

Dear Family and Friends,

As you know, Nora and I are International Ministries' missionaries based in Prague, and our primary task is to coordinate volunteers and short-term mission teams in Europe. We are happy that in knowing you and your friendship, we've received much moral support during our years of ministry here in Europe. We hope that perhaps in your meeting us, or by seeing our IM or MPT website, you may remember many of the challenges, blessings, and fruits of our ministry involving both the sending and receiving of mission. At this moment, we choose to write to inform you about new challenges that we face related to the current world-wide financial crisis that's hitting many of us hard. We not only want to bridge this current situation, but also to explore ways for a long-term future for our ministry.

The reality of the current economic crisis is being seen by us in many ways. Just a week or two ago, I learned that my cousin and his wife (who are faithful, effective missionaries in Bolivia) will be called home because there are no funds left for the project under which they work. A company that is their main donor is facing multimillion dollar losses, and could not continue financial support. Also, recently our dear and close friend (a very bright seminary professor and an example in caring for students through his transparent compelling walk in faith) heard that he's being released due to the seminary's financial crisis, and it must close the Biblical Studies department he's been successfully heading for many years. Also, his wife (who's skillfully headed one of the largest English-language theological libraries in continental Europe for many years) has been released. Today, we learned that the seminary (or parts of it) here in Prague are up for sale because their support base is not sufficient to maintain it as it is.

You may already have learned that not only churches, but also our International Ministries (IM) sending agency (originally the "American Baptist Foreign Mission Society" (ABFMS), and the oldest protestant mission agency in North America) is suffering under the current worldwide financial crisis. International Ministries has seen a dramatic decrease in support to the extent that all IM missionaries were told this past March that their next year's financial support target must be met **by September 30** (the end of the current IM fiscal year). Otherwise, their ministry will likely be terminated. This means Nora and I (and 80 percent of our colleagues) need to do major fundraising during the most difficult financial time in many decades. Consequently, we need to raise 70 percent of our financial support goal with only a few months left this current fiscal year. This would be an impossible task if we did not know that it is not us, but God who touches the hearts of his people to partner with us in the important work for His Kingdom.

The task of fundraising has traditionally not been required of IM missionaries, but as International Ministries started to notice the changing giving patterns in the U.S. in recent years, they realized that IM must change the traditional denominational approach, and adapt to new ways people prefer to give. This includes (for example) that donors want to be linked to individual missionaries and take part in individual missionary ministries by prayer and financial support. Consequently, Nora and I are finding ourselves in a very steep learning curve. We're looking up to the Lord of Heaven, and wondering how we can communicate to you an invitation to sustain our ministry for the near and long-term future. At the same time, we're hoping that we can be a blessing to you through our reports, or by a visit to your church this upcoming year, or through what we do best: facilitating overseas mission outreach in Europe that could possibly involve you or your church

The Bible, the history of our churches, and worldwide mission show us that during difficult times like this, the Lord urges us to reflect and refocus. When about a half century ago all missionaries had to leave China, it seemed the church would die there, but the opposite happened. When China opened up again just 20 years ago, the church was indeed alive and growing. Today, there are more

than 7 percent Bible-believing Christians in China, whereas less than 3 percent in Europe which in this light, seems now even more a mission field to us. We are not doing the work of Europeans or preventing them doing their ministry, but rather we are enhancing, encouraging and enriching their ministry through participation by mission volunteers. We have reflected on God's purpose in our lives, and are convinced this is where God has not only brought us, but also wants us to continue to work for Him and with Him in this important empowering ministry.

We feel we are on the right track. While using this difficult economic time to reflect, we also have realized over the years, we've accumulated various "burdens" that seem to slow us down. So we are committed in the future to become more efficient, and we pray to stay better focused on what really matters: people **coming** to Christ, people **growing** in Christ, and people **changing their world** for Christ. Thanks to God, we have seen that through our volunteers' contributions, and by churches that have grown significantly through specific projects that we've been involved in.

Just last Saturday, Nora and I were part of a 60th anniversary celebration of a Czech Republic church that is outgrowing its facilities. People are sitting on the floors, halls, and stairways to be part of the service in what (some polls show) to be the most atheistic country in the world! We were guest speakers at the celebration, and brought them greetings from our supporting churches. We'd be happy to share ways and opportunities for you or your church to partner with this church, and help them with their new facility if we have an opportunity to speak at your church or in your area during our U.S. deputation that starts in late August, 2009. Or send us an email for more details.

As you may recall through our ministry-related email, or by reading about our ministry activities on our IM Profile webpage or on our MPT website, there are many challenges to doing ministry in Europe, such as enduring religious persecution in witnessing for Christ in areas where the majority of people are atheists. However, there are also blessings of ministry in Europe, such as –

- Baptist churches in Armenia have grown from three to over 150 since the fall of Communism, and
- Eighty percent of youth from First Baptist Church of Prague have come to Christ through attending church-sponsored English camps.

Also, several times Nora and I have been approached to help mission teams from other volunteer organizations that were stranded because their host could not accommodate them. These teams were surprised by the swiftness, professionalism, and skill with which Nora and I helped them find a new missions host who could utilize their abilities and gifts. For example, the Chicago Moody Chorale on their European tour last year enjoyed our coordination for the Czech Republic part of their trip, saying it was the first tour location where everything worked out as planned with ease and above-average anticipation. And as a follow-up blessing, the volunteers we work with return to their home church energized and dedicated to the Lord's work with a broader understanding of mission, a closer walk with God, and a lasting heart for outreach.

Over the years, we've built a well-functioning network of contacts with partnering churches and convention leaders all over Europe that you can read about on our Missionary Partnership Team (MPT) website at -- www.kalkmaneuropo.org. This network of contacts and MPT website help us to match volunteer skills and interests with the needs on the mission field in a wide variety of locations and circumstances. Thanks to such blessings as the combination of our expertise and our many trusted contacts in Europe, churches in the U.S. are able to do mission in Europe with lasting effect. Your partnership with us is a vital help to sustain our ministry. Let this be a blessing to your church too, and explore with us how this can be a blessing to your church.

Please consider contributing to our ministry in Europe in one or more of the following ways by:

- Providing **before September 30** a one-time donation, or pledging a \$10 (or more) monthly donation, as a **directed** IM gift to our ministry that will help us stay in the field this year
- Providing a multi-year annual or monthly donation as a **directed** IM gift to our ministry that will keep us on the field longer into the future
- Taking a “love offering” or special targeted offering at your church for our ministry support.

For any of these choices, you can provide financial support to our ministry by --

- Writing a check made payable to “International Ministries” with a check note of “Directed gift to Pieter/Nora Kalkman”, and mailing it to --

International Ministries c/o Missionary Support
P.O. Box 851
Valley Forge, PA 19482-0851

- Making an on-line donation via the Kalkman’s IM Profile “Give Now” webpage at --
www.internationalministries.org/missionaries/70#donate

NOTE: If the Lord does not put it in your heart to financially support our ministry in Europe, please consider supporting one or more of our International Ministries colleagues who you can read about at -- www.internationalministries.org

Also, please consider helping others to know about our ministry in Europe by --

- Adding the Kalkman ministry to your and your church’s prayer list
- Inviting us to speak at your church during our U.S. deputation that starts in late August, 2009
- Including our monthly “NewsNotes” in your church bulletin or other church publications that you can download and print using our MPT website at -- www.kalkmaneurope.org
- Inviting us to participate in a missions volunteer presentation or workshop at your church
- Putting us in touch with your church staff to present our ministry to them to see how we can partner with your church
- Letting us help you to use our European Baptist Fellowship contacts to arrange individual or group volunteer mission assignments in Europe.

We see the fruits of our ministry multiplied on the mission field and in the churches in the U.S. Please consider being part of this. May the Lord bless you!!!

Pieter & Nora Kalkman

Email: pnkalkman@gmail.com

Our IM Profile Webpage: www.internationalministries.org/missionaries/70

Our MPT Website: www.kalkmaneurope.org