

# \* McCRACKEN JOURNAL \*

ATHENS, GREECE

MARCH/APRIL/MAY 1997

*Often we are asked, "What is a typical day like for you?" The answer is, "The only thing typical about our days is that none of them are typical". However, below are a few samples of journal entry "composites" to give you an idea of what some of our days are like..*

**Wednesday, March 19th...**Well, we heard the disappointing news today that the new insurance company won't cover any more of Kyle's laser surgeries to remove the portwine stain birthmark from his face, so we'll just have to trust God to provide the money in another way or help us to accept things as they are.

Tonight, Delshad (from the Kurdish camp) will come to our home for dinner. Joy and Fevos Papadandonakis, some friends from our Greek church, will also join us. Delshad, an artist, singer, poet, theater director, and writer has been at the camp for 8 months and separated from his wife and little girl for about a year.

I need to write a couple more "thank-you" notes this afternoon. With over 250 people on our mailing list, it's hard to keep up. I don't think we'll ever be able to let everyone know just how much we appreciate their love and support! Because of their faithfulness, we'll be able to reach out to Delshad tonight in Jesus' name!

**Thursday, March 27th...**I visited a Nigerian brother today at the hospital where he was taken to last week. While I was out of town at a leadership retreat, he called our home in a freaked-out state of mind, planning to kill himself. Vicki talked with him for awhile, prayed with him and encouraged him to call his pastor (which he did). Today he seemed better than he has been in months and he told me that it was Vicki's prayer that had helped him clear his head and prevented him from committing suicide.

After that most encouraging visit I went to the Post Office. After driving around for 45 minutes to find a parking space within a mile, I waited in line another 25 minutes just to buy a few stamps. Simple things like that seem to take a little longer here.

Speaking of things taking a little longer...after the Post Office I drove to my office which usually takes about 25 minutes. However, because of a demonstration that was blocking traffic, it took **2 1/2 hours!!!!** There is almost ALWAYS some group striking and/or demonstrating in Athens.

Had my monthly "I.M." meeting with one of our team-mates today. We all meet together for prayer and ministry/business once a week, and once a month for more of a worship/sharing/fellowship time. We also dedicate one day a month to praying together. But the meeting I had today was an "**Individual Ministry**" meeting that I have once a month with each of the team members to go over goals, receive their feedback about me and my leadership, counsel and pray together.

**Friday, April 4th...**Went to my Greek lesson this morning. Had another good conversation with Yoanna about the Lord. Today, she started the conversation by asking, "So do you believe God lives inside each one of us?" It's impossible not to share the Gospel with questions like that! I have a test next week--I'll have to put in at least four hours of study time this week. After my lesson I hurried home so Scott could get to his weekly meeting with his Greek associate director of the **HELPING HANDS** ministry.

Well, after waiting three weeks for the travel agent to give us quotes and dates, our furlough this summer will start with us leaving Athens on May 30th when we will go to Mobile, Alabama with Scott's family until mid-July when we will go to Eugene, Oregon with my family until September 3rd. It's been over two years since our last furlough and we are **EXCITED** to spend time with friends and family again!

Yellena called today. She was feeling very discouraged about her status here. The Greek authorities have lost her Serbian passport and won't issue another. Without proper papers and a passport, she has no hope of immigrating to the States. She seemed a little encouraged after we prayed together.

**Saturday, April 12th...**What a blessed morning it was today as we held the Easter services for the English speaking foreigners in the men's and women's prisons! After singing Easter hymns together and preaching a message on the relevance of the resurrection we shared the Lord's supper in both prisons, and in the women's prison I also had the privilege of baptizing 5 women! Hallelujah! Jesus is alive!

The afternoon was spent meeting together in our home with the Board of Directors of **HELPING HANDS**. I'm so thankful to God for the men and woman who faithfully serve in this leadership capacity.

**Sunday, April 13th...**After church this morning, we made another trip to the primitive camp where several hundred Kurdish refugees are living in tents. We transported by bus and cars about 50 believers from around the world (now living in Athens) who brought food, clothing, and the Good News of Jesus (through singing,

preaching, drama, and literature) to some very needy and open people. I was talking to one man who was about my age or a little younger and I asked him if he was married. He replied with a smile that he was and that his wife was with him in the camp there. I asked him if he had children and immediately the smile left his face and his eyes flooded with tears. "Two babies," he choked out. "Dead from bombs." They had died only one week before the parents fled to Greece 8 weeks before. These people are so hurting, so desperate, so in need of Jesus.

**Monday, April 14th...**Today was our day off and also a school holiday. It was a wonderful break for Kendra (and me) as she didn't have her usual 1 1/2 hours of homework! Since it was a nice day we went on a family picnic at a local park.

Kendra went to a classmate's birthday party tonight. Instead of getting her nightgown on at 8:00 PM, she put on her party dress and we picked her up at 10:00 PM. Greek hours!

A Filipino sister called this afternoon to ask for advice and prayer on relational issues. Though I'm not a person who loves to talk on the phone, it's amazing to see how the Lord has brought me this ministry, as many regularly call to talk, and ask for counsel and prayer.

**Tuesday, April 29th...**After watching the kids while Vicki was grocery shopping this morning, I went to the office to finish the orientation manual for our new team mates who arrive tomorrow morning!! **Caleb and Shelly Burton** were here on summer teams in 1991 and 1992, and now they are joining us on a long-term basis! I'll have to skip my Greek lesson tomorrow to pick them up at the airport but I think I'll get over it. :) The team will have a welcome to Athens pizza party for them at our house tomorrow evening. They will stay with us while they look for an apartment. We are so excited to have them here and look forward to the other two families (**the Carlsons and the Grieshabers**) who hope to join us by late summer or early fall.

After finishing some paperwork I had a meeting with someone interested in joining our **HELPING HANDS** ministry, and then we went to the soup kitchen where we served over 300 people and preached about the resurrection of Jesus! Because of the special Easter meal and lack of clean-up help, we didn't get out until almost 11:00 PM. Afterwards I went to the office to work on this prayer letter.

Also today I received word from our Albanian brother Gregory. The situation is very bad in his city. All the shops and government buildings downtown have been burned down. People are living in fear but at the same time there seems to be a new openness to the things of the Lord. Gregory is fine and his fellowship is doing well.

Well, seeing as how it is now 1:00 AM, I should probably be getting home and into bed now. I wish there was some way to adequately express to all of our prayer and financial supporters just how much they are appreciated, but I'll just have to ask the Lord to somehow communicate that to them in their own spirits. Good-night.

---

**MAY 30-JULY 15TH**

C/O 4230 Thigpen Dr. S  
Mobile, Alabama 36693

Tel: 334-666-9645

**JULY 15TH-SEPT. 2ND**

C/O 25268 E. Bolton Rd.  
Veneta, OR 97487

Tel: 541-935-1018

**Financial Address: International Teams, PO Box 203, Prospect Heights, IL 60070**