



## Pieter & Nora Kalkman International Ministries

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



### **October 2008 Newsnotes -- Change of Inward to Outward Vision brings Church Growth**

It was good coming back from the meetings with most European Baptist leaders in Portugal to our Prague-office without immediate assignments. Especially after prolonged intensive times, it was good to take care of work that had accumulated, and focus on goals for the winter season.

While we were visiting the Swedish Baptist Union (see Augusts NewsNotes), Nora was asked to help them with translating a flyer for the International Prison Chaplains Association. It presents their world wide work of calling people to Christ at the (prison) edge of the society. Our less pressing agenda this month, helped meeting that request (see: [www.ipcaworldwide.org](http://www.ipcaworldwide.org)).

We hosted pastors from Denmark, and enjoyed learning about their ministry situation. During the conversations in our house, we shared about a volunteer application that came to our desk that week: A young U.S. couple, active in youth and worship ministry and wanting to spend more than a year on the mission field in Europe. The pastors were very enthusiast and 3 places came to their mind, where this couple could serve in Denmark. However, we already had pastors from 4 other countries open to invite them. And I know more places in additional countries would be available, if only more couples would apply for such service as volunteers with International Ministries. Feel free to apply or pray for this need, or people from your own church/ region to come and grow in Christ in an international setting.

During the Fall-school vacation time we took a day to celebrate our 11<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary by visiting a famous German castle. And we had the privilege to visit a remarkable Baptist Sunday morning worship in Holland, this tiny post-Christian country, with only 13.102 sq mi. is far smaller than most US states. Here already nearly 1000 Churches closed since 1970, another 1000 (1 in 4, in all Christian Denominations) are expected to close in the next decade. This Baptist church took bold steps in changing from an aging church into becoming a growing, lively church, providing a home for families, students and elderly.

Only 15 years ago this church was rather concerned about themselves, and keeping traditions. A new building for Sunday Worship services was built, to just meet their own needs, but due to visionary leadership and significant changes in their priorities as congregation, they vastly outgrew it, and are currently meeting in a school hall. Though the new building was used shortly; as a project, it had fostered the team-spirit of the congregation, and provided mutual trust among the members to go on a faith adventure, taking steps in faith not clinging to old beloved habits of doing church, and being self-centered, into having a vision and reaching out for the non churched and unchurched, who live in their part of town.

A vision for helping to meet needs in the society was developed, (penetrating their surroundings) with a food-program, a Christian library, helping people at home, help derailed (Moslem) immigrant youth etc. and the sending of about 20 missionaries. Worship styles, and approaches, were changed in such way that newcomers, non-church people, who were looking for God, felt welcome and experienced a community relevant to their spiritual needs and everyday life struggles. Many seekers, that visit the church, stay there. It was good to see an inward focused church changing into an outreaching community, calling people to come to Christ and see the world around them changed with Christ in the center. We wish and pray this for every church that we visit.

Greetings and Blessings  
Pieter & Nora Kalkman



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