

Subj: **Ellie, Income Generation, and a Great Story**
Date: 12/16/2009 9:14:26 A.M. Central Standard Time
From: scott.mccracken@iteams.org
To: scott.mccracken@iteams.org

Dear Friends,

Thanks for your prayers on our behalf. We are truly grateful to you and the way you stand with us in this ministry.

1. Ellie came home from the hospital Tuesday after 4 days and 3 nights. We need to return Thursday morning to consult with the neurologist for a final diagnosis/prognosis, so I will give you more news later.

2. If you have internet access, there is a way to raise financial support for us (and for yourself) WITHOUT ANY FINANCIAL INVESTMENT on your part. Go to: <http://blastoffnetwork.com/> to learn how you can receive money up to 10 "generations", or levels out, from commission on what others in your network use Blastoff's vendor's for.

In a day or two, this email will be followed up with an invitation by us and blastoffnetwork.com to join our first level of people. If you are interested, please check your spam folders in the next few days to make sure it doesn't get lost there.

THIS IS NOT A PYRAMID SCHEME OR A SCAM OF ANY SORT. IT IS THE NEWEST WAY OF SAVING MONEY AND MAKING MONEY USING THE INTERNET. PLEASE AT LEAST TAKE A LOOK. It will really help you and help others.

Of course, if you invest more, you will make more, but YOU DON'T HAVE TO INVEST ANYTHING TO MAKE SOMETHING as long as anyone up to 10 levels out from you will use blastoff's connections with over 400 vendors (like Starbucks, Target, Books-A-Million, etc.) to buy something. YOU HAVE NOTHING TO LOSE, and much to gain, with the opportunity to help others.

Visit their site at the address above and/or read these press releases to learn more:

<http://blastoffnetwork.com/archives/category/press>

PLEASE DON'T SIGN UP UNTIL YOU RECEIVE AN INVITATION FROM US (this only applies to people with a U.S. address).

3. Below is a story that takes time to read, but I believe you will be deeply touched and encouraged, as you have been when you have read other such stories written by Athens Refugee ministry team member Kallie Skaife.

Thanks for standing with us in this ministry. I will send out an update next week about some of our refugee friends. Please keep praying for our Pakistani friend, Dr. "S".

14th December 2009

In need of an advocate . . .

Afghanistan 1987. A second baby girl is born into a family. She is not to know her father; he died before she is born. The widowed mother is not allowed to leave the home to work, she is a woman. A second marriage proves to be a solution of survival for her but hardly a solution for her two little girls. The new husband, unwilling to raise up two girls of another father, insists they are sent back to their grandmother. Grandmother has no affection, resents the fact that she now has two more mouths to feed. She is living at the point of survival and poverty in many areas of Afghanistan is a killer.

I met one of these little girls, a few weeks before last Christmas at our center. She is now 23. Very thin, verging on anorexic, but unmistakably coquette, with a beautiful smile and enormous, almond shaped eyes. A western style red knitted hat replaces the traditional head cover!
Her looks make men notice, her boldness to be uncovered causes women to whisper, and I notice her for yet another reason, her fainting and highly emotional confrontation episodes.
She is not coping.

On a cold December night, as Jimmy and I, a Greek friend, and my Iranian friend and translator, were leaving Helping Hands after Persian Fellowship we found her waiting on the pavement.

“Can I tell you my story in private? . . .”

It is already after 9pm, the tail-end of a full and tiring day; we would gladly find any excuse to postpone the hearing for another day, but her pale face, and look of despair as she holds her two little children, full of chicken pox scabs and fever, transfixes us on our feet!

“ . . . I have never known a father . . .
. . . I never knew a mother . . .
. . . My mother did not want us and gave us to our father’s mother . . .
. . . She did not want us either . . . She was harsh and humiliated us . . .
. . . She treated us as slaves . . .
. . . We were hit on the head with anything available . . . one day the Koran came flying . . . I was unconscious for several days . . .
. . . We were not given enough food . . . never any love . . .
. . . For as long as we can remember we were abused sexually . . . until the age of 17 . . . the violators were our uncles . . . the six brothers of my father! . . .
. . . Then somehow I found the courage to escape . . .
. . . My uncles managed to find me and my husband . . . we escaped into Iran . . . they traced us . . . so with all we had we took the refugee highway and came to Athens. . . ”

A tap has opened and all that has been too painful to hold is coming laboriously to the light. Untold pain, untold shame, untold disgust, guilt, fear, despair, rejection, abandonment . . .

“ . . . Why? . . . Oh God . . . Why? . . . ”

A bewildered and unloved child, hidden within a grown woman, now required to be a mother herself!

There are marks on her wrists. Four times she tried by herself to get

out of a life that was more costly than a daily death.

The violation of her spirit.

Her tears burn our hearts; they mingle with ours and water the pavement.
We stand with her astounded, our compassion mixed with anger.

Difficult to believe what we hear . . .

Impossible to estimate the enormity of her demolition as a person . . .

It is hard, even for the three of us, to keep her standing up. She
shakes like a leaf, but not from cold, it is a tangible expression of
the frailty of her whole existence.

And yet we are all so aware of the Lord's presence. His embrace is
almost tangible and overshadows all we have witnessed. He knew her,
from day one, He stood with her, the time has come to disclose
Himself!

"Well, the Lord is with you"

"How do you know?"

"Because He has given you a will to live and to fight, and despite all
this, you still seek to love a man and two children of your own.

He stands right next to you and wishes to be known by you. Call on
His name He will answer."

"I can't; I have been a Muslim all my life."

"Would you like us to pray in the name of Jesus?"

We pray in the name of Jesus, standing on a cold pavement, on a cold
winter night, it is 11 o'clock.

As we pray she shakes violently. We hold her in our arms, keeping her
from dissolving to the ground, along with her tears. We pray and exalt
the name of Jesus, until her body relaxes and rests freely in our
embrace. We know that the Lord has touched her deep down, yet on our
way home I wonder at the immensity of the task it will be to put her
together as a person. My faith is intimidated by what I've seen.

A few days later she turned up at our women's Bible study.

"Jesus came to my husband in a dream. He wore a white robe and said,
'I know you are in a tunnel, I can bring you out of this mess, but you
must follow me and not listen to any other voice.' Three days later I
saw the same dream. He told me exactly the same thing. I said to Him,
'I will follow, show me the truth . . . ' "

Two weeks after that, on a busy and chaotic day, there was a knock at
the office door.

"Me and my husband want Jesus!"

She came in, sat down with the greatest serenity, took hold of my hand
firmly and waited to be introduced to Jesus!

"For the first time in my life I feel that I have a father," she said
as she left the office.

And after that, though I kept her on my heart and saw her husband for
jobs, I didn't see her for a year.

Last Monday, unexpectedly, she reappeared at our center!
So very beautiful, coquette, no head cover, exquisite make up for
those exquisite eyes, a third baby on her arms! It is the latest
addition!

Surprise and joy to hug her again! I eye her from top to bottom, most

of all I am anxious to know through her eyes if it is well with her soul.

"Are you well?"

"I am well."

"Are you very well?"

"I am well."

The one-year-old that lies on her arms, content without fretting, speaks volumes. A delightful child!

Yes, she is much better than a year ago! But as our hearts begin to unbutton she allows me to know that many of her wounds are still raw. She comes to the light freely but her soul is afraid to be touched, even by love.

She lost her Bible at the camp and asks for a new one.

I mark for her some Psalms.

"They are ready-made prayers. They will help you to identify the cry of your heart."

She is back into my life again. I am thankful to God.

She and her children had been in a remote government refugee camp for a year while her husband desperately sought work in Athens. As soon as he managed to bring them to Athens he lost his job. At present he works and lives in another town and visits his family at weekends. He does all the cooking for the week to help her. He is a very kind and gentle man. He writes songs and makes tiny model matchstick furniture for doll's houses. They are truly works of art! The little money he earns is only enough to pay the two rents and keep the five of them alive. He believes that the family of his ex-wife in Afghanistan, who all practise spiritism, have bound up his wife in some way.

There are still strongholds to be removed.

But the Lord has come into their tunnel, He is there with them. Now they need to allow Him to bring them out into their full destiny in Himself.

Over the last seven years, watching so many peoples' comings and goings and God's ways with them, I often wonder when a man's salvation begins. Is it really the moment we witness him cross over the borders of eternity and acknowledge Christ as Lord?

Or does it begin the moment a loving God wishes someone to come into existence, sets His loving eyes on his yet unformed members in a mother's womb and then welcomes him to life with the longing that this one will know Him?

'I have formed you for Myself. I will bring you safely home! Look into my face'.

The Lord has begun and the Lord will finish!

This little family needs a place to be, they need steady friendship, and they need to be included into a community of God's people, to be included into someone's life, to be included in someone's prayers. They have agreed to come to the morning worship and ask for prayer. I believe this is why God brought her back into our lives, to be introduced to God's local family.

Dear prayer partners of Gods wider family, is there anyone who can adopt this family in prayer, to intercede on their behalf before the throne of God until they are able to stand and drink themselves and until all that God has longed and dreamed for them will have come to pass?

Is there anyone who would like to become their spiritual relatives in God's family?
They are in need of an advocate.

We send you all our love, thank you for being there, standing with us,

Kallie (and Jim)

PS. And if there is anyone who would like to buy miniature matchstick models or furniture for your children's doll's house, send us a photo or a design and specify the size and you can have them made-to-measure!

Georganta 26, 145 62 KIFISSIA, Athens, Greece
Tel: +30 210 808 1524
<mailto:jim.skaife@iteams.org>

--
Scott & Vicki McCracken
Tel: (30) 210-65-28-191
scott.mccracken@iteams.org
<http://elliebomccracken.blogspot.com>
<http://refminathens.blogspot.com>