



The Hamley Herald



February 2009

Global...Wetting?

Lately what has been on our mind (and on our car, and on our clothes, and on *us*) has been the rain. Since we arrived a month ago to our new home in Portugal, the one daily constant has been the rain. Some days the sun pokes out for 5 or 10 minutes here or there, but for the most part, it pours steadily during the day, and sometimes during the night. The running joke here is "quick, grab your umbrella. The sun just came out, so it won't be long now before the rain starts!"

Please pray for us as this has been a very difficult adjustment for us. Constant cold and wet becomes discouraging fast, especially since we came from such a dry climate where it might rain, at most, for a few hours a week during the winter months. Clothes take 4-5 days to "dry" but never really do, and at our church plant in Santa Marta, the walls are mildewing and starting to rot out. We are told that the rain won't last forever...just another month or two! In the meantime, we're keeping our eyes out for ark blueprints on the Internet!

Harvest Time

All throughout the gospels, Jesus describes the fields as ripe for harvesting, but the workers are few. He often speaks of evangelism in farming metaphors, such as "one man sows and another man reaps," the need to sort "the wheat from the chaff," and, of course, the parable of the sower. All of these parables have come to life before our eyes as we are beginning to see a bumper crop come to harvest in the shanty town of Santa Marta, where, a little over a year ago, a Free Methodist Church was planted in the middle of what anyone would swear is a little piece of Africa nestled into a town's edge. Here, homes are built out of anything they could get their hands on, from salvaged brick, to pieces of tin, wood, and scrap metal. The path is dotted with downed live-wires, and an open sewer runs down the middle of the "street." This is the context in which we work and the context in which Jesus has chosen to reveal Himself to these lost souls.

Although the church plant has been there for more than a year, it was a work that two people were trying to do alone, along with their daily responsibilities at the "mother" church (Charneca da Caparica). It wasn't until recently, when they got serious about putting together a team of leaders, missionaries, and pastors-in-training, that the work really began to blossom.

In the past three weeks, we have seen 14 people give their lives to the Lord, most of them emerging from poverty, alcoholism, and some drugs or witchcraft. Their spiritual hunger is admirable! We (personally) have begun a discipleship class for youth (which here translates to the under-thirty set) and another cell group is starting this week for the adults in a local home. We are excited to see all the new growth in a church which will very soon be too

small to hold us all—praise the Lord! Please pray for the church-planting team that is seeking to minister among the most marginalized in Portuguese society, as well as all of the new converts as they daily struggle to put off the old self and be transformed into the image of Christ.



Santa Marta de Pinhal Church Planting Team

Fishers of Men

Despite the recent hardships at the Charneca da Caparica church (unemployment rates are nearly 50% among church members, tithes are down, the cost of "doing business" is up...), members gathered bright and early on a Sunday morning to evangelize at the weekly open-air market and pass out literature to nearly 500 homes in the area. As a result of our efforts, one woman came to church that evening for the first time and accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior!

The church has also begun a campaign to reach store owners and businessmen who have been affected by the financial crisis sweeping the world. It has hit this small country particularly hard. Over 1,700 specialized tracts have been distributed, and we hope that this outreach will bear eternal fruit as people come to realize that Jesus really is the answer.



Church members hitting the streets to do evangelism

Our New "Job Description"

Well, we promised to let you know what we'd be up to just as soon as we've figured it out ourselves, and although we are still in the process, we will do our best to sum up our work here in Portugal.

We are officially working at two of the three churches in the Lisbon area, the main church in Charneca da Caparica (where we reside), and the African church plant in Santa Marta do Pinhal. At the main church we: teach Sunday school on a rotating basis; clean the entire church weekly; teach free English classes for the community, as well as some private ones for fellow missionaries in need of support-raising in the U.S. and Canada; participate, whenever asked, in the church service; help organize and participate in fundraisers and evangelism; take part in the seminary classes offered at the church; help with the weekly "food bank" pick-up (and later assembling and distributing food boxes); translate documents into English and Spanish; have begun a cell group in a young Portuguese couple's home; and anything else that is asked of us.

At the Santa Marta church we: teach the children's Bible School class, teach the youth discipleship classes, clean the church, participate in neighborhood outreach and evangelism, distribute food to needy families, make home-visits, do some "mini preaching" during the service, help with fundraising events, and anything else that is asked of us. We'd like to start a Saturday kid's program (stories and crafts), but realizing that our time here is limited and that someone is going to need to be able to take over all these ministries once we are back in Spain, we are praying that someone would step up and volunteer to lead. Then we could just help get it started and support them during our time here.

In addition, we still have a few responsibilities back in Spain, the main one being planning and organizing this year's Summer Program. We are anticipating a large turnout this year, and Carrie is carefully considering how to handle the influx of children while still giving them a quality experience. Please pray as the team is put together (with two missions teams, one from Mexico and one from the UK, joining us for part of the summer).

Meanwhile, Back in Spain...

We were blessed to have had the opportunity to return to Spain to leave our car with the team there and participate in the church's 2nd anniversary. It was a blessed time of fellowship with all those who have contributed to making our church in Rivas-Vaciamadrid the community it is today. The 130 people in attendance were treated to a surprise performance of a local Spanish dance troupe who entertained us for nearly two hours, dancing traditional flamenco and castellana dances complete with fans and castanets! This generous gift of time and energy was given because the dance instructor (the woman pictured), now a



baptized member of our church, came to Christ nearly a year ago because fellow missionary Susy Fajardo and another church member decided to take Spanish dance classes as a way to evangelize Spanish women. It worked!

We were also joined by Europe Area Director Jerry Colman and his wife, Jan, who joined us for the celebration before continuing on to teach Free Methodist membership classes to a church in Murcia, which is in the process of affiliation. And so the FM family in Spain continues to grow!

Praises

- For our slow but sure acclimation into life in Portugal.
- For the harvest we are experiencing in the Santa Marta church. 14 new believers in three short weeks!
- For the internet at the church being restored, as it is our only link to the outside world!
- The Madrid church celebrated its second anniversary on Jan 18, and we were able to be a part of the festivities.
- We finally received our long-awaited European driver's licenses which have been "in process" since September!
- We celebrate 9 years of wedded bliss later this month.

Prayer Requests

- That we would be able to quickly speak intelligible Portuguese.
- For Carrie's father and sister's visit with us in Portugal and Spain (Feb 7-15).
- For the FMC in Spain's progress in becoming an "official" denomination with inviting status for missionaries (like us!).
- For the young and growing church leaders around us here in Portugal. God is forming a great team for work here and elsewhere around Portugal and Europe!

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"So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, 'He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.' But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved."

—Hebrews 10:35-39

(This month's verses we're trying to live up to)