



# theWheatley Word

January 2008

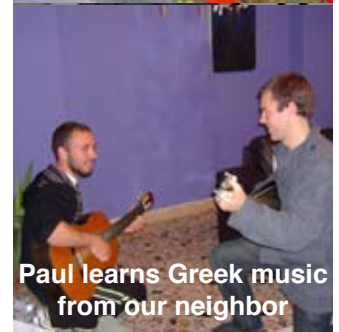
**Greetings in 2008!** I hope you've taken time to reflect on the Lord's faithfulness during this past year and are looking forward with anticipation. This month, I want to give you a picture of what it's like for me (Catherine) to build friendships here.

**Teargas and Coffee** Strikes are very common here, on any given day the busses may be striking or the trash workers, or teachers. On a day that everyone with public service jobs was striking, I called my friend Stella to see when she could get together. I could tell she had answered the call but it took a while for her to whisper the words, "I'm so sorry, I've just been tear-gassed!" That was a first for me! She called me later when she felt better, and we were able to get together that night. As we yelled to hear each other over the bumping bass, so common at coffee shops here, she explained that she had wanted to show her support for public service workers at a peaceful protest, but ultimately found herself in the wrong place at the wrong time, at the wrong end of police crowd-control tactics.

Listening to sweet Stella talk about her day, she was obviously a little shaken by the experience, though it wasn't her first time to get caught up in some sort of crowd control by the police. Stella, like many other Greek students, exudes passion for change in her country, readily willing to protest injustice she sees. Her passionate, sweet spirit has been evident since we first asked her where we could get a cup of coffee our very first day on campus. We've hung out two times since we first met, and she is starting to call me back more quickly. Our relationship is deepening, however slowly. In our conversations we're still covering a lot of broad topics, but she's already felt the freedom to give me advice as we open up more and more with one another. Will you please pray that the Lord will open her heart to believe that he is real and that she would be as passionate about following Him as she is about political issues. Stella is one of my best friends here, along with another girl Margarita. We knew relationships would progress slowly, but I had no idea that after 4 months of being here I would be so utterly thankful when I have two friends who call me back.

**Thanksgiving's not just for November!** In light of how slow things progress and the flexibility that's required to get to spend time with Greek friends, I feel a great need to focus on the discipline of gratitude. I've noticed a real difference when I'm thankful for the little things, like when my friends call me back, or that we got together at all, rather than being disappointed that they want to get together at 10:30p instead of 3p, go belly-dancing, or change plans so many times that I start to feel at their mercy. I feel like this is going to be crucial as we plan to serve here long-term and are already wondering if we're ever going to be able to be "in" the culture and "in" our friends' lives. The barriers seem so high and challenging right now, but I really believe that stubborn faith and a thankful heart for the little things will greatly affect our perspective. Will you please bolster us in prayer as we feel like we are facing many things that could be discouraging, that instead we will keep our eyes fixed fast on the faithfulness of God and a thankful heart for how he IS working. Pray we won't take even the smallest things for granted!

**A Little R&R** From January 28 - February 3, while Greek students slave away on their final exams, we will gather with Crusade workers from all over Western Europe in Nerja, Spain for our mid-year conference. We're looking forward to catching up with a few friends and hearing what God is doing across Europe. We thank God for you!



Paul learns Greek music from our neighbor



Staff Christmas Party

**Please pray...**

- for God to draw Stella, Giannis, Margarita, Kostis and Kostas to Himself.
- for attitudes of thankfulness for God's blessings here.
- for safe travel and rest at our mid-year conference in Spain.

**It's Greek to Us!**

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*Paul & Catherine*