Exponential Growth

Nadene Badenhorst 5 September 2023



When Peter and Eefje de Korte planted a Four12 partnering church in Oudewater, Netherlands, in March 2020, little did they imagine that the church would grow from 10 people to about 260 people in three and a half years! Of this, there are 150 adults and about 110 kids.

Since then, the church has not only grown exponentially in number (and continues to do so), but has become a model New Testament church and a notable example of saints wholeheartedly devoted to the Lord and to each other, sharing what they have with one another.

A New Venue

The original congregation met on a farm in Driebruggen, Oudewater, but the church quickly outgrew the venue and relocated to a hall in Hekendorp, Oudewater.

When people further afield felt to join Living Waters Church, the next step was to plant a second congregation in Veenendaal (led by Johannes and Annemarie De Zwart). This congregation meets in a building owned by one of the saints, who has made the building available for full-time church use, without restriction.

Bursting at the seams again, the Oudewater congregation (led by Floris and Christine De Kruijf) has moved to yet another bigger venue in Benschop.

A Third Congregation

Some more exciting news is that the church is gearing up to plant a third congregation in Alblasserwaard towards the end of the year. A community is already meeting in that area, and conversations are already underway about potential venues.

The new congregation will be led by Stefan and Asmara Schaffhauser, who served on the eldership team of All For Jesus, the Four12 partnering church in Switzerland. Stefan and Asmara and their five children packed up their lives in Switzerland, where they have lived for the last 18 years, and moved into their new house in Giessenburg, which the Living Waters family had been preparing for them.

And what a beautiful testimony of a church family this is – one that does not "do church" on a Sunday, but is devoted to loving, serving and meeting one another's needs, Monday through Sunday! Peter de Korte shares how, at the end of May, he asked his now-retired father to oversee the preparation of the house for the Schaffhausers. His father was quick to jump in and coordinate the saints to garden, repaint the whole house and even to repair the staircase – a job which took 29 hours!

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One Sunday, 25 adults joined a "work party" at the house where, after worshipping and sharing testimonies in the garden, the men started working on the house while the wives prepared food. One of the community groups also dedicated a community night to working on the house and getting everything ready for the Schaffhausers' arrival.

Peter and Eefje (who oversee the work in the Netherlands) are very excited about this new congregation, which will start with five families and two single ladies. They believe it is very fruitful ground and – with strong support already there – that it will grow fast. Eefje mentioned that there was a mini revival in that area a few years ago, and that there is still a deep hunger in people for more of God.

Stefan and Asmara said, "We are very excited and believe that God has big plans for the people in this region. We constantly feel that the harvest is ripe and big. We feel that God has prepared

us for this new season".

Partnering in Prayer

While they are in a good season, marked by deep devotion and unity among the saints, Peter and Eefje ask that we continue to pray for boldness for the church. While many people in the Netherlands profess to be Christians, many are stuck in religion and are not born again by the Spirit. They attend religious churches but do not have a living relationship with Jesus Christ.

Increasingly, people who choose to join Living Waters Church are facing opposition from friends, family and even other churches. This is particularly true when saints decide to get water baptised – an act which many traditional churches practising infant baptism ("sprinkling") would regard as unnecessary or even offensive.

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"When people join Living Waters church, they realise that you cannot be 'half in, half out' – that if you choose this church, you go all in. It will cost you your time, your devotion, your everything. Some say we are too radical, but Jesus is very clear – die (to yourself) and you will find life. It's all or nothing to follow Jesus," Peter says.

The choice may be difficult, but it is clear: to follow and obey Jesus wholeheartedly, fully devoted to Him and His church. It may be costly, but those who have given themselves to this call and to living out New Testament church testify of the life they have found. In the words of one saint, "I never thought it would exist in the Netherlands, but now I have finally found what I was looking for."