



The Hamley Herald

March 2009



A Special Visit



Welcoming Paul and Heather Nedrow to Europe

Last month we were blessed with a special visit from home...Carrie's father and sister who we hadn't seen in nearly two years. It was wonderful to spend time with loved ones, especially during a difficult and disorienting time in our lives. After spending nearly a week with us in Portugal, we took them to Spain for the weekend to see the work we have there as well, and made a surprise visit to the church in Madrid, which was a lot of fun! We are so grateful for their visit, as well as our quick visit "home" in Spain. And we are also grateful that the Lord kept us and our old car safe and we made it there and back without any problems. (We had an electrical problem just before we left on the trip, but were able to get it fixed in time!)

Always on the Move

After several months of trying to get our apartment up to livable standards, and many failed attempts at getting the landlord to do something about all the leaks, broken pipes, broken washing machine, etc., we have decided that it is time to move on and find a place with a reputable landlord we can trust. It is very disappointing because the church had to break the contract in order to "get us out of there," but we are grateful for their willingness to do so!

The Lord has provided a small, inexpensive apartment so close to work that all we have to do is come downstairs, and we are there! Yes, we will be moving into the apartment above the church for a few months which had been remodeled to receive a missionary couple from Brazil whose plans have changed and will not be able to come until summer, after we've gone back to Spain for the summer program. Though we aren't excited about moving again (this makes for 3 moves in 3 months), we are happy that our rent money will be helping the church make necessary improvements, and if we have any problems, we know they will be fixed in a timely manner. And best of all, we will have telephone and internet access! (We can hear our mothers' cheering already!) Please note the change in address at the end of the newsletter; the new address is effective immediately.

Retreat! (Part One)



A sunset view of Praia da Rocha, Algarve, Portugal

We were invited to take part in the retreat for ministers and ministerial candidates in the churches in Portugal in mid-late February. This meant that we were blessed to be able to spend the weekend in the Algarve, Portugal's sunny, green south coast. (For Europeans, it's the equivalent of Florida.) While much of our time was spent in meetings and special services, we did escape for a few hours (while the rest of the group was in the jacuzzi) to enjoy the spectacular coastline there, and were able to bring a few "critters" home for Carrie's small saltwater aquarium.

We were also blessed to be able to spend some time with a couple of families from the Tapada de Mercês FMC, on the northwest side of Lisbon, whom we don't get to see very often. And we consider it a blessing to peek at another part of Portugal. For a small country (Portugal is about the size of Indiana), it's quite diverse and often scenic. We hope to find some free time as the weather is looking up and temperatures are beginning to rise, to explore this beautiful country, especially since we have no idea how much longer we'll be living here. (As of now we plan to be here only through June, but that is dependent on a large number of factors.)

A Brush with Royalty (Almost)

One of the couples from the Tapada de Mercês FMC we enjoyed getting to meet and know on the retreat was Dantas and Priscilla, a young couple of Brazilian missionaries who arrived in Portugal just after we spent a month here on our first arrival, then departed for Spain. Dantas and Priscilla are "tentmaking" missionaries, meaning most of their financial support comes through working a secular job. While Priscilla is a student of psychology, Dantas' particular "tent" is a bit unusual: He serves as butler to the Princess of Austria and her husband, an English lord. The royal couple maintains a villa in the scenic town of Sintra, northwest of Lisbon, although they only stay there a few months out of the year.

When the couple is there, Dantas has a lot of "butling" to do, but they were elsewhere when Dantas

and Priscilla invited us to visit with them on the last Saturday in February, which coincided with our anniversary. We enjoyed spending the day together with them and another couple, eating, playing games, talking and even "jacuzzing." We rounded out the day by going to a brief concert by Shekinah, the music and worship ministry of the churches here; they were recording a couple of music videos to be distributed by DVD. In all, it was an unusual, but fun, way to spend our anniversary, and a blessing to build relationships with our fellow Christian workers here.



New Friends with whom we spent the day at the "Palace"

"Retreat!" (Part Two)

This past weekend, we went on what was scheduled to look a lot like a weekend retreat, but turned out to be anything but! This time it was a "Peniel Encounter," named for the place where Jacob wrestled with God and was renamed Israel. In a sense, this was our purpose for the weekend as well: to spend a time in intense communion with God, with other priorities blocked out. And intense it was! (Especially when you have to strain so hard to understand everything that is being said.)

Peniel encounters are a regular ministry of the church here, as well as in many other countries. (They are probably quite similar to the Walk to Emmaus program in the U.S.) One of the facets of the program is that many of its aspects are kept quiet by its participants, so as not to offer too much of a preview of the "surprises" in store for future participants. Though we can't say too much about the weekend, we do recommend that all who have the chance to go on such an encounter do so.

An Answer to Persistent Prayer

When we first arrived in Portugal in June of 2007, we went with a group of church leaders to the shanty-town of Santa Marta do Pinhal, where we had just rented a building to begin a church plant. One of the people we met there was a young West African woman named Zuleica. She was pregnant and had been abandoned by her boyfriend, and sadness pervaded her appearance. She invited us in for a visit, and we told her about the church that would be starting in the neighborhood soon, encouraging her to attend. She wasn't interested.

In the intervening nearly two years, we've often thought and prayed for Zuleica, but she had never attended the church since it began. A few weeks ago, at a special youth service, she showed up with her little boy. At the end of the service, the invitation was given, and our hearts leapt up as Zuleica answered the call to give her life to Christ. We have been blessed to sit beside her in

church the last few weeks, sharing our Bible and smiles with her. We are blessed by how God answers prayer! Last night, the boyfriend who had abandoned her came and announced that he and is ready to make a life-long commitment to Jesus and to her!

We ask that you keep Zuleica and others like her in the Santa Marta community in your prayers as they begin their new walk with Christ.

Banking It

Another one of the ministries of the church has taken on in order to bless the community is the food bank ministry. Each Thursday, a vehicle from our church drives to the government-sponsored food bank for the area where we live. There we gather up the week's allotment of donated food, which can be almost anything imaginable! We then haul it back to Charneca and distribute it to local families, as well as in Santa Marta. This has been a good way for Michael to serve without requiring too much Portuguese language ability. He'll probably be more involved now that Wesley, the man who usually did the pickups, once again has a job. Praise God!

Praises

- We are becoming more fluent in Portuguese every day.
- We have found an honest, trustworthy mechanic to help us with our little, somewhat problematic, car. May he come to know the Lord through our (many) interactions!
- For a wonderful visit with Carrie's dad and sister.
- For the warmth and sunshine which has finally found its way back to Lisbon!

Prayer Requests

- For our upcoming move, that it would be quick and painless, and that our new home will be a sanctuary of peace and rest.
- For the church in Charneca de Caparica which is going through somewhat of a financial crisis in a struggling economy.
- For the African church plant in Santa Marta which grows weekly!
- For various situations back home involving close friends and family which need urgent prayer.
- That we will be able to "keep up" with the fast pace of ministry here while continuing to learn the language and cultural contexts in which we are ministering. (Brazil, Portugal, and West Africa)

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"I tell you," Jesus replied, "if [my followers] keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

—Luke 19:40