



Pieter & Nora Kalkman International Ministries

*Life-changing missions in Europe through partnerships
with European Baptist Federation*



April 2008 Newsnotes -- Civilized Borders, No Mines, and Real Hair

Dear Friends,

The first April week, I returned from an extensive trip through the Balkans After Serbia and Bulgaria, I was in Macedonia, where the minority, and often disadvantaged Baptist Church, sees a window of opportunity in intellectual outreach, organizing study events, and translating books, etc. They welcome teams for helping with fixing up rural schools, The new border crossings with Albania, appeared professional, western European like a world of difference with the experience 5 years ago. Most roads appeared repaired, and with less armed gangs, safer. The Leader in Tirana, asked for help with Street evangelism, hip-hop, mime, open air object lessons etc.

We still have no Baptist Churches in Cherna Gora (Montenegro), and I drove through, I have a special prayer in my heart for this area. The good thing in Bosnia was that this time I did not see the warnings for mines along the roadside, and it was good to reconnect and learn about ministry developments and needs in Sarajevo where bullet and shell holes from more than 10 years ago are still visible. We had a team as well as some individual volunteers there, and it would be good to welcome more volunteers to work especially with their Kairos center.

In Croatia, I arrived toward midnight and stayed two nights to have some rest, and to enjoy the developments that took place in the pastoral center in C(z)akovec, where volunteers are welcome for light construction. Sunday, I left early for Slovenia, where I spoke in a church that I visited 5 years earlier on a weekday. After the break-up of Yugoslavia, it appears that the Slovenian churches seem to have transitioned from self-containing survival mode to society-oriented outreach mentality.

We had some footage taken for a small ministry introduction video clip, which will be available through International Ministries.

With several teams and individuals coming to Poland this summer, we felt urged to spend some preparation time, checking in with different pastors as well as checking out some of the excursion options. This led us to finally visit Auschwitz after nearly 8 years living in central Europe. We have seen other holocaust sites in Europe, but this former death industry place was unreal: the vastness and scope, the recycling industry around the persons that were sent to the camp (often thinking just to be moving), even their hair was taken for the weaving industry. Russian soldiers found tons of hair ready for transportation. This real hair is on display besides expropriated personal belongings in one of the barracks of the museum section of the camp.

There is a special openness in Poland at the moment, as the Roman Catholic Church is losing its long tradition power and influence to secularism. Some priests are turning more evangelical in terms of being committed to Christ, Scripture. and congregation. Volunteers to do work with the Baptist Churches are welcome.

Greetings and Blessings,
Pieter & Nora Kalkman