

8-1-04

Athens 2004 Mid-Summer Update

We are in between summer mission teams. Four teams with a total 30 persons just left a week ago. Teams are coming for the Olympics in a few weeks. We are dashing this note off to you in order to request an increase in prayer support and to give thanks for the many great things that have already happened this summer.

For the Olympics, our mission team will be responsible for overseeing ministry activity at one central Athens square (or "platea" as we say in Greek.) The square is called Koumourdourou. We have been granted permission to distribute water. The booth is called a "cool spot". In hot Athens the six Flame Christian cool spots are much needed. The bottles of water are distributed with coupons for New Testaments. Someone interested in the Living Water that quenches thirst eternally may receive the source: God's Word. Permission has been granted by the city of Athens with the condition that no literature or tracts will be distributed just face painting and balloon sculpting. The good thing is that the square is very big and teams will easily meet people far beyond the "cool spot" and tell them about living faith. If you would like to help purchase New Testaments, Olympic tracts, and water which will cost over \$6,000, please use the enclosed envelope. Every gift is greatly appreciated even this late and even during the Olympics.

For the Olympics, the Lord has called 5 summer missionaries, 1 one year VISA, two work teams, and two evangelism teams. We have been greatly blessed with each individual and group. We have had a wonderful time partnering together. We are looking forward to the arrival of the Wabash, Indiana and the UK teams coming for the Olympics. Together we will reach out and share in the heart of Athens with mime, song, clowning, magic, drama, and spoken word. We are praying for a harvest of souls and relationships.

We had a wonderful time with the Athlete in Action teams from Holland and the USA. They came to entertain, train, and compete with sports. Leonidas, our bookstore coworker, lead the soccer and basketball camps with the boys from our bookstore ministry. Doors opened. Sports facilities were made available. The local Mayor and President of Athletics congratulated him and requested more camps in the future. Over 50 youth came out everyday morning and evening to play soccer/football and heard testimonies at half time. Leonidas is excited about a few very good contacts and wants to start a home meeting with them.

Maria, Ruth, and I helped the dance and drama team at a park near the Balkan House. This was the first outreach to begin building relationships near one of our newest ministry centers. The response was overwhelming. Bulgarians, Albanians, Armenians, Ukrainians, Georgians, and even Greeks became our friends through morning and evening programs of dance, drama, and testimony. Crowds grew every evening until the last night where I preached in Greek that all they need is faith and scripture. After the invitation for those interested to come take some literature, the over 200 listeners overran those passing out the booklets. We can't wait to come back after the Olympics to start regular meetings in the park there.

Another team stayed at another new ministry center called the Good Country weekend center at Kallikratia. Christos and the Spring Arbor students hosted a beach volley team. They did well too.

This summer's great accomplishment is that all the buildings have been finished and are already being used. Thanks to the Rollo, Art, Bob, Charles, Collon, James, Dave, Steve, Jay, Stan, Bill, and many more craftsmen, the Balkan House housed 11 persons, the Good Country center housed 10, the church also housed 9 persons and the Olympic buildings will house at least 40. We are so thankful for everyone's hard work and sacrifice. All work combined is bringing glory to the Kingdom and relief for Maria's bed and breakfast.

The biggest new development is Bulgaria. Since I have been having trouble with my Greek residence permit, Maria and Pastor Sakis have been going non stop. Pastor Sakis goes every week to continue the shoe project. They have made over 500 shoes and the believers are very encouraged in Gotse Delchev. The church of over several hundred wants to join the FM family. Maria has gone over 6 times by her self. Yesterday, she took our kids and visited the orphanage in Petrova. We are assisting Pastor Miko and their ministry to 17 run down institutions. Maria and the kids touched and held paralyzed, needy kids that have been abandoned by their

parents.

Bob Couch and Project Barnabas are working on a container shipment for these very needy, forgotten places. Project Barnabas is collecting donations for the institutions. Along with the entire ministry in Bulgaria, the FM mission is building churches for congregations without sanctuaries. Baptist Pastor Miko is so overloaded trying to keep up with revival, he is asking our mission to partner with them and for new FM churches in Bulgaria. The Olympic housing units are designed to be moved to Bulgaria to provide worship places for groups in Petrich, Volkovo, and Gotse Delchev. Donations for FM Bulgarian Church buildings will help make the spiritual dreams come true for scores of Bulgarian believers.

The good news is that I have received my residence permit and can now legally travel outside of Greece. The other good news is that others are traveling outside of Greece and I can stay on top of things here. Thanks for keeping this matter in your prayers.

Also by the grace of God, by some hard studying, and by strong prayer support, all three children passed their Greek school grade. They missed over three months of Greek school due to home assignment. They are now moving on to 8th, 9th, and 11th grade. The three girls are three teenagers. They love the Lord and help out with the work sometimes. Today, they all three started to wear braces. Hopefully, by the next prayer card picture they will have new smiles.

Ruth Adams, a one year VISA worker, is in the US due to her father's failing health. She returns on August 10 just in time for the Olympics. Prayers for her and her family are requested.

Keep us in your prayers especially from August 13-29.

We are praying for safety from accidents and terrorism,
For Holy Spirit direction, guidance and protection for evangelism,
For our Father to provide for literature, water bottles (20 cents each), and transportation,
For joy, strength, and grace in reaching the masses and individuals,
And for fruit in new missionaries, new leaders, and new believers.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support, interest and prayers.

Next report after the games. Until then, Grace and Peace!

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