

Subj: **McCracken Memo--Fall 2006**
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Dear Praying Friends,

As we come to the latter part of 2006 we are grateful for what God has done, and we look forward to what God has yet to do.

KOSOVO MINISTRY...

One of the biggest highlights of this year was Scott's visit to Kosovo. Many already know the story of our Albanian brother Gregor Menga (if not, it can be read at <http://refminathens.blogspot.com> under "Archives April 2006"--Gregor's story). Gregor, his wife Kela, their 3 boys and a team from Frontiers are church-planting among Muslims. Gregor and his family remain strong examples to me of loving humility and sacrificial service. It was so exciting to hear how God is using their small church to take the Gospel to so many Muslims. They have a monthly evangelistic outreach meeting at a local restaurant. Usually, they have 75-150 show up with many seekers asking very good questions. Their weekly children's program sees 40-50 children from the neighborhood participating. Gregor has a Bible-teaching program on TV called "Bread for the Soul" that is broadcast three times a week with a potential viewing audience of 600,000 (the owner of the TV station has come to the Lord, been baptized, joined the church, and wants to use this medium for sharing the Gospel). I so much enjoyed meeting this man, as well as other former Muslims on the street, in places where they worked, and in their own homes that have been led to Christ through Gregor and/or his church. I also thoroughly enjoyed preaching in his church, sharing on his TV program, and teaching some special Bible studies to his team about fasting.

Additionally, Gregor is a member of the Albanian Church Planters Mission and they are seeing an exciting and growing "missions" movement among the churches in Albania! More and more short-term teams are being SENT OUT FROM ALBANIA to other countries (like Bulgaria, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Turkey)! Plans are being implemented to begin in Spring 2007 a MISSIONARY TRAINING SCHOOL for potential missionaries from Albania in Kosovo! This is so exciting!

If you wish to invest a one-time or monthly amount in their strategic ministry, please send your tax-deductible (in the U.S.) checks to: Grace Countryside Church, PO Box 611, Milford, MI 48381 USA

FAMILY.....

This summer we had the privilege of having our whole family participate in the Helping Hands Kids Camp, targeted for refugee kids and held at a nearby retreat facility. Kendra and Cody were invaluable assets as counselors and translators, Kyle and Will were friendly and helpful campers, and Scott and I were able to help out during the days as gophers, kitchen help, photographers, or whatever else was needed. It was truly a joy for Scott and I to watch our children ministering to others- operating out of their gifts and unique personalities and allowing God to use them. It was nice for Scott and I to just stay quietly in the background and watch our children become "main players", under the authority and instruction of others. They rose to the occasion!! The camp was a huge success, touching the lives of many refugee children and blessing all who participated.

Kendra had a meaningful and fantastic time on her first missions trip to Peru! She performed drama, painted a church, visited schools and distributed literature. She loved it and hopes to go back some day.

The kids are all growing up great and doing well in school! We are thankful for your prayers that sustain us and bring encouragement!

CONTINUING PERSECUTION...

Remember our Afghan brother we told you about (on April 30th) who had scalding water thrown on him by a Muslim relative on the day of his baptism? "M" lost all his family as a refugee in Iran during the Bam earthquake a few years ago. Eventually, he remarried, had children back in Afghanistan, and made his way to Greece in hopes for a new life for him and his family. He came to know Jesus here and has been continuing to grow in the Lord through many trials and difficulties, including periods of homelessness, his wife back home divorcing him and refusing him further contact with her or the two children ever again (because of his conversion to Christianity), and several attacks on the streets of Athens from fanatic Muslims. A couple of these attacks have landed him in the hospital with knife wounds and stitches. His grandfather was a famous Islamic leader in Afghanistan, at whose tomb many Muslims still visit to pray. "M" 's conversion to Christianity is especially offensive to devout Muslims from Afghanistan. Please pray for his continued growth and encouragement, as well as wisdom for him to know how to face this persecution (staying in Athens, or leaving). His quiet humble spirit, and continuing trust in the Lord, is a real testimony to me and all who know him.

EXPANDING MINISTRY OF ADDITION...In the McCracken Family...

We are expecting (hoping for, praying for, longing for) a phone call regarding our Chinese baby by the end of this year. Lord willing, within a month of receiving the call, we should be able to travel to China to pick her up. But only God knows. This 5 year process has taken so much longer than we ever expected. Of course we know that God's timing is perfect, so we wait with great expectations.

EXPANDING MINISTRY OF MULTIPLICATION...In Athens...

One dear Iranian brother ("M") who came to the Lord here some years ago stayed in The Nest, was active in the Persian Christian Fellowship, was a student at the Athens Intensive Ministry School, and then one year at the Greek Bible Institute is now a staff member with "Entrust" and pastoring another Persian church in Athens. Several others have been brought to Christ and are growing in Him through that ministry. Last Saturday, I had the privilege of preaching there and a few more indicated their decision to become followers of Jesus! Please pray for our Iranian brother "M" as he has chronic back problems, even after several surgeries, and he has been accepted to Canada so will be leaving Greece in the near future.

EXPANDING MINISTRY OF MULTIPLICATION...In Europe...

Our Iranian teammate Nader was granted the Greek ONE YEAR resident permit last year! One of the benefits of this is the right to travel outside of Greece. As a member of the Persian Christian Council of Europe, and a certified trainer in Campus Crusade's New Life Training Center and Global Commission Training Center, Nader has been able to start attending strategic meetings and training seminars around Europe. This month he was able to do some evangelism and discipleship training among Persians in Holland, and one man who was a seeker asked permission to attend, and accepted the Lord after the first day! This summer, Nader was able to attend a special conference

for Persian ministers at which over 30 visiting Muslim seekers turned to Christ! Nader continues to share Christ with refugees in Athens, pastor the Persian Christian Fellowship here, and help disciple new believers in Athens, but praise God for these new opportunities to help bring Christ to others outside of Athens! So far, funding for these trips has been provided by others but soon will have to be paid for out of their own (insufficient) support. If you wish to invest in this strategic ministry (of Nader and Ella)

you can send tax-deductible (in the U.S.) investments to International Teams, 411 W. River Rd., Elgin, IL 60123 USA, clearly indicating that it is for Nader and Ella Mohajer.

MARK POWELL...

When Scott's brother-in-law went in for his Catscan last month, they discovered that the cancer has returned and they have started immediate chemo and radiation treatment. Please keep him and the rest of my sister's family in your prayers. Here is an excerpt from a recent update:

Last night, three young people from Cottage Hill Christian Academy, along with Corey and Chelsea, came over and prayed for me. Most people will never understand the joy that wells up in me as I see the faith God is rooting in my children and their friends through this whole situation. There is nothing that can compare to witnessing your own children walk in faith and follow Jesus wholeheartedly. I was strengthened and encouraged in far more ways than physical. What kind of faith would we have if we only trusted God when things are going well?

We trust God through the rough spots too!

To quote one of my favorite song writers, Darrell Evans:

"I am pressed but not crushed, persecuted not abandoned, struck down, but not destroyed. I am blessed beyond the curse for His promise will endure that His joy's gonna be my strength. Though the sorrow may last for the night, His joy comes with the morning."

Thank you again for standing with us through your prayers and/or financial investments! WE ARE SO GRATEFUL FOR YOU!

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Web pages:

www.ITRefMin.org (click "Teams", then click "Athens")

www.iteams.org

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

www.geocities.com/scripturecalligraphy (purchase beautiful art and support our teammates)

www.helpinghands.gr/en/default.htm

www.helpinghands.watchmyshow.info

www.myspace.com/smccracken730

Our ministry is striving to be a FULL-SERVICE station on this exit ramp of the Refugee Highway by partnering with churches to offer practical services

Saturday, November 04, 2006 America Online: Macnmony

which demonstrate the love of God for the refugee as a whole person, and which invite the refugee to be a part of advancing His kingdom among the nations.