



# Merry Christmas!

## The Hamley Herald



December 2008

### The BIG News

As you may have heard by now, within a few weeks we will be transitioning to ministry in Portugal. This is probably a bit of a surprise to many of you. Suffice it to say, it was a big surprise to us!

The main problem is that, because of the state of the economy, many European nations are becoming more stringent on visas for foreigners, including church workers. At the same time, the Free Methodist Church in Spain is still awaiting its official registration as a denomination, as well as full invitational status. When these are in place (June 2009 at the earliest), the FMC in Spain will be able to invite missionaries on religious worker visas, at which point we will need to return to the U.S. for a time to apply for visas and await their approval. During that time, we may be coming to a church near you!

Until then, however, we do have valid visas for working in Portugal, so we will be assisting in whatever ways we can with the three FMCs there, especially the church in Santa Marta do Pinhal, an immigrant community on the Caparica coast, south of Lisbon. Please pray for us as we make the transition from Spain to Portugal, including changing apartments, finding language tutoring in Portuguese, and establishing good relationships with our fellow workers in Portugal. It would be easy to look at this as a detour from our desire to continue working in Spain, but we want to serve God wherever we can!

### An American Thanksgiving in...Bulgaria?

While many of you were enjoying turkey with all the trimmings, we were enjoying pork roast with most of the trimmings in Petrich, Bulgaria, along with friends and fellow FM missionaries, Al and Diane Mellinger. (We trained with Al and Diane as new missionaries and left for our different fields two days apart.) One of the joys of life in Europe is the ability to be in a new country and culture within a brief trip on a low-cost airline, so making the Iberian-Balkan connection was as quick, easy and inexpensive as visiting friends or family a couple of states away. We were also blessed with side trips to Greece and Macedonia, accruing us a total of 11 passport stamps in 6 days!

During our time there, we were encouraged to see the active participation of house church members in the Virtual Christmas Box project headed up by the Mellingers. This project will provide poor gypsy children with Christmas gifts full of toys, hats, scarves, mittens, etc. After church, 14 people wrapped more than 300 presents! (*pictured above right*)

It was nice to collaborate in such a meaningful project (that the children here in Spain also got involved in, earning money to buy gifts to donate to the children in Bulgaria), and we pray that the church in Petrich would

continue to grow and actively seek ways to bless others in their community!



Wrapping Christmas gifts for gypsy children in Bulgaria

### A Tragic Loss

On the first day of our pre-field missionary training, which took place in Oregon the summer of 2006, we were told to look around the room and study the faces of those who would soon become some of our closest friends and biggest support system to walk us through life as a missionary. This statement very soon proved true as we forged special friendships with several of the families who trained alongside us.

When we lost our baby in October, the people who supported us best were those friends, now scattered across Europe, Africa, and Asia. Shortly thereafter when we learned another from that close-knit group was pregnant, all our tears turned into rejoicing. Yes, we have a special bond: one that helps us support one another through difficult times.

We tell you all this because we have recently suffered a loss in our Free Methodist family. Someone we knew and loved dearly...Ryan Bartlett. He and his family served in Malawi, helping to run the Light and Life Seminary. Ryan was killed in a car crash on Dec. 2 in Malawi. He left behind a wife (Katie) and three young daughters (Ana, age 8; Lydia, age 6; and Ella, age 3). Please keep Ryan's family in your prayers, as well as all his friends and supporters who knew and loved him.

### Praises

- The church in Madrid has become an official society (full-fledged church) with a pastoral cabinet and a board of administration.
- Pieces are starting to fall into place for our move to Portugal.
- That we are able to finish 2008 in the black, at least as far as our personal missions account is concerned. Thank you!

- Carrie's mom is finally coming to visit us! And surprising to all of us, to help us pack and move.
- For a safe and enjoyable visit in Bulgaria.

### Prayer Requests

- For the transition to Portugal: for a house, a car, ministry opportunities, and friends in our new home.
- For strength, both emotional and spiritual, as we grieve the (hopefully temporary) loss of the ministries we must leave behind.
- For leaders to step up and fill the vacancies in the ministry here, especially among the children.
- For the Bartlett family, as they continue to mourn the loss of Ryan.

### 2008 in Review

For those of you who do not receive our monthly newsletters, and for those of you who do, and have a hard time processing it all, we've decided to feature highlights over the past 12 months of what God is doing in our lives and throughout our church and community:

**January:** The church celebrated its first anniversary and Carrie celebrated her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. We traveled to Budapest for our New Missionary Orientation. Carrie's younger sister came for a visit. The church held a 30-day fast.

**February:** We saw 4 people come to Christ within 10 days. The church began a Sunday school class for the youth. We celebrated our 8<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in Tunisia, which included spending the night in a Bedouin tent in a desert oasis.

**March:** Several neighborhood children gave their lives to the Lord and began attending church. Our church held its first foot-washing service. Michael's mom joined us for a visit.

**April:** We completed one full year abroad. The church began praying together on Tue. nights. A children's Bible club was also started. In English classes, children and youth dyed Easter eggs and heard the story of salvation through the Easter events.

**May:** We attended the first ever European missionary retreat in France. We took the church and English class children for a barbeque and biking outing. Carrie attended 3 days of a Simply the Story storytelling workshop. While doing our weekly homeless outreach, we witnessed the complete healing of a partially paralyzed man. His friend came to Christ as a result of this miracle and has been attending church ever since!

**June:** We scrambled to get everything prepared for the summer program for neighborhood children. Rebecca Davenport arrived to lend us a hand. We celebrated the end of the school year with an ice cream party and the next day hosted a free carnival for about 80 neighborhood children, complete with a clown, games and prizes, and snacks. Michael finished language school!

**July:** We spent the month ministering to 42 children through the 6-day a week (6-7 hours a day) summer program, which featured crafts, classes, workshops, clubs, sports, snacks and play time.

**August:** As most Spaniards left the big city to relax, we rested and recovered from an intense two months of ministry! We spent evenings helping missionary friends with an informal park summer program in the inner city of Madrid.

**September:** When Josh and Susy Fajardo returned from a summer of support-raising in the U.S., we took a week's vacation to travel to exotic, yet nearby, Morocco. We also attended the Mediterranean-area leadership conference in Lisbon and witnessed the live recording of Shekinah Ministries' 3<sup>rd</sup> praise-and-worship CD.

**October:** Carrie attended the Ladies Retreat in Toledo, along with women from both churches in Spain, the Dominican Republic, and the U.S. We found out we were pregnant, but miscarried at six weeks. Our church's Homework Club, as well as a children's Bible club on Thursday nights, began for neighborhood children. The youth ministry began in earnest with evening gatherings at the church as well as outings for bowling and hiking in the mountains.

**November:** We welcomed Glenda Leveron, with whom we had taught in Honduras, to Spain as she begins a short-term mission in Ubeda. Youth from the church learned to play flag football. We enjoyed Thanksgiving with friends in Bulgaria. We also learned we'd soon be heading to Portugal.

**December:** We will welcome Carrie's best Spanish friend for a few days' visit following her conference on marine biology. We'll also be preparing for the transition to Portugal. Carrie's mom will visit us for Christmas.

### Top 10: You Know You're in Spain When...



10. ...you don't even begin to think about what to fix for dinner until after 9:00 p.m.
9. ...a sandwich almost invariably includes some kind of product made from pigs.
8. ...you always leave home with your sunglasses, and sometimes use them at the same time as your umbrella.
7. ...a gathering of 5 people requires at least 24 conversations, all at the same time.
6. ...you have trouble sleeping at night, knowing you threw away a toothpaste tube when it could have been recycled.
5. ...an omelet isn't an omelet unless its main ingredient is potatoes (and you thought it was eggs!).
4. ...the sports channel shows soccer 23.5 hours a day.
3. ...your idea of a night on the town includes fried squid sandwiches in the Plaza Mayor.
2. ...a daily nap is required, even for adults.
1. ...you don't get your Christmas presents until Jan. 6 of the following year!

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*"Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you."*

—Genesis 12:1