



theWheatley Word

December 2007

Hello everyone, it's me, Paul! Catherine and I wish you a Merry Christmas.

Hey, can we play? Walking into the café at the Mathematics building for the first time, David and I were hoping to meet new friends. We found two guys playing backgammon, and simply sat down, asking if they could teach us. Asking their names, they told us their names were both Evangelos, but one goes by 'Akis'. When I asked what their name means, Evangelos [not Akis] told me, "It either means 'good news' or 'good messenger'. I like to think of myself as a good messenger." Their name comes from the same Greek root as the words 'evangelist', 'evangelism', and the New Testament word that we translate as 'gospel'.

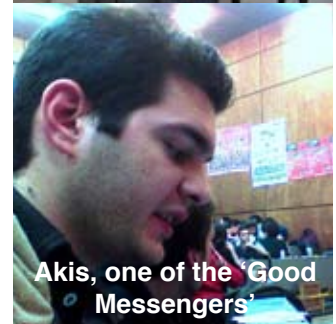
Within minutes, we were discussing spirituality and philosophy, and I was able to share with them about the importance of my relationship with Christ. They were curious about talking more, but quickly informed me that while they think Jesus is one of the greatest men who ever lived, they don't believe in organized religion. As I asked more about what they meant, they expressed disappointment with the Orthodox Church, saying that they barely helped anyone hurt by the wild fires in August.

A few days later in a local coffee house, we were talking further about what it means to follow Christ, and they told me that they wanted to follow God, but didn't trust the church enough to help them. I asked, "If a Greek wanted to follow Jesus, where would he go, if he didn't go to the church?" "I guess you would just read the Bible and try to do what it says," they agreed. When I asked if they would like to read the Bible with David and I sometime, they both excitedly accepted. Just this last Wednesday, David and I met with them and their friend Miltos to begin reading through the Gospel of John.

"It's Poetry" Over a table littered with coffee mugs and Bibles, we read through John 1:1-18, the Word made Flesh. As we read verse 1, "... and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," Evangelos raised a question. "How could he be with God, but also be God? That's impossible!" Akis quickly responded to him, "It's a mystery – it is too profound to be explained by logic – it's poetry." Our study ended with them wrestling over what it means for Jesus to reveal "grace and truth" to us.

After our study, Evangelos, Akis and Miltos were eager to read more, but we decided to wait until next week. We went back to my apartment, where they taught me traditional Greek dances in our living room. Evangelos and Akis have been by far the most responsive students I've met. Please pray with me that they would live up to their namesake as 'good messengers', believing and sharing Christ on campus.

When's Christmas Starting? Celebrating holidays overseas for the first time has been an interesting experience for me. Catherine has come to appreciate the intimacy and authenticity of celebrating holidays away from the consumer rush of Thanksgiving and Christmas in America, but it's new for me. We celebrated Thanksgiving together as a team in grand fashion, starting with a turkey trot in the morning, followed later by a huge turkey dinner and football, for which we were **very** thankful. This last week, balconies around our neighborhood began filling with lights and little Άγιος Βασίλιος [Saint Vasillis - their Santa Claus, complete with red suit, belly and beard], who seems to prefer climbing into their homes via ladder, rather than chimney! Please pray for opportunities to talk about Christ with our friends this Christmas.



Please pray...

- for the Holy Spirit to move in the hearts of Evangelos, Akis and Miltos as we study John together.
- for opportunities to discuss Christ during Christmas.
- for team togetherness over the holidays.

It's Greek to Us!

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