

McCRACKEN MEMO

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R-E-C-R-U-I-T

Recruiting God's people to join Him in what He's doing in Athens is a current focus of our team here. We desire to help mobilize nationals and local internationals into all our various ministries, including leadership opportunities. *We would also like to ask you to consider recruiting others*—family, friends, S.S. classes, missions committees, etc.—*to be a part of our team here.* *Would you pray about who God may want to speak to through you about joining us here by praying, giving, or coming to work beside us?* Thanks!

Earthquake in Athens... 143 died, 100,000 were left homeless and thousands of homes and buildings were destroyed or badly damaged. Thanks to God that no person on our team was harmed and no home damaged.

Conference in the Philippines... Scott will be in Manila October 13-20th to speak at a missions conference organized by International Teams/Philippines. Please pray for this opportunity to **recruit** and mobilize Filipino believers into ministry along the "refugee highway".

Refugee Center... The **Athens Refugee Center** was damaged by the earthquake in ways that required much repair and money but we thank God it wasn't worse. We had planned on being open by now. However, with the setback, we now hope to be mostly functional by early November. We still need another few thousand dollars to completely finish renovation, but due to a lot of hard work by our team this summer it will truly be a beautiful building in which we hope God will glorify Himself among the nations. Additionally, such a facility will more easily enable us to **recruit** local believers (and special short-term teams) to join us in the ministry here. By-the-way, we are planning to leave one of the cracks from the earthquake in the main room with a plaque over it that has Hebrews 12:25-28 on it.

Upset neighbors... One very important prayer request: *Please pray for our relationship with the neighbors of the ARC. They have been VERY HOSTILE to us since we first started working on the ARC. We want to share the light and love of God with them as well.* We have **recruited** two Greek believers with "diplomatic" skills and sensitivity who will try to help us meet with our neighbors in the context of pursuing better understanding of each other. But we are dependent on the Holy Spirit to do a miracle. **Please pray.**

Iranians (and former Muslims) **Kayhan and Nadir** are new believers (1 year, and 10 months, respectively). They are praying and fasting in these days about how they might go to Afghanistan as missionaries to the Muslim people there. Please pray for them as they seek the Lord about how and when He wants to make this life-endangering task possible. Please pray for us as we seek to encourage, equip, and support them. Please pray for the Holy Spirit to **recruit** other refugees into the harvest fields!

Thanks to God for you and your partnership in the Gospel. You are appreciated more than we can adequately express. Your prayers and/or financial investments motivate us to praise God and to thank you for allowing Him to use you in these ways. We thank God that He **recruited** you to be an important part of our life and ministry among the nations.



A THORN IN THE FLESH

"Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."—2 Cor. 12:8-9

In December of 1996, we purchased a Subaru mini-van for which our whole family had prayed and for which many of our friends gave generously and sacrificially. **It is the only prayer request that I can remember making that I wish God had never answered.** A little over a week ago as Vicki and I were standing in traffic, waiting for the tow truck to come, she asked me, "Do you ever wonder if you missed God on this one?" My reply: "Almost every day." I am pretty well convinced that if I didn't miss God on this one that He gave it to us primarily for *character development*, NOT for transportation purposes.

The first five weeks after we purchased it, it ran great. Ever since then, it has been a major source of emotional and financial frustration. We have poured thousands of dollars and (at least) hundreds of hours into taking it back and forth to ALL of the few Subaru mechanics in Athens, with little success or satisfaction. Our van is used for both personal and ministry purposes, so in addition to the challenges we face when without a vehicle (i.e., grocery shopping, church, etc.) our ministry is also significantly hindered (i.e., unable to make pick-ups and deliveries of donated food, clothing, furniture, appliances, etc.).

I *frequently* try to remind myself that most people in the world have **REAL PROBLEMS** and that I need to be content with what we have and thankful for the Lord's blessings in so many ways. I am learning to do this, though I have not yet learned it perfectly. The real question here is: **What is God's plan in all of this?** Does He simply want to teach us character development and greater contentment in His sufficiency? Does He want us to exercise faith for a better car? Does He want to do both? Or something else? We do not know. What we **DO** know is that while we sincerely desire to know God's will and to do it, **absolute frustration** is a primary motivation for writing this letter. Sorry that's not so "spiritual", but it is true.

Over and over again, we have wanted to write a letter like this but have been hesitant for a number of reasons, but mostly because it wasn't so long ago since our last appeal for help with a vehicle purchase. *But we have decided, like the scripture above, to ask the Lord 3 times to remove this "thorn" and to replace it with a new vehicle. **With this letter, and the next two, we will ask the Lord to show us what He wants.***

Because of our negative experiences with our last three "used" cars, we are asking the Lord for a new (i.e., unused) vehicle this time. **DO WE DESERVE A NEW VAN? NO!! DO WE NEED A NEW VAN?** The answer to that is debatable but we will trust the Lord to provide the answer. Even if He chooses to provide a new one, we will be thankful, but struggle with guilt. A new van, of a reliable make, is very expensive (with only a few makes to choose from). (For example, a Nissan would be about \$25,000 USD, a Ford about \$28,000 USD, and a Volkswagen about \$32,000 USD). A lot of worthy things could be done with that kind of money. However, we have decided we would rather struggle with guilt and have a dependable vehicle (should the Lord provide in that way) than to continually face the frustrations caused by our current situation. However, we will accept His answer, regardless of what it is, knowing that *His grace is sufficient, He is good, and His plans for us are good.*

Even if you don't sense the Lord leading you to help us in this way, **please pray for us.** Believe me, we need it. We need it for *proper perspective, attitude, and faith.* And we need it for proper transportation (in whatever form).

If you do sense the Lord leading to help in this way, please make out the check to International Teams, with a note, **clearly indicating** that it is for the **MCCRACKENS' CAR FUND.** **Any amount will help.** Send the check to: (Note NEW address)

International Teams 400 West River Road Elgin, IL 60123-1570

Please don't forget to pray for us. God bless you, and thanks again for being part of our team!