



# theWheatley Word

January 2009

**Happy New Year!** This month, you'll hear from me, Paul. It has been quite an interesting time here in Athens! Since we last wrote, there have been riots in Athens, we hosted 17 students from Texas A&M, welcomed my mother and sister here for Christmas, and even got to participate in the baptism of our Iraqi friend Mike.

**A Riotous Visit** Broken glass, tear gas, protesters... You most likely heard about the riots and protests that occurred across Greece after the killing of a 15 year old boy by police in early December. For days we watched on the news as places in downtown Athens that we knew were burned and vandalized. We were safe through the entire ordeal, but our hearts broke for this nation as it endured these riots. Things have calmed down considerably, but students are still crying out for change. Universities have been closing periodically for a week or two at a time as students protest, and students are in danger of losing credit for the Fall semester.

In the aftermath of these riots, a team of 17 students from Texas A&M came to visit us and learn more about our ministry. What a time to come! Most of the faculties of our universities were closed, making students hard to find. During this time, however, we were able to show the Aggies some of the difficulties Greek students face, and lead them to pray for individual schools and students we know by name. Not such a bad trip after all!

**Celebrating New Life** While the Aggies were in town, we served Christmas dinner to 200 refugees at the refugee feeding program we help. As Catherine and I arrived, after having cleaned and skinned hundreds of chicken pieces the day before the meal, Mike, our Iraqi friend came up to us to tell us that he was planning to leave Greece to find asylum somewhere else in Europe. With sadness we listened as he asked if I would be willing to baptize him before he left. Having taught him some of the basics of the faith this summer, Mike saw me as one of the most influential people in his spiritual life, alongside Bruce, the leader of the refugee ministry.

On a cool afternoon a few days later, Bruce and I led Mike into the Aegean sea after he shared his story about coming to Greece and finding Christ. We lowered him into the water, and after the initial shock of the cold water, Mike came out of the water smiling and praising God for new life in Christ. I can easily say that it was one of the greatest experiences in my time here in Greece, made somewhat bittersweet by the fact that two days later we said goodbye to Mike. We celebrate with him that God has delivered him safe to the Netherlands where he has begun the process of seeking asylum.

**Answered Prayer** Last Friday I received a text message from Kostas, inviting me to meet him for lunch. I had been praying for him earlier that day, and was happy to hear from him. At lunch, we discussed his new love interests, soccer and the riots. As I asked Kostas how he thought Greece could change, he surprised me, saying that no country could be truly free without a leader who would unselfishly and sacrificially lead. I read him some statements of Jesus about how He didn't come to be served, but to serve and that anyone who wanted to follow Him must take up their cross like He did. While Kostas still isn't ready to trust Christ, I can see that he is becoming more and more open.

**Hitting the Books!** During this year I have had the opportunity to take some seminary classes through Dallas Seminary's online program, and I've loved it so much that Catherine and I are considering making it more of a full-time endeavour. Please pray for us as we seek God's wisdom and leading. **We are thankful for you in this new year!**



With my Sister and Mom at Christmas!

*Paul  
&  
Catherine*



Sign on campus protesting the police



Baptising Mike

### Please pray...

- for God to bring peace and openness in the aftermath of the riots.
- for Mike to grow in his faith and be safe.
- for Kostas to know Christ
- for wisdom and God's leading in how to best pursue seminary study.

### It's Greek to Us!

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### More Pictures & Words:

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