

**AMP 3-27-16 | 9:00 - 9:30am**

**Today's Service**

- That God would draw unsaved people to our service and into his kingdom. Pray especially for those that reached by Robert's tract ministry.
- That Pastor Jon would teach and preach in God's power as he preaches a series on Easter.
- That God's presence would be palpable and that all in attendance would be changed by the godness, power, and love of God.

**RPC Outreach**

- That we the people of RPC would desire to be a word and deed church.
- That God would open up great and lasting opportunities of community service for RPC.

**Regional Church**

- Pray for the other churches of our presbytery: Westminster Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Jonathan Holst (Hamden, CT); Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Bohemia, Meindert Ploegman (Bohemia, NY); Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Franklin Square, William Shishko (Franklin Square, NY), Trinity Church, Ben Miller (Syosset, NY), Westchester Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Dan Osborne (Mt. Vernon, NY).

**Belgium | Basic Country Facts:**

**Operation World Denomination Statistics**



Christians	Deno ms	Pop %	Affiliates	Ann Gr
<b>Protestant</b>	54	1.01	108,000	1.1%
<b>Independent</b>	18	0.24	26,000	4.0%
<b>Anglican</b>	1	0.10	11,000	0.6%
<b>Catholic</b>	3	47.69	5,101,000	-2.1%
<b>Orthodox</b>	8	0.65	70,000	1.3%
<b>Marginal</b>	15	0.55	59,000	-0.8%
<b>Unaffiliated</b>		12.50	1,335,000	7.0%

**Ethnic Breakdown:** Flemish 58%, Walloon 31%, mixed or other 11%

**Major Languages:** Dutch (official) 60%, French (official) 40%, German (official) less than 1%

**Religion:** Roman Catholic 75%, other (includes Protestant) 25%

**Population:** 11,323,973 (July 2015 est.)

**Life Expectancy:** male: 78.3 years female: 83.58 years (2015 est.)

**Government:** federal parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy

**Economic Conditions:** This modern, open, and private-enterprise-based economy has capitalized on its central geographic location, highly developed transport network, and diversified industrial and commercial base. Industry is concentrated mainly in the more heavily-populated region of Flanders in the north. With few natural resources, Belgium imports substantial quantities of raw materials and exports a large volume of manufactures, making its economy vulnerable to shifts in foreign demand, particularly in Belgium's EU trade partners. Roughly three-quarters of Belgium's trade is with other EU countries.

The government has pledged to pursue a reform program to improve Belgium's competitiveness, including changes to tax policy, labor market rules, and welfare benefits. These changes risk worsening tensions with trade unions and triggering extended strikes.

**GDP Per Capita:** \$44,100 (2015 est.)

**GDP - composition, by sector of origin:** agriculture: 0.7% industry: 22.3% services: 77% (2015 est.)

**Education:** Education is compulsory from 6 to 18 years of age for Belgians. Among OECD countries in 2002, Belgium had the third highest proportion of 18- to 21-year-olds enrolled in postsecondary education, at 42%. Though an estimated 99% of the adult population is literate, concern is rising over functional illiteracy. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), coordinated by the OECD, currently ranks Belgium's education as the 19th best in the world, being

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significantly higher than the OECD average. Education being organized separately by each, the Flemish Community scores noticeably above the French and German-speaking Communities.

Mirroring the dual structure of the 19th-century Belgian political landscape, characterized by the Liberal and the Catholic parties, the educational system is segregated within a secular and a religious segment. The secular branch of schooling is controlled by the communities, the provinces, or the municipalities, while religious, mainly Catholic branch education, is organized by religious authorities, although subsidized and supervised by the communities. (wiki)

**Religion:** Since the country's independence, Roman Catholicism, counterbalanced by strong freethought movements, has had an important role in Belgium's politics.[138] However Belgium is largely a secular country as the laicist constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the government generally respects this right in practice.

Roman Catholicism has traditionally been Belgium's majority religion; being especially strong in Flanders. However, by 2009 Sunday church attendance was 5% for Belgium in total; 3% in Brussels, and 5.4% in Flanders. Church attendance in 2009 in Belgium was roughly half of the Sunday church attendance in 1998 (11% for the total of Belgium in 1998). Despite the drop in church attendance, Catholic identity nevertheless remains an important part of Belgium's culture.

Belgium has three officially recognized religions: Christianity (Catholic, Protestantism, Orthodoxy and Anglicanism), Islam and Judaism.

In the early 2000s there were approximately 42,000 Jews in Belgium. The Jewish Community of Antwerp (numbering some 18,000) is one of the largest in Europe, and one of the last places in the world where Yiddish is the primary language of a large Jewish community (mirroring certain Orthodox and Hassidic communities in New York and Israel). In addition most Jewish children in Antwerp receive a Jewish education. There are several Jewish newspapers and more than 45 active synagogues (30 of which are in Antwerp) in the country.

A 2008 estimate found that 6% of the Belgian population, about 628,751, is Muslim (98% Sunni), while a 2011 estimate claims 1,000,000 inhabitants of Muslim background in the country. Muslims constitute 22.0% of the population of Brussels, 4.0% of Wallonia and 3.9% of Flanders. The majority of Belgian Muslims live in the major cities, such as Antwerp, Brussels and Charleroi.

According to new polls about Religiosity in the European Union in 2012 by Eurobarometer found that Christianity is the largest religion in Belgium accounting 65% of Belgians. Catholics are the largest Christian group in Belgium, accounting for 58% of Belgium citizens, while Protestants make up 2%, and Other Christian make up 5%. Non believer/Agnostic account 20%, Atheist account's 7%, and Muslim 5%. (wiki)

### **Prayer Points:**

- Belgium is a deeply divided nation. For 2,000 years, its territory has straddled the cultural divide between the Latin/Romance and Germanic worlds. Walloon-Flemish rivalry and resentments colour the use of language, the economy, politics, religious life and worldviews of both communities. The growing immigrant population adds a third angle to this dynamic. An eventual breakup of Belgium is within the realm of possibility; this defining issue has paralyzed political progress. Pray that national leaders at every level may have wisdom regarding this complex challenge. Pray that the Church might be a profound example of unity to the wider society, and that real reconciliation and peace might be shaped in Belgium. (OW 1)
- Rapid secularization has allowed the introduction of several very liberal laws that are an affront to a biblical understanding of the sanctity of life, sexuality and marriage. These both reflect and encourage an erosion of the moral foundations of society, coinciding with widespread recreational drug use, sexual immorality and occult and New Age activities. Pray for all false and erroneous beliefs to be exposed as such before the light of God's revelation. (OW 4)
- Leadership in the churches is a challenge. The lack of Belgian, and especially Flemish, Christian workers and pastors is crippling indigeneity and growth. There are very few fulltime pastors; most are bivocational. This in turn undermines first-generation believers (the majority of indigenous Belgian evangelicals), since they need solid discipleship in post-Christian Belgium. Immigrant churches, through their tithing, have shown that it is possible to support a full-time pastor, even with a small congregation. Pray, in this light, for the ongoing work of well-established Belgian Bible training institutions. (OW 7)
- Specific outreach challenges:
  - b) Brussels is a strategic city. The capital region's population is over 1.1 million. It is 32% foreign, 8% evangelical and close to 13% Muslim (largely Moroccan and Turk) – with over 45 nationalities of 1,000 people or more. It ranges from increasing numbers of impoverished neighbourhoods to growing communities of affluent young professionals, from the often isolated and marginalized immigrant groups to the powerful Eurocratic community. Pray for the various church and mission programmes reaching out to the diverse facets of Brussels' society. (OW 9b)
- Pray for the victims and their families from the recent attack on March 23, 2016 in Brussels at Zaventem airport and on a metro train. Pray that in this tragedy they would find the comfort that is to be found in Christ. Pray that the authorities will catch those still alive who are responsible for the attack and deal with them justly.