



# theWheatley Word

March 2007

**Finally!** This is one of the most fun letters to write. Not only did we have a great trip to Athens, but we also have some exciting news! The waiting is over, and we have a decision. We're going to spend the next 3-5 years in Athens, Greece! God has been so faithful to us during this process, and we are excited about what He has next for us. Thanks for praying! We've included a prayer calendar for Greece on the back.

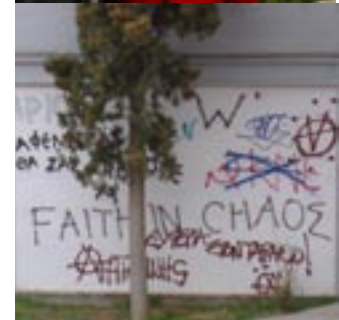
**Imagination** We'll back up and tell you about our trip. Previously whenever we heard "Athens, Greece," we imagined Mediterranean, white stucco buildings with blue awnings, with a seaside view, next to the Parthenon. We imagined sidewalk cafés full of jovial Greeks eating gyros and baklava. Isn't that what you think of? Well, when we think of Athens now, we think of warm, friendly people with little hope who desperately need Christ. (All of the dreamier aspects of Athens exist, and are fabulous, but they're in the midst of a very normal concrete, crowded European city.)

**Reality** Arriving in Athens, both of us were not sure what to think. It was so different from what we expected. We visited Ancient Corinth the first day and felt the sacred grandeur of walking in the footsteps of the Apostle Paul. Then the second day we walked around two college campuses, the University of Athens and Athens Tech, and were in total shock. Basically, the campus is covered in graffiti and every part of campus shows signs of neglect. Reality weighed heavy on us as we tried to imagine what it must be like to be a student there. Currently, both the students and teachers are on a strike that has lasted two months so far. This situation seems to be coming to a head, and students seem ready for a change. In stark contrast to the campus environment, students were very friendly, talkative and spoke fluent English!

**Offering Hope** Though our time in Athens was very short, we talked to a wide variety of people and there was a common thread that seemed to bind them all together. Almost every person seemed to doubt if there was any hope in any area of their lives: financially, culturally, politically or spiritually. They have a rich history in Christianity and the Orthodox Church, but very few believe you can actually know God anymore. Currently, only 0.14% of the population are Evangelical believers in Greece. That's only a 15,000 in a country of almost 11 million! Most students seem disillusioned with the Orthodox church and ambiguous about God's existence. Only 2% of Greeks go to any kind of church. There is clearly a great need.

We are excited and a little scared to pioneer a new ministry, which currently would be the only college ministry attempting to reach the 100,000 students in Athens. We are trusting that God will reveal that He is the hope they are desperate for. Five of our new teammates are pictured to the right.

**Now What?** Now that we have set our sights on Athens, we will spend our next few months focused on preparing for effective ministry in Athens. In June we'll be going to cross cultural training for six weeks, and other than that, we're spending our time raising support. Since we're moving to Europe, our financial needs have increased quite a bit. Please pray with us as we ask the Lord to provide and prepare us for a new ministry. We really hope you are excited to be going on this adventure with us!



**Please pray....**

- for God to bring about a solution to the on-campus strikes and create an environment of openness to the Gospel
- for us to walk in faith and love as we begin raising support
- for God to provide abundant support

**New Website!**  
[www.paulandcatherine.com](http://www.paulandcatherine.com)



*Paul + Catherine*