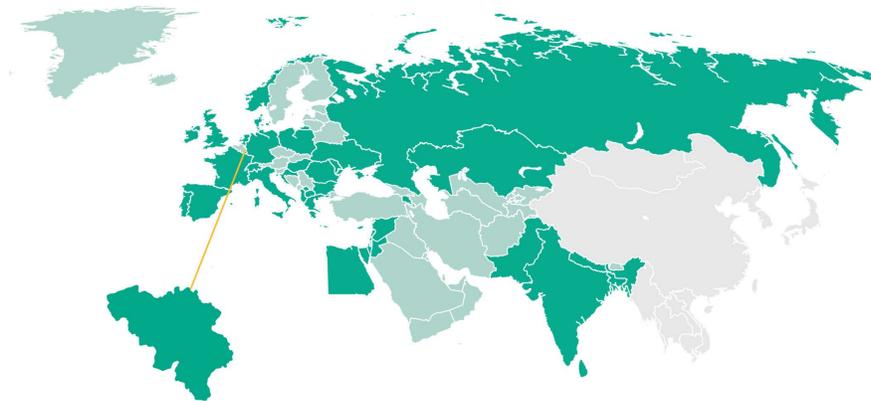


NMI Central

NAZARENE MISSIONS INTERNATIONAL

26 June 2024

Eurasia Region



Belgium

On 4 October 1830, a provisional government declared independence from The Netherlands; and on 21 July 1831, King Leopold I ascended to the throne, establishing a federal parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarchy. Historically, there have been strong connections with the Netherlands. Linguistically, Belgium is a multi-lingual nation: Dutch or Flemish in the North, French in the South, and German in the East. Part of the Benelux Economic Union between Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Belgium, it has become a prosperous, technologically advanced European state, whose capital city, Brussels, is host to both the European Union (EU) and NATO. Belgium is a predominantly Roman Catholic country; with the largest proportion of its population concentrated in the northern two-thirds of the country, with 97% living in urban areas. During the 2024 General Board meetings of the Church of the Nazarene, Belgium was officially declared the 165th world area where the Church of the Nazarene has work. The story that follows is one of God's plans coming to fruition, in His time, through the faithful obedience of His people.

No statistics yet available.

PRAYER



- Pray that the Holy Spirit may create a spiritual hunger in the people of Mechelen, and that many will experience God in our services, conversations, and relationships.
 - Pray that we may build a strong leadership team with people from Belgium, who in the future can lead the church.
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PRAISE



- Thank God for the enthusiastic and faithful support by people in both Mechelen, Belgium and Breda, Netherlands for this new church plant.
- Praise God that He is speaking to, and inspiring those who visit our services and Bible studies.



Responding to God's Providential Work: How the Church of the Nazarene started in Belgium



In August 2022, Willem Kolpa of Mechelen, Belgium, wrote an email to Rev. Antonie Holleman, district superintendent of the Netherlands. In it he asked whether the Netherlands district would consider planting a church in Mechelen. Located in the Flanders region of Belgium, bordering the Roman Catholic southern region of the Netherlands. Willem is originally from the Netherlands, found Christ as an adult, and became active in the Zaanstad Church of the Nazarene. After his marriage, he had moved to Mechelen, the hometown of his wife, and was missing the Church of the Nazarene in his new city.

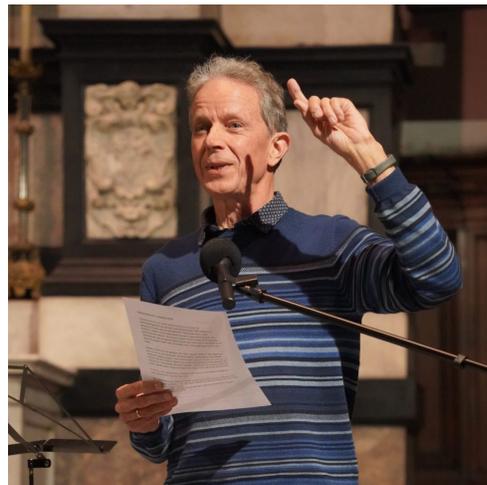
A brief timeline may help to see how God was moving:



In 2021, Rev. Holleman and several pastors felt that the Netherlands district needed to “Move South,” giving attention to a part of the country in which it had been difficult to establish strong churches.

In 2022, Stephen Overduin, pastor in Rotterdam, shared with his district superintendent that he had been sensing a call to go to a small Nazarene congregation in Breda near the Belgium border; and that call was also to plant churches in Belgium.

Later that year, Holleman received the email from Willem. The District Advisory Board gave focused attention to this request to move further South than intended. Within a year, a team was created, consisting of persons from Mechelen and the Breda church, under the leadership of both Willem Kolpa and Stephen Overduin, to begin a missional community in Mechelen.



In the Autumn of 2023, a series of three worship services was planned to introduce the Church of the Nazarene to the wider Christian community and to explore support for, and interest in, starting the Church of the Nazarene in Mechelen. Holleman explains: “For Willem Kolpa this was a dream come true. As the host, he welcomed the people in his Nazarene church in Mechelen. The response from the people was positive and it encouraged the group to continue, being convinced that the message of salvation and entire sanctification needed to be proclaimed in Mechelen, and that the existing churches in Mechelen needed further help in establishing a stronger Christian presence.”



In November 2023, the District Advisory Board affirmed this providential work, and together with all those involved, felt the urge to commit to the challenge of planting a Nazarene presence in Belgium. “This needed to be our response to what God has been doing. This was not a decision coming out of strategic meetings in which targets were formulated. It was our response to the surprising providential work of God, preparing the way,” said Holleman.



Currently, the small community in Mechelen has a worship service each month, and a small group called the “Holy Club”—a discipleship group meeting, fashioned and named after John Wesley’s early gatherings for faith development.

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17001 Prairie Star Pkwy
Lenexa, KS | 66220 US

