

### “St. Paul’s journey”, and Cyril & Methodius’,

With the Southern border almost touching the historical Biblical Philippi-site (The Philippians supported Paul on his missionary journeys), we can assume Christians were in what is now Bulgaria from the start of the early church. Byzantine Missionaries Cyril and Methodius (Cyril from Thessalonica) brought Christianity in the 9th century to the Bulgars that had spread into the area. While introducing the “Cyrillic script” for spreading the Bible, Cyril and Methodius are still well recognized throughout Bulgaria.

### Enduring 5 Centuries of Islam,

Despite an half millennium-Islam rule during the Ottoman empire, the Orthodox church managed to survive. Still today almost 10% of the population is Turkish (5% Roma). While sometimes an independent state or empire, other times Bulgaria was overruled, incorporated or associated. From the Byzantium Empire, to becoming a member of the European Union in 2007, Bulgaria’s borders have shifted in the South with Greece and West with Macedonia and Serbia, in the North with Romania, and in the East the Black Sea and South-East Turkey. It was the largest in the 13th century and has its current 42,858 sq mi size since WWII (compare to Tennessee).

### End of enduring communism,

Industrialization under communism changed the predominantly agricultural economy rapidly, and left many unemployed when communism fell, (some cities in the North reached 90% unemployment). Average GDP, Income/ person, is 14% of the USA. Many tried to find employment in Western countries and human trafficking has been serious with strong corruption and mafia-practices preventing healthy economic growth. Religious persecution was severe under communism.

### A witness out of the shadows,

After the fall of communism in 1989 and a new constitution in 1991 there was much economic turmoil. Foreign mission caused economic dependency of many churches, but praise the Lord the number of Bible believing Christians increased five times! (from 0.4 to 2%). The Baptist moved out of the communist induced shadows, with an attractive noticeable Church structure as inviting witness in the capital Sofia. It is still a priority mission field and we invite volunteers to this beautiful country in the Balkan, with its 3 mountain ranges, 2 large agricultural plains, and the gorgeous Black-sea beaches.

### Points of Praise:

- Increasing religious freedom after communism, and cooperation between Evangelical Christians.
- Significant church-growth in the 90s, remarkably sustained until today!

### Challenges for Prayer: (pray for Pray4 p4)

- Those involved in corruption, crime syndicates, divorce and abortion need wholeness, the Gospel brings.
- The Orthodox church to re-discover the spiritual treasure the Gospel offers, rather than national identity.
- Growing, unifying and maturing evangelical churches, like ‘Bulgarian Evangelical Alliance’, ‘Bulg.body of Christ’, and many churches in the Capital (many more needed).
- Consolidating Church growth, through training leaders. Also needed: discernment regarding cults, indigenous agencies, and a country-wide Gospel-vision.
- Increasing cross cultural mission, Bulgarians serve in different countries in the world and throughout Europe.
- The 12% Moslems (often folk-religion) not to be “purer”-Islamized, but to open up for the teachings of Jesus.
- Rights for ethnic minorities Gypsies and Turks.
  - \*Rumelian Turks (with only 150 known believers)
  - \*The Millet (Gypsy); Believer-count (80% women) shrinking
  - \*Romani many occult/crime links, but 20.000 believers!
  - \*B-speaking Turks identity-crisis, just a few churches.
- p4 more missionaries (with nationals reaching unreached)
- p4 wise money use: huge effect, but avoid dependency.
- Student work (in 10 cities): Pray4 effective outreach.
- Continuous effective use of media for evangelism.
- Pray4 lasting fruit from literature, Bible translation, Christian radio & TV, other media like “Jesus Film”.
- Pray for IM missionaries the Myers, with economical development (agricultural), education urban Gypsy illiteracy and for volunteer teams to assist them.
- Pray for the Baptist Union of Bulgaria.

### Volunteer and Short Term Mission options:

- Help with interior finishing of new church in Sofia.
- Help with the Myers and the Gypsy outreach.
- See: [www.kalkmaneuropa.org](http://www.kalkmaneuropa.org) ask for more options.

### Prayer and Support for IM-Missionaries the Kalkmans:

Assigned to work as liaison and volunteer coordinators from International Ministries with the EBF. (European Baptist Federation), Bulgaria is one of our 50+ partners.

We need your help and support to do this ministry. If you feel God is leading you to partner with us in reaching out to Europe, please pray for us and consider monthly support by sending a check to International Ministries with “Target Kalkman” in the memo to P.O.Box 851, Valley Forge, PA. 19482; or go: [www.internationalministries.org/missionaries/70](http://www.internationalministries.org/missionaries/70) to give electronically; or call 1 800 222 3872 ext. 2324

Contact us through [www.kalkmanEurope.org](http://www.kalkmanEurope.org) click “send us an e-mail” in the top-bar, asking for our prayer information and newsletters.

Thank you for your prayers!  
Thank you for your support!

*Pieter & Nora Kalkman,*

