



PRAY FOR EAST ASIA

Pray for Belgium

You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

— 1 Thessalonians 5:5

Country Profile

Belgium, a small country in the heart of western Europe, shares its borders with France, Germany, Luxembourg and The Netherlands. The country is generally split into three regions: Flanders in the north, where the main language is Dutch; Wallonia in the south where French is mainly spoken; and Brussels, its capital. Despite its size, Belgium plays a considerable role on the world stage. Brussels is the headquarters of the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Nato). Antwerp, another city in Belgium, is a major seaport in the world and the international center of the diamond industry.

Belgium enjoys a high standard of living and has a high per capita income. Its GDP in 2017 was close to USD500 billion. Services account for about 75% of GDP, with agriculture only 1%. Belgium depends heavily on world trade. About three-quarters of its trade is with other EU countries. Unemployment is roughly 6% in 2018, with Flanders' unemployment levels generally half of that in Wallonia.

Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the country's constitution, and Belgian law officially recognizes all Christian churches in Belgium (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox), as well as Islam and Judaism. The government provides subsidies (e.g. payment of salaries and maintenance of facilities) for officially recognized religious or belief groups.

Catholicism is the main religion of Belgium, especially in Flanders; while Islam is the second-largest religion.

Belgium was a nation founded on a Catholic identity. However, the Catholic church in Belgium has been in decline. Many of the Catholic Christians are nominal. Since 2000, Sunday mass church attendance in Flanders has dropped by an average of 0.5%-1% each year. The number of Protestant churches however, has grown significantly over the last few decades, almost doubling since 1980, with most of the growth attributed to African churches. Secularism and humanism are also growing in Belgium. The number of people with no religion have risen steadily for the past two decades. Islam however, is the fastest growing religion in Belgium, as a result of immigration and births.

The first OMF seeds were planted by Jan en Ans Poot. Many Flemish churches prayed and supported their mission in Thailand. OMF opened its own Belgium office in 2007. OMF Belgium's work focuses on engaging the local churches in missions, to encourage churches to develop the vision and passion for missions. It conducts Hearts4Missions, a one-day introduction to mission for churches. It also mobilizes young people for short-term mission with Serve Asia. However, the support base of OMF Belgium is still very small. It is very challenging to help the small Belgian churches make missions a priority, because most their energies go towards managing



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themselves. OMF Belgium aims to show them that God gives many blessings as we go out and share the Gospel.

Population

- **Total:** 11.3 million (2016)
 - Flemish: 58%
 - Walloon: 33%
 - Italian: 4%
 - Moroccan: 2%
 - Others: 3%

Religions

- **Roman Catholic:** 58%
- **No religion:** 27%
- **Non-Catholic Christian:** 7%
- **Muslim:** 5%
- **Others:** 3%

Lord, thank you for your work in Belgium. We ask that you would encourage and strengthen the Belgian church. May the Belgian church grow and become more Christ-like and capture the vision of missions. Please raise up many missionaries from Belgium to bless peoples in other parts of the world.