



CURRENT ENCOURAGEMENTS

Mercy Meals

God has continued to bless the mercy meals! The Hellenic Missionary Union continued its generous partnership ministry with HH in the Meals of Love and Hope ministry on Tuesday evenings through the month of May. Many hungry people were fed warm meals for their bodies, and the Word of God for their souls. Some, many of whom were Muslims, even indicated a first-time trust in Jesus because of this vital ministry of hospitality. Although these meals will not be held any longer at the HMU hall, we are thankful for all that the Lord has done there and thankful to HMU for their loving partnership.

We are thankful to God for all His children who have made an investment in this mercy ministry through their prayers, hard volunteer work, and/or financial gifts. Here are some words that some of the volunteers had to share about how God blessed them through this ministry:

«This is the best «fishing place» to share Jesus with people.»—Fred Rattopoulos (Pastor of a Greek church in Kallithea who has been helping minister to Romanians)

«It has been an opportunity for me to express practically what I believe. I have also met many people whose problems make me very grateful for the blessings of God in my own life. It has created compassion in my heart that did not come only by thinking and praying.»—Michael (a Greek civil engineer)

«The night that George Asteriou sang and shared, I looked into the eyes of the people and saw some of them crying and changing right in front of me.»—Christian (a Romanian brother who sometimes helps us translate)

For the summer, we are continuing to serve food on Tuesday evenings at the Athens Christian Center on Eripidou 90, the 6th floor (from June 17th, 7 p.m.). Any interested volunteers are welcome!

Fund-Raiser

On April 20-21st, HELPING HANDS sponsored a bazaar and concert to raise funds and awareness of refugee ministry. We raised about 400,000 drachmas to help advance God's kingdom among the nations and we learned some valuable lessons for future fund-raisers.

The concert was a tremendous blessing, and we cannot adequately express our appreciation to the various artists who gave of their time and talent to help us not only bring greater awareness of the refugee's needs, but also to help us unify the Body of Christ.

From the Koran to Christ

The following is the testimony of an Iranian brother who came to trust in Jesus through the Meals of Love and Hope ministry. These are the words he publicly shared from the stage before a room full of Greek and refugees during the program of the soup kitchen ministry on May 27th ...

«Today I want to share with you a very interesting point or I should say, a turning point in my life, which has changed my life. Before I share what I found, I'm going to ask you to please consider what you are hearing and think about it. Most of you believe that God created Adam and Eve, they sinned and were separated from God. If you believe this, don't you think that somehow we must get back into fellowship with God? We ourselves can't come back to God by any works of our own. We are lost.

In the Bible I found that God has provided a way for us to be with Him through Jesus Christ (John 3:16). Please listen carefully. God has provided for us. This is the love of God. The Grace of God. Isn't it perfect? My friend, what I was looking for I have found in Jesus Christ. My whole life something in my heart was telling me, if there is a God, He has to be a God of love. The faith which I grew up in taught me of a god who was everything else but love. He had demands on me, that in my heart I knew I could not keep. In Christ I found the God who loves me so much, that he gave his life for me, forgives me of all my sin, past, present, future, gives me his righteousness so I stand blameless in the sight of God.

Friends, the turning point which I have found is, God's love for me. He loves

you also, and wants to come into your life and change it. You can find God's love for you by reading His book, the Bible. There you will find that God truly loves you.»

The Future (Fall of 1997-?)

• Lord willing, we hope to begin English and Greek classes for the refugees beginning in September. Please pray for this strategic and powerful ministry as we seek to share Jesus in practical and relevant ways. If you like to be involved, give us a call at 721-4936 (English speakers) or 865-4083 (Greek speakers).

• We are still waiting on the Lord to provide us with a central facility that could be used to help meet the various social and spiritual needs of the refugees and immigrants in Athens. It would be used for services such as: A CLOTHING ROOM, SOUP KITCHEN, COFFEE BAR, LANGUAGE CLASSES, A LIBRARY, JOB REFERRAL OFFICE, HOMELESS SHELTER, and many other possibilities. If you would like to know more about this aspect of the vision God has given us, or if you would like to give specifically toward this project, give us a call at 721-4936 (English speakers) or 865-4083 (Greek speakers).

• Perhaps you would be interested in HELPING HANDS coming to your

church to share about our ministry in a more personal way. If so, talk to your pastor and have him call us at 721-4936 (English speakers) or 865-4083 (Greek speakers).

• Should the Lord lay it on your heart to make a financial contribution to our ministry, you may do so by directly depositing it in one of our accounts: ERGASIAS BANK #81/92003/50 or THE NATIONAL BANK OF GREECE # 10094627915 AB or you may send it to: HELPING HANDS, Arnis 3, ILUSSIA 11528.

God bless you as you help us reach the nations for Jesus! Together with you, we are His HELPING HANDS.

HONORABLE MENTIONS

In this, and future issues of the Filoxenia, we want to give space to publicly encourage churches, groups, and organizations that we observe God is using to serve the refugees and immigrants in this city. We do not desire to puff up, but to build up, partners in the Gospel. For this issue, in the spirit of Philippians 3:17, we want to encourage the Christian community to look at, and learn from, the examples of...

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH OF CHRIST

This Greek church, pastored by George Patsiaouras, has for many years been instrumental in reaching the nations for Jesus. Their church meetings are translated simultaneously in several different languages. They have helped «birth» a number of ethnic fellowships, including Polish, Russian, Romanian, Bulgarian, and others. They sponsor a weekly soup kitchen that provides physical and spiritual food for the needy. They help supply the various Bible and literature needs in the various languages represented by their congregation. We praise God for these brothers in Christ who are such shining examples of God's compassion for the foreigner! Please remember them in prayer as they reach out in these specific ways and in many others.

AND ALSO... THE HELLENIC MISSIONARY UNION

This Greek mission, founded and directed by Kostas Makris, is well-known to every believer in Greece for its evangelistic zeal and commitment to serving the local church. In addition to their ministry to Greeks, they also started fellowships among internationals. They sponsor summer campaigns to foreign countries in the Balkans and Middle East. They initiated a generous FULL PARTNERSHIP ministry with HH for the Meals of Love and Hope, and they even started their own mercy meals on a weekly basis.

We thank God for the members of the H.M.U. and for the way they are being used to reach the nations for Jesus! Please pray for them as they continue to reach out in these ways and in many other ways to Greeks and the foreigners in this city.