not even wish on them. I didn't think that many people had such dreams about God. For a couple of days, I didn't think much about it, but I, talking with Wojciech, he told me of the dream he had on Friday, the night of my first dream. In his dream, he had talked with God. He saw two arms reaching out to him and heard a voice saying, "Why do you not believe?" Wojciech thought that God was asking him why he still did not believe in Him. He saw the Hands of God as long as ribbons, and from these hands felt God's goodness. But Wojciech wanted to run away and asked God, "What do you want from me?" During his dream he was excited and felt a great strength turning him from side to side, and he awoke. He was nervous, and afraid that he had been talking too much about God lately. When he awoke he had a feeling like someone was in the room.

Wojciech did not tell anyone about his dream at first because he was ashamed, thinking that maybe he had revolted against God. Later, when we compared our dreams, we realized that Wojciech had seen the arms of God from the right and had seen the image from the left. We believe that God was between us.

Since that time we have been reading the Bible and praying regularly waiting expectantly for God to show us His face. We believed some about God and Jesus before because we were raised Catholic, but never read the Bible. We adhered mostly to a communist view. We thought we must believe in evolution, because we could understand no other view. But, on April 16, at a Seeker's Weekend at the Oasis, we decided that God is most important in life and that the Bible is true. We would like to trust and follow Jesus as he walks in His way.

I, Wojciech, would like to add some comments to the above. When I was thinking about my dream, before I told anyone, I asked myself three questions: 1) Why did Helena and I have these dreams on the same night, and why on Good Friday? 2) What was the meaning of this dream about God different than any I had before or any way I had ever thought about God? 3) Why did God ask me, "Why don't you believe? Why this question and not another?"

I know that God gave me power before to deal with my mother's illness in Poland. We prayed for her when she was very sick and she got better. When I thought about all this I was beginning to understand, but needed time to evaluate these things and consider a change in myself and thinking about God. So, at the Seeker's Weekend at the Oasis on April 16, we zealously prayed to God and gave Him our lives, asking Him to guide us spiritually. In this time I also publicly declared our faith in Jesus Christ.

