

Grace Today

Greetings Grace Family!

Serving as pastor of a multi-national church on an island in the Mediterranean was never something I felt led to do. Yet in God's grace and plan my wife (Cindy) and I are now residents of the island nation of Cyprus. Most people think Cyprus is a Greek island. Although Greek is the language, the island has its own culture and history apart from Greece. Something we'll deal with in another newsletter. Since 1974 Cyprus has been a divided nation – and the only nation in Europe with a divided capital. The turbulent political scene of the mid-1970's resulted in a Turkish invasion and occupation of slightly more than 1/3rd of the island...and the division continues to exist. The UN Neutral Zone runs across the entire island and the barbed-wire, barricades, and manned border crossings are very noticeable – especially in the capital city, Nicosia. The line runs through the middle of the city, even cutting through the historical old walled city. One can easily here Muslim call-to-prayer from nearly anywhere in the old city. What was once an integrated island society is now divided – Turkish Cypriots that lived on the west coast in cities like Paphos were forced to move to the Turkish side (Turkish Republic of North Cyprus – a "country" recognized only by the Republic of Turkey), while Greek Cypriots who had lived in Kyrenia and Famagusta, now live on the Greek Cypriot side (Republic of Cyprus – the UN/EU recognized nation). The UN/EU and both sides of the island are currently in direct talks to find a solution to what is known as the "Cyprus Problem." And the jury is still out as to how successful it will be.

Our side of Nicosia (the "Greek" side) is an urban, cosmopolitan city. We live near the city centre (as it's spelled here), and just around the corner there is a Harley-Davidson dealership, a Ducati dealership, Versace, Hugo Boss, as well as many other upscale retail outlets. There are also signs of US business influence – Ernst and Young, Deloitte, and Price-Waterhouse all have large scale operations here. Not to mention the usual fast food chains of McDonald's, Burger King, and Kentucky Fried Chicken – with Taco Bell entering the food fray sometime in 2010. The two Starbuck's here are pretty upscale compared to one's in the US with a European al fresco flair to them. Not that these are the only eateries – local kabab houses, restaurants, and tavernas (cafes) from ordinary to upscale fusion populate the downtown scene.

Religion is still a big part of life here. The Cypriot Orthodox Church influences nearly every aspect of life. Discussions of faith and references to mass are not unusual. Church bells ring regularly throughout the day, and there are churches situated to serve every

neighborhood...I've got a great view of one from our apartment's balcony. Come to think of it, Saturday was the first day I didn't hear the church bells, but they started early this morning (Sunday).

It will be interesting to live and offer the Gospel here. My Greek Evangelical Church counterpart (we share a building) has the most opportunity given the Greek is the language here. Although we serve a small English-language niche, there is still an opportunity to reach out to people with the Gospel.

Nicosia Community Church is an interesting organism. It's a multi-national church. We minister to people from the US, UK, Netherlands, Brazil, Sri Lanka, Denmark, Kenya, Finland, and Cyprus. Our congregants work for academic study centres (local spelling), embassies, for Christian and non-Christian NGO's, as well as for the UN. Like any church, we have people at various stages of faith: seekers, new believers, and mature believers. We're also a very transient church – not knowing each week how many people to expect because our NGO workers could be as far away as Kosovo, Albania, Lebanon, or Pakistan...or numerous other countries they work in. Although we're trying to get to know people, the faces change often.

Urban life in Cyprus is interesting and has a very human dimension to it. The day can start as early as 8AM, usually at 9AM. People work until 12:30 and then close up shop from 12:30 until 3:30 for lunch and rest. Some of the more high-powered businesses have shortened it, but relationships and lunch are very important - even to them. And everyone gets one afternoon off per week...most take it Wednesday but several people in the congregation get off early Thursday, or even better, Friday.

Retail hours are the polar opposite of sales-driven stores in the US. As mentioned above, they open at 9, close at 12:30, reopen at 3:30 and then remain open until 7:30. On Wednesdays and Saturdays they stay open until 3PM and then close for the day. Most of the banks are open from 8AM-2PM Monday-Saturday. And other than restaurants, nothing is open on Sundays...so make sure you have gas in the tank by Saturday afternoon.

I was up late last night (Saturday). The streets had been quiet all day, but at 11:30PM the streets came to life. Though some are coming home from late evening dinners, there were large crowds returning from a football (soccer) match – and obviously the local team won...honking horns vouched for it. Another sizeable "minority" were the young people on their way to social events and clubs - the latter of which don't close until 4AM. A lot of these same "kids" will be up in time for mass on Sunday – remember, the church does have a lot of influence.

Two oddest things about being here are driving on the left side of the road and getting water. Needless to say looking left for your rear view mirror and shifting with your left hand are quite an experience. Tap water is ok, but it has a fairly high level of lime and mineral grit. So most people go to water services kiosks...private reverse osmosis

machines that give you 20 litres for 1-euro, 20-cents. Then you cart it home...and in our case, up the elevator.

Meet the US ambassador on Tuesday (October 13th) - get 15 minutes. Also get to meet the MARSECDET NCOIC, I'll have the privilege of providing chaplain support for the embassy's Marines. Also have to register with the embassy as a "resident" in case they need to evac us (Not real likely, this is not a hot-zone by any means).

We covet prayer here...especially being so far from family and friends, and a culture we readily recognize. We'd ask you to pray for:

- Being faithful to God's call to this church
- For the spiritual growth and church/community life of the congregation
- Integration into the church and the culture
- An ability to learn modern Greek (we have Rosetta Stone!)
- Developing relationships/friendships
- Time management - I'm the solo pastor/staff (do have some volunteers for various things)
- Sale/rental of our house in Charlottesville, VA
- And probably others I can't remember.

Kalespera, Avtio

Terry Burns
Pastor
Nicosia Community Church

Announcements

We Need Your Help!

Saturday, October 31st, probably two and a half hours of work in the morning. Simply loading furniture and pre-packed boxes onto a moving van in Carodon subdivision of Ruckersville and then unloading in Forest Lakes. Four guys minimum, six would make the project go super quick. Contact Jerry Brewer (973-7614) to confirm.

Need a Babysitter?

If you are looking for a babysitter, there is a list of youth in our church interested and available for babysitting. To request this list, please call or email the church office.

Outreach Team

If you are creative, friendly, and want to reach out to our community, consider joining the Outreach Team. Shack Shelley is trying to get a core group of volunteers to form a team to lead and organize outreach events. If you are interested email Shack at lilshack@embarqmail.com.

Need Coffee?

Do you have 15 minutes on Sunday you can volunteer to help satisfy the coffee cravings of our congregation? We need people to either make the coffee before the early service or clean up the coffee supplies after the late service. This is a great way to serve with very little time involved. Please call or email Becky Barber if you can help. 978-1986 or bbarber3@hotmail.com

H1N1 Flu Update

In view of the concerns about H1N1 flu this season, please take precautions to ensure your health. Wash your hands and use hand sanitizer often and cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Also, if you or your children are sick, please stay home until you feel better!

Looking for a Small Group?

We have a variety of small groups meeting in various locations throughout the area. If you're looking to join a small group, please contact the church office (sdyck@gcchurch.com) or see the small group list in the foyer on Sundays to find the group meeting closest to where you live!

We Need Pictures!

If you have any photos of recent events at Grace, please send them to Peter Edwards at peter.d.edwards@gmail.com so they can be used for the new website (www.cvillegrace.org)!

GCC Meals Ministry

If you are not currently receiving emails from us asking for occasional help with meals for families at GCC and would like to participate in this ministry, please contact the church office, Monica Jerabek, Terri Wilson, or Maria Jones. The time commitment is only what you are willing and able to give, and the meals can be handmade or store bought!

Women's Events

Person of Jesus Study

The next meeting of this study will be Wednesday, October 7th. Welcome and refreshments will be from 9:00am-9:30am, study will begin at 9:30am. If you need

childcare, call Carol Hill at 973-2899.

Knit Night Plus

Calling all crafters! Bring your knitting, crocheting, scrapbooking, or just yourself for fellowship with other women of the church. Monday, October 19th from 7:00-9:00 pm here at GCC. Call Carol Hill for more information- 973-2899.

Youth Events

Sr. High Retreat Deadline

The deadline to register for the Senior High retreat is October 23rd. Cost is \$60. Retreat will take place October 30th- November 1st. Don't miss out!! Contact Dave or Shack for details.

Youth Emails

If you are a parent or student who is not receiving the Youth Emails and would like to, please contact Shack Shelley to be added to the list. lilshack@embarqmail.com

Community Board

The Salvation Army Needs People Like You!

The Salvation Army of Charlottesville needs volunteers to be bell ringers and to help with Angel Tree ministries this Christmas season. For more information please contact either the church office (sdycck@gcchurch.com) or volunteer coordinator Lisa Chapman at 295-4058 ext. 118.

Please help me with my school work!

Abundant Life Ministries needs adults, college students, mature high school students to be tutors to low-income city students. Great opportunity for family members to serve together. Once/week commitment to same child for school year. Structured lesson plans provided for K-4th; general homework help for 5th & up. Carpools available! Staff oversight for all programs.

- Grades K-4th: M, T, W or Th, 3:20-5:00 pm at Johnson School
- Grades 5/6th: T or Th, 2:30-3:30 pm at Walker School
- Grades 7/8th: M or W, 2:30-3:30 pm at Buford School
- High School (girls): during 45-minute lunch period, Thursdays at CHS

Contact: Main@CharlottesvilleAbundantLife.org or 970-2077.

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