



The Hamley Herald

May 2011



Our Easter Egg-stravaganza

The children's special Easter event we told you about last newsletter took place the Saturday before Easter. We opened the new ministry center at ten for children to come and hear the Easter story; dye, decorate and learn the meaning of Easter eggs; make butterflies and hear about how they represent newness of life; take part in an Easter egg hunt; and most importantly, hear the Gospel message. The kids also had the opportunity to get their picture taken with our very own Easter bunny, Carmen.



Johan & Carmen. Johan prayed to accept Jesus that day!

The children who came had a lot of fun, as did the adult helpers. We were overwhelmed by the number of adults who showed up to help—from both the international and Latino churches. There were almost as many adults as children present! (With so many of them being new Christians or on the verge of making a decision for Christ, we're pretty sure they learned a lot, too!) Johan (who proudly turns ten this week) prayed to accept Jesus, and his parents tell us each week that he is openly sharing his faith in school among his friends AND teachers! He is challenging and inspiring his dad

to read the Bible and pray as well, and although his dad hasn't yet accepted Jesus, he is well on his way!

The butterflies and Easter eggs were quite a hit, especially as Easter eggs are little-known in Belgium. Carmen, thankfully, did not mistake any little fingers for carrots, and the children had a great time looking for chocolate Easter eggs in the backyard of the family who rent the ministry center to us. (The wife of this family, Maria, is one of the pillars of our Latino fellowship group.) That said, we're pretty sure Michael and fellow FM missionary, Dick Dickinson, had just as much fun hiding them.

Just as we were winding down with the cleanup after the event, Maria surprised us with a large paella and other dishes, and we gathered for an impromptu fellowship meal with many of the helpers and children. It was a great way to finish up an exciting event.



Andrew, overcome by the excitement, enjoys napping in a hammock in the ministry center backyard.

Learning as a Family

In our Latino fellowship group, our current teaching series focuses on the family and its relationships. Because family is such an important part of life, especially for Latinos, it has provoked some interesting discussions among the group. Some of the topics we've looked at so far are mutual submission in marriage and being the kind of parents God wants us to be. We've based these on Biblical texts that are especially relevant to each topic. At times, we've had to spend two or three

weeks on what might be a single study or discussion because, along the way, there are so many opportunities to teach what might seem to be basic Christian knowledge. However, this has underscored for us that, for people with little biblical background, there is no such thing as basic Christian knowledge! We are blessed by the opportunity to teach basic principles, but realize what a big responsibility it is. Please pray for us—and fellow FM missionaries, Dick and Sheila Dickinson—that we might find ways to relate the Bible to everyday life for the people in our group. Next week, we will be looking at God’s plan for our children’s lives, using the example of Zechariah and Elizabeth and their son, John the Baptist. With many families in the group with young children (including ourselves), this should be a very important study for the group!

A Little Re-Creation

We recently returned from the FMWM Europe tri-annual missionary retreat, which took place in rural England, at a Christian retreat center. One of the highlights of the retreat was a series of lessons from Dr. Tony Headley of Asbury Theological Seminary about re-framing our ministry based on the model God gave us in Genesis 1. We also enjoyed the excellent food at the center and the peaceful surroundings: mile after mile of fields covered in yellow rapeseed flowers. On Sunday we worshiped in a church in Lowestoft before visiting a site where John Wesley preached, a few steps from the easternmost point in England. We enjoyed a break from our usual routine, and Andrew, thankfully, adjusted well to his first trip away from home (which is good, because he’ll have a lot more of them!). He also enjoyed visiting with his many “aunts and uncles” in the faith. To top it all off, we had distinctly un-English weather the whole time: not a drop of rain!



Going Fish-ing for Men and Women

Carrie continues to use her passion for fish as a means for sharing her faith. It took nearly a dozen interactions at the local fish store before the Belgian owners, Doreen and Cedric, would even say hello, but after many visits (it’s just a block from the ministry center and three blocks from language school), we have begun to form a friendship. We try to stop by several times a week during

non-peak hours to hang out and talk. (They both speak excellent English and enjoy practicing with us.) It has been great getting to know this Belgian couple and listening to their perspective of God and the church. It is helping us to understand how past abuses from the church in Belgium has driven a wedge between the people and God. May we be able, through our lives and our witness, to show them what a relationship with Jesus is really about! Might our friendship continue to grow and blossom, and perhaps we might someday be able to converse in their native Dutch!

Praises

- That our children’s Easter event went so well, and that many children (and adults) got to hear the Easter story!
- That Johan made a decision for Jesus and is encouraging his family and peers to do the same.
- For an enjoyable time of retreat.
- For Andrew’s continuing growth and health, and for the joy he continues to be in our lives.
- That our partnership building schedule is beginning to come together for this fall.

Prayers

- For continued spiritual growth among our Latino fellowship and wisdom to know how to guide them.
- For the upcoming Spanish movie night on June 3.
- For Michael and Dick as they work toward discipling two men who we hope will be key leaders in the Latino group.
- For our continued efforts to reach out to Belgians and immigrants.
- For our last few weeks (including final exams) of Nederlands (Dutch) class.

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“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”
 —Jeremiah 33:3