



The Hamley Herald



February 2011

Growing the Church

One of our prayers ever since we first arrived in Europe has been to see the Free Methodist Church grow in number and in spiritual vitality. We believe that vision is being accomplished at the Licht en Leven (Light and Life) Oostende church. Our strategy for cell groups that meet in homes (including groups specifically geared toward Filipinos, Africans, and Latinos) have brought several newcomers into the church—and the Kingdom!

In addition, we realized recently that by September we will have 6 new babies born into the church—and will be in desperate need of a nursery! Please pray that someone will come forward to help meet this need. As we are currently an ambulant congregation renting a fellowship hall from a Catholic church in town each Sunday, we must set up and tear down each Sunday and take everything with us. This will make creating a nursery quite challenging! But we rejoice for each of these new lives and pray that we can be equipped as a church to meet needs in this very important growth area!

Andrew Update



The first four weeks of little Andrew's life have been a tremendous period of adjustment for us. Two days after he was born, Michael; Carrie's father, Paul; and a small army of volunteers from the church, moved our belongings into our new place, a townhouse in a residential neighborhood of Oostende. It's been nice living within walking distance of almost everything in town. But it's also been a lot of work getting furniture put together and in place, while at the same time adjusting

to the needs of a newborn. But it's actually been a great blessing to us! Instead of being overwhelmed by one great change (a new baby), it's been part of the overall big change of a new house, job, ministry, country, etc.! God has been good to us! That said, it may take a while before things really begin to look "normal" around here. We'll just take it slow.

Ministry Center Grand Opening

One of the hopes our team in Oostende has for future ministry possibilities is to have a space we can call our own. Some of the items on our "wish list" include space for offices for ministry staff, plus a "great room" for congregational gatherings, especially Bible studies, and a room for children's ministry to take place. We thought that this would be a fairly tall order for a congregation with limited resources, but we are happy to report that God has provided. And, as it turned out, what we needed was right nearby.

One of the leaders of our Latino fellowship, along with her husband and two children, lives in a townhouse that has a separate apartment on the ground floor. When it was vacated by their most recent tenant, it became available to us. And it's a great fit! While not large enough for Sunday services, it meets all our other requirements and is very affordable for a rental in this market. We plan to begin putting it in order very shortly and to be able to use it beginning in March. This will be a great benefit for the congregation, as the space will be available for meetings, trainings, and Bible studies, counseling, outreaches, and children's programs. And to top it all off, it's only a few blocks from our apartment—a five-minute commute on foot!

Back to School?

Belgium has a very well-planned integration program for the many immigrants it attracts. Almost all immigrants (including us) are required to attend an "inburgering" class that orients one to the ways of life and culture here in Belgium, and at least one semester of Nederlands (i.e., Dutch) language classes. I (Michael) have been in Dutch class for just over a month now, and it's going well. I had been afraid I'd be hopelessly behind from the week I missed due to Andrew's birth and the move, but it turned out I barely missed a beat—clearly by God's

grace. My teacher, Petra, clearly knows the material and how to teach new arrivals, and the school is only a few blocks from home. I see a lot of familiar faces from the Latino fellowship there, as well as fellow missionaries Richard and Sheila Dickinson (who are taking a higher-level class).

What is more, it's a great opportunity to meet people from all over the world. In my class are people from Bulgaria, Syria, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia (the one in Asia, not the one north of Florida), and Iraq. I actually go to school with guys named Mohammed and Allah. Talk about a journey to the nations! Please pray that I can be a faithful witness and light for Christ at school as well as the rest of the time.

Financial Update

With the end of the year having passed, the time has come to examine where we are from a financial standpoint.

Our efforts to spend wisely and keep our budget tight have paid off. However, the news about our giving report from the mission was not quite as positive. Despite the faithful giving of many individuals, families, and churches, for which we are very thankful, we experienced a shortfall of nearly \$6,500 versus our budget with the mission.

Fortunately, our account with the mission had an existing balance from prior years that covered this shortfall. For this we are also very thankful.

However, this will not be the case in the future, as we have nearly depleted our reserve. In addition, with our growing family, our insurance premiums this year will be higher than last.

Moreover, this is the time of year where we need to be counting our giving commitments from our supporters, including individuals, families, and churches. Some of you have already communicated these to us; to those who have, thank you so much! But if you have not communicated your planned giving to support us yet, please do so in the next two weeks, if possible.

And thank you again to all of you who give toward our support!

Praises

- Andrew is doing very well and is a pleasant, easy-going baby.
- We rejoice with our dear friends Ryan and Jen Willson (FM missionaries in Malawi) for the arrival of their adopted baby earlier this month.

- Carrie's father, Paul, was able to visit us for Andrew's birth and the move and was a great help to us!
- We celebrate 11 years of wedded bliss this month!
- We were finally able to get our car registered in Belgium and insurance purchased the day before our Spanish insurance ran out!

Prayers

- For Michael's language studies: he seems to be picking up Dutch easier than we anticipated ☺. May that continue to be the case!
- Jonny, a Belgian man from our church, is still in the hospital after having a brain tumor removed back in September. The plate they put in became infected and he nearly died. Now he is beginning to recover, but he still has a long way to go.
- For us as we continue to acclimate to life in Oostende and Belgium—and with a new baby!



Europe Area Director Jerry Coleman meets the newest MK.

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"Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"

—2 Corinthians 9:15