

Freedom to Focus

Scott and Vicki McCracken <scott.mccracken@iteams.org>

Sun, Nov 20, 2011 at 3:40 PM

Thank you for standing with us to reach the nations through Athens.

URGENT PRAYER REQUEST:

I know it is hard to pray fervently for someone you don't know or who is not right in front of you but can you PLEASE PRAY for our friend who was working here in Athens with the BBC, but last December experienced a very bad reaction to a yellow fever inoculation (in preparation for a trip with UNICEF to Congo). Since then he has been repeatedly hospitalized, had psychotic episodes, was released from the BBC, his family moved to Denmark last month (where his wife is from), and now he is in isolation in a psych ward. They are not believers but are asking for prayer. Their 13-year-old son (a friend and former schoolmate of William's) will be soon coming back to Athens to stay with us for a short time. PLEASE PRAY for their salvation and his healing.

* Scott is finding more freedom to focus on teaching/preaching and discipleship (one-on-one and small groups); in the last week this has included preparing and speaking (for 90 minutes) about "Human Trafficking" at a local Christian high school, preparing and preaching at the Eritrean Evangelical Church, meeting yesterday with the youth worker from that church, preparing and leading the Saturday "open" Bible study at Helping Hands (this is for seekers and believers, studying through the Gospel of John), planning and leading the Friday night Community Group (a small group of older and younger believers focusing on deeper fellowship and character growth in Christ), and a weekly evangelistic Bible study with the "hardest" case of a "seeker" relationship that I have ever had (we're meeting now for almost 8 years)

You may have noticed that I used the word "preparing" or "planning" a few times. That is usually assumed in most cases, but the fact is that being freed up with more time to FOCUS has afforded me time to actually study and prepare better than I am used to (though I should have been a bit better prepared for the "trafficking" talk). I am grateful for that and I hope that the difference will be evident.

* Tonight we had a different kind of "thanksgiving" celebration. Dr. Joseph wanted to gather a few people who made very specific investments in him or in his application for asylum, and give thanks together to God for granted him the asylum he waited over 2 1/2 years for. We shared a meal together in our home (Pakistani food cooked by a new Pakistani brother in Christ), decorated with (positive) images of Pakistan, listened to Pakistani music, took a quiz about Pakistan, enjoyed each other's fellowship, and spent time in corporate thanksgiving and prayer for his family in Pakistan waiting permission to join him here. Among the guests were family members, a lawyer, a translator, a pastor of the Greek evangelical church that Dr. Joseph attends, friends and team mates.

Thank you for continuing to pray for our dear brother, for the safety of his family, and for a quick reunion.

Also, Dr. Joseph and I have just started a new Bible study, focused on learning leadership qualities from different people throughout the Bible. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will use this time to encourage him as one who will grow in his influence for Jesus.

* Recently, Scott Olson (iteams/USA president) and Anthony Jones (Vice-President of Ministry Development) visited to cast their vision for the direction iteams is headed in, and to discuss how the various iteams ministries in Athens may fit into that. It seems that God is up to something that recent and future changes (both expected and unexpected) may very well be "dovetailing" with. More on this in a future update.

* The Helping Hands team suddenly lost one of their senior and most valuable staff members when Iranian teammate Nader went to Canada to apply for asylum. Please pray for him and his wife Ella (who is currently in the Philippines, caring for her grandson) as they await Canada's decision, and pray for the team here as that significant loss is dealt with.

* And one last reminder: "Kingdom Beyond Borders" has now been published and is ready for you to order! This "devotional-style" book has 31 chapters of God-glorifying testimonies of refugee lives changed by Jesus in Athens, most of them former Muslims. The book was written by Helena Smrcek, a dear friend of ours for many years, who came to Christ as a teenage refugee in Austria during our ministry there back in 1987!!

The book would make a GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFT and ALL PROFITS WILL GO BACK INTO iteams REFUGEE MINISTRIES. You can order from:

http://www.amazon.com/Kingdom-Beyond-Borders-Finding-Refugee/dp/1449715664/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1319947486&sr=1-1

OR

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/kingdom-beyond-borders-helena-smrcek/1106678368>

OR

<http://bookstore.westbowpress.com/Products/SKU-000459869/kingdom-beyond-borders.aspx>

Again, we are SO GRATEFUL FOR YOU!! Thank you for joining us through your prayers and/or financial investments to reach the nations through Athens.