

Spring 2017 prayer & news letter from Missionsmiths

Roland and Carolien Smith working together with European Christian Mission



Dear family and friends How pleasant to write to you again. May the peace of the Prince of Peace reign in your heart.

Here is a photo of a time of thanksgiving during a recent ECM prayer weekend for Belgian and Maastricht missionaries. The children joined in as we placed tulips in the vase and named someone for whom we were especially grateful. Chloë Wolfson (*right*) and Christ Wigram, ECM International Director (*smiling*), both joined us. Chloë, an Australian missionary in Spain, is helping coordinate short term opportunities in 23 countries. Please join with us in praying for her as she travels around Europe this year. During an

evening meal tea lights were lighted and placed in the middle of the table to help us remember people in our lives who had influenced us. For each of his three lights, young David van Dijk, who is three years old, said 'Jesus'.

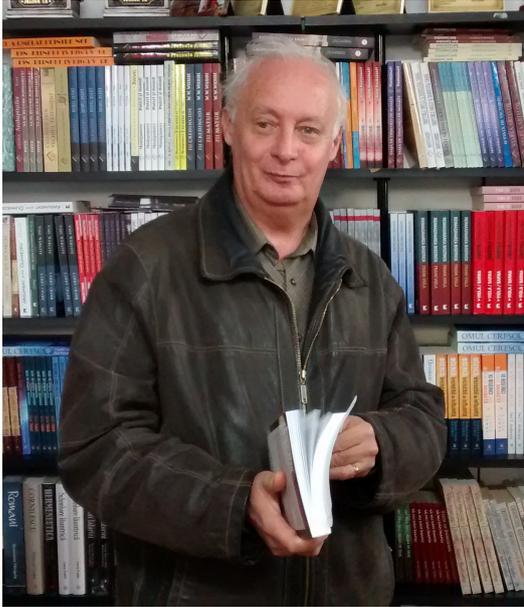
Stephen leads *In Christ United*, a youth group consisting of the young people of three Maastricht churches. Last Sunday morning he led worship at the churches-together youth service. The three churches met in one place so that all the parents, families and visitors could worship in one gathering. Maarten and Léonie were playing and singing and Rhiannon took part in the drama. Next month these fellowships will be planning a series of joint services for Thursday, Friday and Saturday in Holy week. For the last four years Christians in the city have been enjoying these times together, expressing their unity and inspiring one another. A special **thank you** for praying over the years for Maastricht. How wonderful to be able to write that these joint gatherings are still continuing. Léonie has been singing for several years in the worship group of the Baptist Church and is now going to plan and lead the whole time of worship, including readings and prayers, for the first time in March.

Carolien is preparing this week for the teaching and discussion this coming Sunday morning on the subject of festivals in the Bible. This different once-a-month style of Sunday will begin with breakfast and then people will stay in table groups to read the Bible and discuss relevant questions. Do please join with us in continuing to pray for the churches to provide good, spiritual food and for Carolien in her teaching and pastoral care. **Thank you** for your kind support, which enables our family's service to continue. **Thank you** too for praying for our sons and daughters as they grow and experience different ways of helping in mission.

Home assignment in the UK this month was a huge blessing and Carolien joined me for the first part, and spoke at Barnoldswick Gospel Mission, Lancs., about the needs here and her work with local women. She made cake too for everyone in the church ☺. Back home we are thanking God again and again for such loving people supporting us and caring for us. How can one find the words to fully express our gratitude? Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!



Stephen



I'm half way through the three-year integration coordinator project to facilitate the incorporation of New Hope missionaries under the ECM umbrella. The next trips are to Hungary in April and Bulgaria in May and the next training event I'll be helping at will be a cognitive coaching course in October for orphan care workers in Lviv, Ukraine. I was trained by ECM to coach last year in helping people reflect, plan and problem-solve. The aim will be to train care workers to coach Christian families who take in orphans.

Something else new last year was to travel to Timisoara and help prepare a project proposal for the translation of all the volumes of the new Zondervan NT Bible commentary series into Romanian. Here is a photo of the translator, Tavi Verlan, who has been granted copyright by Zondervan. There is seed money for the translation of the first volume from a church in Virginia. Please join us in praying for Tavi as he has already started translating the Matthew commentary, and for funds for successive volumes and their publication. ECM trustees are happy that the integration process is on track. **Thank you** for your support in prayer.

Tavi Verlan, translator and publisher in Timisoara

A particular answer to prayer is that new people are coming to join in ministry here and in Belgium. Stephen and Lisa Schenkel, an OM couple, have moved into Maastricht to work with ECM missionaries Tjerk and Anneke van Dijk (*photo overleaf, centre on sofa*) and another family from Zambia is hoping to join them. A South African young woman, Esmarie, has arrived this week to help ECM missionaries David and Holly Delameillieure in Kortrijk, Belgium. Another answer to prayer is that ECM has found a venue large enough to accommodate 500 people for the April 2018 biennial conference (11th-18th). Last time we mentioned the ECM lifelong leadership development course that Carolien was going to attend. It was really stimulating and helpful. Praise the Lord for this opportunity for her.

March 4th-6th there will be a think tank for 20 younger leaders from within and outside ECM. Our strategic plan for 2017 includes prioritising the mobilisation of younger people into leadership. David Delameillieure will be taking part. Please pray for him and Holly and their three young children as they help inspire the church in Kortrijk. David is one of the elders.

The Lord bless you in this season of Lent.
*With Christian love from Roland, Carolien, Stephen,
Maarten, Léonie and Rhiannon.*

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