

CBC IN GREECE!

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH'S SHORT TERM MISSIONS TRIP TO THESSALONIKI, GREECE – FEBRUARY 2019



A WORD FROM OUR MISSIONARY

I want to thank you for your visit to our church. Your presence during the Sunday service and the worship in the presence of the Lord gave us courage and power to continue the good fight. I want to also thank you for the meal you shared with the Roma families. For their community it is very important that they feel they are accepted by other believers – something they do not often experience here in Greece.

- Dimitris Tsoukalas

GREECE '19

In February of 2019, Calvary Baptist Church sent a team of 4 families to Thessaloniki, Greece to work with refugees and an unreached people group in the mountains known as the Pomaks. The team spent their time teaching art and the Word to a community that rarely meets outsiders. They also had the opportunity to fellowship with a marginalized Christian "Roma" community that lives in extreme poverty. One of Calvary's full time missionaries, Dimitris Tsoukalas works extensively with the Pomaks and established the refugee center in Thessaloniki.

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Breaking Bread with the Shunned Romas

The Romas are shunned by the local communities as squatters living in makeshift homes adjacent to the airport without electricity, running water, or other utilities. The church is pastored by a local medical doctor and his wife. The camp was recently devastated by a clan conflict...Many church members had fled in fear of violence. The church shows the true joy of the Lord by singing praise and thanksgiving from within that desolate situation.

- Pam and JC Clenace



"Today I witnessed an exceptional effort to share the love of Christ and to proclaim the Gospel message to an unreached people group. Fear not – just believe."

- Pastor Alfonse Javed

Spending Time with The Pomaks

We were the first non-Greek, Turkish, or Bulgarians to come into this village. Up until 20 years ago, the village had a gate that closed off the Pomak people from the rest of Greece.

The center where we served is a place for mothers to come while their children are at school and a place for children to come after school to do extracurricular activities. The women need someone to listen to and relate to them. Most do not have husbands that live in the country, and many struggle with depression.

The children who came to the center to work with us worked on learning a few words from the Fruit of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22-23. We were able to translate the words to teach them English, art, and computer skills – and used every opportunity to share the Gospel.

The days in the village were the most challenging, tiring, and rewarding. Some of the teen girls shared that what they heard about Christians painted us in a negative light, but now that they met us they know what they heard is not true. They were receptive to us and what our team shared during our visit and many seeds have been planted.

- April and Peter Baez





Pamela and I embarked on this short term missions trip expecting the language limitations to relegate our team to (mostly) physical labor or back-room support. God had other plans: we encouraged an embattled Roma congregation, paved the way for future outreach via positive “first contact” with an isolated community, and clearly communicated Christ’s love by serving refugees.

Dimitris speaks of his ministry when he visits Calvary, but nothing compares to experiencing the situations in person – it deepens the burden and makes us better advocates and prayer partners here at home.

- JC
Clenance

“I have grown closer to the Lord and have a new appreciation of how blessed I am and how I want to continue to be a blessing to others with what God has blessed me with.”



We spent an entire day at the refugee center that Dimitris founded and runs. What an amazing operation it is! They serve a few hundred people a day, all run by volunteers! They offer showers, food, and donated clothing. They offer sewing and English classes. The center meets the immediate needs of the refugee community but more importantly they hear the Gospel! They start each day off with a prayer and a 10 minute video about Jesus in Arabic.

We met people from many places, Sarah and I spent the most time with a few women from Aleppo, Syria. Their lives were destroyed by the war, so they left everything behind and fled with their small children.

Dimitris has really shown what being the hands of feet of Jesus looks like. We are heading home tomorrow, but I will remember this trip always. I have grown closer to the Lord and have a new appreciation of how blessed I am and how I want to continue to be a blessing to others with what God has blessed me with.

- Herve and Marissa Aussevis

About Our Missionaries:



Dimitris is one of Calvary's full-time supported missionaries and has been serving in Thessaloniki for over 30 years. He is one of the founders of the "Care Center," a refugee center that was created to accommodate refugees and immigrants in Thessaloniki, offering bath, laundry, used clothes services. In a safe place, with translators in refugee languages, with a specially designed space for children, volunteers to serve the beneficiaries and to offer snacks, coffee and tea to everyone.

They accept refugees and immigrants from different countries who have applied for asylum in Greece or have been transferred to another country. Families and individuals are welcome to take advantage of the free services offered.

Dimitris also works extensively with the persecuted Roma community and is committed to serving and bringing the Gospel to the Pomak community that is isolated in the mountains.

