

the LISBON

focus

Volume 10: Issue 5

September 2017

new beginnings

This fall proves to be a bittersweet season as we close one chapter to begin another. We are transitioning from the ministry we have been a part of for the past several years to a new area God has lead us to with many young families and young professionals. This area is a new “urbanization” made up exclusively of high rise apartment buildings. Soon we will know exactly how many as we have been mapping out the city during our evening walks as a family. We count doors and mailboxes (for future flyer distribution) and the kids suppose we are making a treasure map of sorts. We have been intentionally integrating into this area as a family, trying to make contacts and be visible in the community. Here we now have a dentist, a hair salon, a barber, a gym, a vet, a grocery store, kids’ swimming lessons, some favorite restaurants/cafés where they know us by name (oops ☺) and have met and converse with many of our neighbors. This week Owen started preschool one round-about away from our house (we can’t really give directions in “blocks” here) and this has been a difficult adjustment for him, but we pray it will help him learn Portuguese and gain him some friends his age. These steps seem small, but they are necessary, take time, and require more effort than one might expect. Please pray for our kids as they adjust (change is always hard) and for God’s divine hand to put us in the paths of the people He is drawing to Himself.



the chicken or the egg

It’s the age-old question, which came first? But for our purposes, the chicken is the church members and the egg is the church building. As we prepare to kick-off SOMETHING, we have been praying for God to direct us in what that SOMETHING should be. Through our experiences, we have gained some cultural insight.

1. Contrary to the Biblical definition of a church (people), unchurched *Portuguese strongly identify a church as a building* and do not recognize a “church” as legitimate until they SEE a building.
2. When it comes to religion, Portuguese best accept what you are offering if they have come to you. Mormons and Jehovah’s witnesses are largely poorly esteemed in Portugal for invading privacy by knocking on people’s doors to witness.

With these observations in mind, we have been mulling over ways to BEGIN and in what direction we should head first. The dilemma is, you can’t support a church building without members, and you can hardly get members without a church building. Without a little creativity, it seems like vicious cycle with a long, slow, uphill battle in either direction.

We have put together a plan of sorts in phases and we feel God would lead us to place *a building in the first phase.* On our map of doors and mailboxes, we also have properties for rent, their sizes, prices, and lease agreements. Our goal would be to rent a storefront from which we can do outreaches we know to be successful such as offering English classes, tutoring, piano lessons, and thematic Bible studies. Our hope is, this “neutral territory” (as opposed to our living room or their doorstep) will create a platform to share Christ within natural relationships with our students and on-lookers.

Because we are foreigners without a Portuguese co-signer, we are required to put down 6 months’ rent up front. We have listed a few other **start-up costs** below and would urge you to pray about how God might lead you to be involved. If you are able to sponsor one of the below items, please share that good news with us. Since prayer letters must be concise, we cannot include all of the details here, so please feel free to contact us with any questions or clarifications necessary.

- 6 months’ rent = 800 euros = \$950/month
- vinyl window-cling or sign - \$100
- 2 classroom divisions (walls/door) = \$500/room?
- vacuum/trash cans/cleaning supplies = \$100
- piano - \$500
- tables - 10 at \$35 each
- chairs - 30 at \$20 each
- 2 white boards = \$50 each
- English curriculum for 15 students @ 25€/student = \$450

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