



Wednesday, October 28

Dear prayer partner,

You are probably tired of hearing about our seemingly never-ending visa saga. . . . But if you really want to know, here is the latest chapter:

Our current one year residence permit is due to expire on November 22, so we went to the local government office to start the renewal process in September. After eventually finding a parking spot and waiting in line for a while, we were told that we could only submit our applications between 10:15 and 11:30 on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday. Even though the person who processes the applications was there and had seemingly little to do at the time, since it was Thursday, we were told to come back next week.

When we arrived on the following Monday morning, the office was full of people waiting to turn in applications. Even though the office was full of employees (I didn't say "workers"), there was only one woman processing the applications. After a morning of bureaucratic bedlam and people finding clever ways to butt in line, Sandi & I were told that we needed to come back on Tuesday. Before we went home, we talked with a pleasant lady who told us to come at 8:15 the next morning and she would help us.

When we arrived at the office bright and early on Tuesday morning, the "pleasant lady" who promised to expedite our applications was nowhere to be found. So we handed our documents over to another woman and thought we were finally close to the "finish line." However, when she found out that we were going to move at the end of the month, she told us that we needed to wait until after the move and apply at the office in our new municipality. She gave us the address of the office in Nea Erythrea (where we now live) and assured us that everything would go smoothly there.

However, the address that she gave me is not listed on the greater Athens road map. We found out later that even though the name of the square where the office is located has been changed, the locals still refer to it by its old name (however, we are not locals!!!) With the help of a South African friend, we were eventually able to locate the office in our municipality.

So, on Monday morning, armed with a folder full of documents and a book to read in the waiting area, Sandi & I went to the new office to try again. After a relatively short wait, I handed our papers over to a friendly man who spoke excellent English. He consulted another employee and told us that we would need to go to a different office that is located about 5 blocks away. He didn't know when the other office was open but was nice enough to try to call and find out when we could submit our papers. There was no answer at the other

office, so he suggested that we come back on Tuesday morning after 8:00 and he would try to get us the information that we need.

When I arrived at the local office yesterday morning, I found out that the "friendly man" who had offered to help us would not come in until 2:00 PM. However, while I was trying to figure out what to do next, another employee who remembered us from the day before arrived on the scene. She offered to call the other office for us, but after being interrupted by a couple of phone calls and several other "customers," she told me that there was still no answer at the other office. However, just as I was about to go home in a state of total bewilderment, another employee arrived. I found out that she works at the office where we need to turn in our applications, but she told us that her office is closed this week because they are training new staff. She assured me that if Sandi & I come to her office next Tuesday between 8:30 and 12:30, she will help us. So, here we go again. . . .

So, please pray:

- that we will finally be able to turn in our applications next Tuesday and that we will receive our renewal before our present residence permits expire.
- for the refugee Bible study at the Samaria Center as I wrap up the book of Daniel next Tuesday evening and start a new series on the Gospel of John
- for Sandi's international women's group as they meet next Wednesday

Sincerely in the Lord who promises to give us peace and patience. . .

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