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April 2024, Michael & Rani Grivas-Allison



Michael and Rani Grivas-Allison

Serving the Lord in Belgium



Dear Friends,

A few days ago, we celebrated 1 year in Belgium! 🇧🇪

Unfortunately, this milestone has brought **a bit too much 'deja vu'** for our liking. The last few weeks have featured a particularly nasty virus that has reminded us of the early days of 'immune system shock' when we first arrived. 😞💧

Yet even amidst sickness, God has reminded us multiple times this past month of **the sheer difference that this last year of learning language and culture has made**. Below we've shared three such 'reminders', none of which would have been possible a year ago!

More and more, we're seeing that being here is a long-term investment. It takes time to learn a language properly, to be invited into a culture, and to discover the ways we need to change and adapt in order to serve Christ here. **Thank you for partnering with us through this season of preparation, as we seek to 'become like Belgians to reach Belgians, so that by all possible means, we might win some'!** (1 Cor 9:19-23)

Warmly in Christ,

Michael & Rani



One year later...

'Goodbye' Google Translate



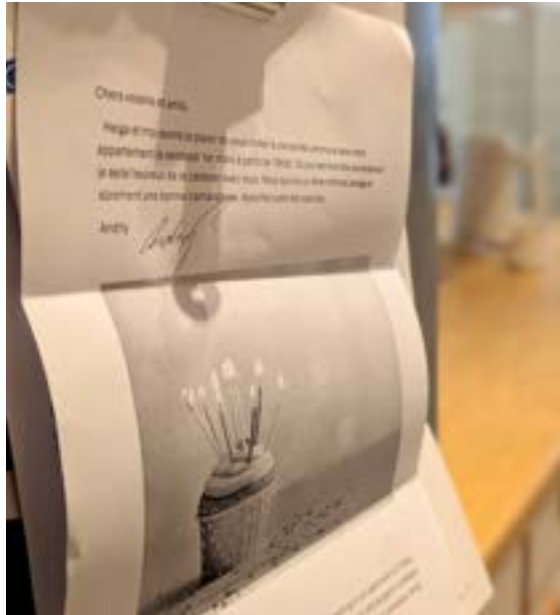
Recently, Rani went to register Alexi for *maternelle* (pre-school). She was



taken on a tour by the very chatty secretary, met the class teacher, and filled out a massive stack of paperwork...**all in French!** This came almost exactly a year after doing pretty much the same thing for daycare...but with zero language and exclusively using Google translate (yep that was pretty motivating!) Our French is definitely still very 'rough-and-ready', but **we praise God that it now kind-of, actually 'works'!**

Literal doors opening...

Over this past year, we've spent a lot of time praying for relationships. We've seen God open up some great connections at language school and also with ministry people in Brussels. But our **apartment building** has definitely been one of the tougher spaces to crack. In the last month, however, we've received what has felt like **a flood of invitations 'in'** - to tea, brunch, a birthday celebration, even semi-regular conversation practice. All great answers to prayer! We'd love you to **keep praying for relational doors to 'swing open'** in all areas of our life here.



Becoming more 'textured' Christians



About a year ago, we could identify as Christians in French, but that was about it. Recently however, we've had small but regular opportunities to talk about our faith in the class-room and with our neighbours. Amusingly, in these circles we **feel like we've become**



known as the 'Australian Protestants' (affectionately, we hope!) We're enjoying figuring out what this new label means and the opportunities it presents (especially as our French grows) **to share Jesus in a more 'textured' way in our new context.**

Above - recently, we both gave short class presentations where we shared tangentially from the Bible. Afterwards, our teacher opened up a class discussion on Protestantism, where our classmates asked us questions, and quite amazingly, all laid their 'spiritual cards' on the table. Please pray for some good follow-up conversations!

What's ahead for year number two?



At this stage, we're about half way through our 'dedicated' season of learning language and culture (though in reality we know this will never end!)

This means that we expect to spend **the next year in full-time French study**, while taking (we pray) more and more opportunities to press into culture and relationships here. As our French progresses, we also expect to **begin conversations about our future service with GBU**. Watch this space!



🙏 Please thank God...

- For **one year in Belgium!**
- For **growth** in language, relationships and opportunities to witness to Jesus.
- For the **incredible goodness of gospel partnership**, which we have experienced this year (through you!).

🙏 Please ask God...

- For **real progress in our second year** - in language, relationships, and godliness.
- For some **'salty' follow-up conversations** with our class mates.
- For a recovered **immune system for Rani** in particular.

From Michael and Rani





"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow." 1 Corinthians 3:6-7

Say 'hello' or let us know you've prayed for us!

Financial Partnership

We can't serve in Belgium without the generosity of God's people.

If you'd like to give through financial support, please head to our [CMS giving page](#).

If you would prefer to give using a BSB and account number, please email CMS and they will send you the relevant details.

We're so thankful for your partnership with us to see a world that knows Jesus!

Email: mrgrivas-allison@cms.org.au

Profile: <https://www.cms.org.au/missionaries/michael-and-rani-grivas-allison/>

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