

# Merry Christmas from the McCrackens—Dec. 2010

## “A” and Family Share Jesus’ Birthday



“A” was one of the first refugees I talked with when I came back to Athens in September. Fluent in English, this carpenter from Afghanistan had been coming to the ARC (Athens Refugee Center) for almost 2 years, and several other men on our team had invested significant amounts of time, Bible studies, and discussions with him.

Although apparently “close to the Kingdom” this sincere seeker was not quite convinced as to the Truth of the Gospel, but made it clear that when he was ready to believe he would believe with all his heart and life and nothing and nobody would be able to hold him back. After a few enjoyable discussions with him, I prayed for him one day at Tea House and then rarely saw him again after that (although a few days after that while we were on retreat, he tried to contact me about 15 times through another team mate before he finally got through to me to say, “Your prayers are working!” This was all he would say at the time. Later, I learned that while he had not had any work in a long time, he suddenly had many opportunities for jobs beginning after that day we had prayed in Jesus’ name that he would find work).

Now, on Christmas Day 2010, a few months later “A” and his wife “N” publicly declared at a gathering of our team in our home tonight that they are convinced that Jesus is the Son of God and the only way to the Father, and they have decided to follow Jesus! (PLEASE DO NOT POST IN A PUBLIC LOCATION).

## “Ahmed” Shares How Shower Ministry Helps Him

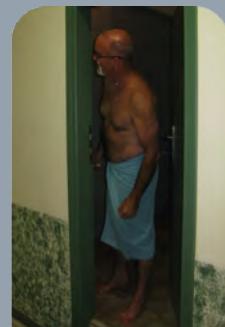
*“My name is Ahmed. My family and I are in Greece 3 years and we live in the park. I don’t have work. We don’t have house. We don’t even have a country. In our country I was a civil engineer and I was a very clean person. I bathed every day.*

*But in Greece, almost every day, I feel like an animal—sleeping in the park, nobody is interested in us. I don’t like at all that I am dirty. Dirty skin, dirty clothes, dirty hair—OK, I don’t have so much hair, but my wife and daughter have much beautiful hair—when it is clean, that is. But...what can we do?*

*5 days ago, I found in the streets a used razor for shaving! I was so very happy! But today, here, I took a shower with HOT WATER FOR 8 MINUTES AND THEY GAVE ME A NEW RAZOR.*

*Here I feel like a human, not an animal.”*

Helping Hands recently had an “Open House” to which leaders from Greek churches were invited. In each room of our facility we had a different staff member explain what kind of ministries happened in that particular room. **Scott** was assigned the men’s restroom, where he *played the role of a refugee* who benefited from the shower ministry each week.



# Christmas gifts come in different packages



In November we wrote to you about “H”, a 15-year-old Afghan boy. “H” is still facing many challenges. He has no legal hope of staying anywhere long-term in Europe, and he is considering returning to Afghanistan. He still has not accepted Christ.

However, I am very happy to report that a good friend of ours named Chris (our landlady’s grandson)—a very mature and compassionate 19-year-old—has temporarily taken “H” off the streets into his tiny apartment. Additionally, he and “H”, and some other friends of Chris, have all become quite good friends. The other friends of Chris have even offered a turn at housing “H” when his time with Chris is finished. We are so grateful for the way God is using Chris and his friends in this way.

## Christmas Outreach 2010

In December we had 5 different Christmas parties, the first was for children only, the others were for Persian single men, Persian families, Persian singles and families, and for Greek and Arabic speakers. Local churches invested in some of the parties by cooking, serving, cleaning, speaking, singing, and providing a bell choir. Also, a great team from Glad Tidings church in Nebraska was here to help.

We had a puppet show, sang Christmas songs (you can see our Helping Hands “choir” at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ci2OHbEvB4>), ate good food, shared the Gospel, and gave many new fun and practical gifts.

For most who came, it was their first time ever hearing about the true meaning of Christmas and receiving a Christmas gift. MANY THANKS to those who prayed and/or gave to make it possible!

Additionally, we had some refugee friends and a few Bible College students into our home for a meal and celebration on Christmas Eve.

For viewing some photos from our parties, go to:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/111752056722268850278/ChristmasPartiesFavorites2010?authkey=Gv1sRgCJKrq4SYh7-bCQ&feat=email#>

## Ellie's Needs Being Met

We are so very grateful for the various people and ways that God is using to help meet Ellie's needs in these days. He used a late tax refund from "Uncle Sam" to help pay for her **new AFO's** (Ankle-Foot Orthotics). He used a Greek couple with a disabled son who had outgrown his **stander** to provide this need for Ellie. He used a couple in the States (who Scott had only briefly met one time) to raise money for the purchase of a used **gait trainer** which is on its way to Greece right now (this same couple is currently try to raise funds for the purchase of a **TheraTog** for Ellie. We also got word this week that the same woman who gave us Ellie's current **wheelchair** is offering us another one in a few months (which will be even more suitable for her) when her grandson gets a new one! (see pics at: <http://elliebomccracken.blogspot.com>)

### Prayer Requests

1. Pray for "A" and "N", and other new believers
2. Pray for my Bible studies with "Y", Mr. Ali, and Dr. Joseph, and the new believers
3. Cody and Kyle's mission trip to Tanzania Jan. 3rd-13<sup>th</sup>
4. Cody's plans after Bible School (nursing school?)
5. Healing for Ellie



We are so grateful for the friends God Has given us here, and the opportunities we have to fellowship together in our home. We are grateful for YOU, and wish we could be closer, but we are so very blessed to have you play the role you do on our team from over there. THANK YOU! May God richly bless you in 2011!