



## Pieter & Nora Kalkman International Ministries

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



### August 2008 Newsnotes -- Street Children & Santa Claus in August

Dear Friends,

A young US-Mexican mission-minded girl signed up for a student exchange program in Italy this fall, which is an excellent way of doing short-term mission in Europe. For the spare weeks that she had after the Baptist World Youth Alliance conference in Leipzig, she came to volunteer in Prague with street-children. This courageous volunteer saw in Nora a role model and big sister. Some late night conversations helped her to not miss home too much. She had experience with volunteer trips to Mexico and ministering to gang-members in the LA area, and she especially enjoyed ministering to the street children in Prague.

The following week, we had a pastor couple come to stay in our house while we were leaving for Scandinavia. This southern Californian couple, just a few years short of retirement, combined a study trip on Baptist/Brethren history in Europe with some weeks of volunteer service to street-children in Prague. This is an excellent way to combine leisure with short-term mission in Europe. Together with our Mexican friend, they guarded our house while ministering to the majority Roma (gypsy) street-children from dysfunctional, partly detained, and/or single-parent families in Prague.

We started out on our twice- postponed mammoth trip to Scandinavia. The first day in Denmark, we rejoiced with the General Secretary at his inauguration service in an aging church longing for visionary leadership. We were impressed by the committed and original efforts of young pastors for finding ways to call the community to Christ, especially the Caffee/(pub)-Church that we attended and observed as actually very conservative but so informal that everyone felt comfortable inviting friends. And we had a meal with a missionary to the student community in Alborg. He invites volunteers to assist with his ministry.

Norway is among the richest countries in the world. The government-backed social welfare system is so highly developed that Michael Moore decided he could not use it for his film 'Sicko' last year because it would be beyond belief for most American viewers. Material richness goes not seldom with spiritual poverty. Churches have a hard time to find needs to cater to, and so be a witness. Stores that sell their things too cheap without environmental or fair trade concerns, lose out. We were impressed with young pastors in dwindling aging churches facing the challenge to reach the generation often merely familiar with the 'ways of doing church' forms of the revival times rather than being affected by the content of the revival faith like their grandparents; and to have this generation come to Christ.

In Sweden, we visited two Baptist Conventions. One emphasized that for most Swedes who come to Christ, there is a link with the Alfa Course Program. We learned about churches devoted to the Purpose-Driven Life program, and others to the Natural Church Development (Schwartz). The other Baptist Union emphasizes inter-religious dialogue, inter-denominational cooperation, environmental concerns, and human right issues. It was great to see how impactful they change the world for Christ, and a joy to speak at one of their mission conferences.

It was a special joy for Norita to visit the world-famous Santa Claus village far north at the Arctic Circle prior to meetings with the Swedish-speaking Baptist union in Finland. Praying for people who live around their churches is a key and special blessing to help the church grow in their situation. The Finish-speaking Baptists have an American Baptist exchange student who stays in Finland now as a missionary pastor of an international church. The link with the international student community is often a very significant help to reach the local communities; Finish universities are free or low cost, and U.S. students have great opportunities to study there and with missionary vision, reach out and help churches grow.

Greetings & Blessings,  
Pieter & Nora Kalkman