



The Hamley Herald



January 2011

NEW (and Improved?)

Happy New Year! We are eager to greet you and tell you all about our new life here in Belgium. Though this move was very unexpected, we get a real sense that this is where God wants us, at least for the foreseeable future. It means a lot of adapting and learning, but we are up to the challenge!

We are trying to settle into our new life here, including a new city, new country, new language, new friends, new ministries...and very soon, a new baby! Our new "permanent" home will be ready to be moved into on Jan. 27, at which time we anticipate having our little one snug in our arms (or so we hope!). Carrie's father will come from the U.S. in a few weeks for the birth of his first grandchild and to help oversee the move.

All in all, our time of adjustment couldn't be going much better. We are finding friends among the international community at church as well as a young Belgian couple who are in the process of moving out of our new house. Since Peter has lived in the States (Ohio), he has been a wonderful cultural teacher, giving us a "heads up" on many cultural differences that may have otherwise passed us by as we are still trying to orient ourselves to the Belgian way of life. And the fact that he is a huge Steelers and Penguins fan has helped us to relate to him in a way that we aren't even able to relate to most Americans living overseas!

Christmas in Belgium



One of the highlights of the past few weeks was the Christmas celebration we had with the Latino group we are starting to lead! We saw many new faces in the

crowd, as well as many of the Belgian spouses incorporate themselves into the group (whereas before, if they came, they sat in another room talking among themselves.) This group from all over the Latin world (including Spain and Brazil) is very open and inclusive. They welcome with open arms anyone interested in learning more about Jesus.

The church also had an international Christmas celebration in which each small group participated in the service in some way. The Latinos sang a traditional Venezuelan Christmas carol, while the Africans helped lead worship and the Filipinos reenacted the first Christmas. There were so many language speakers present that the English service had to be translated into Dutch and Spanish as well. It was a wonderful time of celebration, and afterwards we enjoyed an equally international meal together.



The shepherds join Mary in a song of praise

During lunch, the children were surprised with Christmas gifts. Most had a "take it and run" approach to receiving gifts, just in case we changed our minds!



Settling into Our New Roles

We've been here in Oostende, Belgium for nearly a month now, and we are slowly getting acclimated to the ministry and our new roles on the team. It has been a time of gradual transition due to the holidays, the pending arrival of our baby, and the graciousness of the pastoral team at the church. The church is blessed with four pastors, each focusing on a particular people group yet equally sharing in the teaching, preaching, and practical aspects of the ministry. Pastor Jackie Barbier (Belgian) and his wife, Ching (Philippines), reach out to the Filipino and Belgian community. Senior Pastor Richard Dickinson (FM missionary from WA) coordinates and oversees missions work throughout the country of Belgium, gives the church direction and leadership, and spends much time working with youth and raising up local leaders. His wife, Sheila, additionally coordinates and trains children's workers throughout France and Belgium. Pastor Lawrence Abagnaba (Ghana) ministers to the African community including people from all over the African continent. We were sent specifically to minister to the Latino group, but we also do our share of the work in the church. Last week Michael led the church in love feast (a church first, as we understand it) and Holy Communion, and yesterday he preached his first sermon in Belgium. Carrie is trying not to over-commit herself, but has enjoyed teaching Sunday school (attempting to do it, with help, in three languages) and working on an official church directory. All in all, we are very happy with where God has placed us and look forward to what lies ahead!



Too many Christmas cookies?

Praises

- We are enjoying getting to know our new city and the people we will be ministering among.
- We have felt loved and welcomed here in a way we have never experienced on the field.
- For the many new friends we are making within and outside of the church.
- The pregnancy is coming along well and nearing an end! (Can't wait!)

Prayers

- For our baby who will be arriving soon (officially in two weeks, but could be any day now); for a quick and safe delivery.
- For our new friend Sandra who will be delivering her baby via c-section on Jan.14. She has had a difficult pregnancy with many complications.
- That the move would go smoothly and that we will quickly get settled into our "permanent" residence.
- For Carrie's father's safety and well-being as he travels for many long hours across the Atlantic.
- That we would pickup Dutch quickly.
- For the church's spiritual and numerical growth over the next year, and wisdom for the leadership as we make plans for this new year.
- For wisdom and endurance in dealing with bureaucracy from getting our car switched over to Belgian plates, to registering and obtaining a US passport for our baby.

Contact Us

Michael and Carrie Hamley
Nijverheidstraat 36
8400 Oostende
BELGIUM

Email: mikencaty@hotmail.com
Blog: www.mikencaty.typepad.com

*"Sow your seed in the morning,
And at evening let not your hands be idle,
For you do not know which will succeed,
Whether this or that,
Or whether both will do equally well."
--Ecclesiastes 11:6*