

Sept. 18, 2010

Dear Friends,

We have been two weeks back in Athens, and one week back in ministry with the Team here.

It has brought a mixture of feelings: heaviness over the tragedy in others' lives, encouragement at the openness of some refugees in the midst of their tragedy, relief at being out of leadership, joy at spending time in conversation and Bible studies with refugees, frustration with seeming to have so little time to do all that I want to do (I know, I have EXACTLY the right amount of time to do what GOD wants me to do), and gratitude for the different ways this team is reaching out with God's love, amazement at all the closed businesses I am seeing downtown, disappointment that all THREE of the restaurants (2 Greek and one Iranian) that I was eating and having meetings at have closed down, happiness that I have been introduced to a new Pakistani restaurant that has good, plentiful, and cheap food!

In our next update, I will mention some of my refugee friends, but for now I will close with two excerpts from some other teammates' updates this last week...

Saturday, as our team prayed together before Tea House, we asked God for some **low-hanging fruit** - a reminder that God is at work and that His harvest is indeed plentiful.

Within ten minutes of our doors opening, a young Afghan man began speaking to me in Farsi. I don't speak Farsi, but understood two words: Jesus Christ. At the same time, he was opening his hands as if to make a book. I called over my teammate Susie (whose Farsi skills far surpass my own), and the three of us walked together to where we had some Bibles and tracts on display. Susie translated for us as this young Afghan ("M") asked about following Jesus: "Do you have an Injil (New Testament)?" "Do you believe it is possible for someone to change religions?" "Do you have classes about the Bible?" **The harvest is plentiful!** Later in the afternoon, "M" returned with three friends who also took New Testaments and asked when we would be having a Bible class. Please pray for "M" and his three friends. Our communication was limited, and I don't know their hearts... but I do know that *the harvest is the Lord's!*

Later on a dear Afghani family came in and sat down with my teammate Christy and me. The mother and father were each carrying a child in their arms and there was another one running around at their feet. Seems that two of their children were born with brain problems (perhaps hydrocephalus) and the other one was born deaf. What they came in for was a stroller. Neither child can walk or even hold their heads up. One is 7 and the other is 2 years old. The deaf child is 5.

I patiently explained to them that strollers are expensive here in Greece and that they are hard to find (that is, double strollers). They understood, and were about to leave when Christy had the idea to ask one of our single mom friends who has twin girls. The girls are now 2 1/2 and are walking everywhere with her. We called her and asked if she could re-donate her double stroller back to us. She said "of course!".

As we were still talking to this family a dear Egyptian lady came by to sit with me. She's been around for years and at times is not thinking quite clearly, but that day she sure was. She said to me, "Susie, what can we do for them?". She searched her bags in the corner of the room and came back to us with a tiny muffin and a package of bread. They ate those right away. A few minutes later she came back to them with a bottle of water. Again she disappeared and came back this time with a few coins that she pressed into the woman's hand. Talk about the widow's mite. I was nearly in tears by this time. Twice that day I saw those who have next to nothing themselves give to others who are in need. It was convicting and heart warming. Please pray for these families. The one with the disabled children, Z the single mom with 4 children, and Eleni and her husband. They all need Jesus in their lives. I know I saw Jesus that day, and I pray that they did too.

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<http://vimeo.com/1207537> (ministry video)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nj8YotW2R3U>

<http://elliebomccracken.blogspot.com>

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

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