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A Refugee Named 'Prince of Peace'



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SUPPORT PLEDGED



EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST AND LIBERIA

Dear Family and Friends,

The situation.

With the refugee crises emerging explosively in recent months, someone mentioned to me that 'migration has always been a part of humanity'. When we arrived in July to the USA (to stay at Atherton/ Alhambra CA.) for our year-long deputation assignment, we were mostly asked if Greece would stay in the EU (European Union). This seemed at that time the only concern on peoples' minds regarding Europe, not realizing that in August, European leaders started discussing on how to prevent thousands of people drowning in the Mediterranean (1/3 were kids), and how to distribute the 'overwhelming' number of 40,000 refugees at that time among various EU-countries.

Before the Fall arrived, nobody seemed to see this avalanche coming. The 'overwhelming' 40,000 number dwarfed, as suddenly hundreds of thousands of refugees were flooding into Europe. Daily between 5,000 to 10,000 crossed European borders, by December 2015, estimated totals surpassed the million mark. It is the largest migrant crisis since WWII. Never in known history have there been so many refugees, migrants and misplaced people worldwide, (economical, climate-change, and conflict area refugees). Let's not forget that Lebanon saw its population increase by 30% with over 1,000,000 Syrian refugees in the past 4 years. Lebanon is smaller than Connecticut, or almost 1000x smaller than the US. (US accepted 1,500 Syrian refugees in the same 4 years.) Also Jordan accepted likely over a million refugees, and Turkey over 2 million. After depleting their savings in those countries, many Syrians are trying to move/ migrate on to Western Europe now.

This is shaping and changing world-history for generations to come. What is our personal response, or our response as a church? Are we prepared? WWJD? Just in the month of October, Pieter was on deputation in 5 different states visiting at 5 regional annual gatherings, some of them together with Nora, others while Nora was speaking predominantly at churches and events in the LA area. By God's grace, prior to that, Pieter was able to travel to the annual European Baptist Federation council in Sofia, Bulgaria. I (Pieter) was able to take first hand notice of the refugee crisis, when I traveled late September through Central Europe and the Balkan (incl. Hungary and Serbia). I was meeting with pastors, who were reaching out to moving migrants, often finding themselves between on one side frightened or angered nationalist fellow citizens (as one finds in every country/ kingdom on earth), and on the other side the call of Christ, to spread the love of Christ especially to those in need, according to God's Kingdom perspective.

Biblical reflection.

We know from Genesis that God instructed humankind to spread and 'fill the earth' (Gen.1:28), and literally Cain was summoned to migrate (Gen.4:12-16). After the first created earth was destroyed (Gen.6:13), and God let newly shaped continents emerge following the flood, Noah's descendants did not want to spread out (Gen.11:4), but the Lord ordained (caused) them to be scattered over the earth (Gen.11:9). Further, in many accounts in the Old Testament we see cross cultural migration and God's deliberate hand, God's ordination in it, from individuals like Joseph (Gen.50:20) and Ruth, to whole tribes and nations like Israel in exile (Jer.29:7). We might as well wonder how to respond to the current global refugee crises, which God allowed, directed, caused or ordained as confrontation on our doorstep. Are we fit or ready to rise to this challenge? Is there a lesson in the Jer.29:7 principle, in a reverse situation, as the doors for ministry in the Middle East were closed, God now sends its population among us? What if the answer is not to let media instill fear in us but to learn open-hearted from Gen.50:19,20?

Immediately following the Christmas story, (rather still part of the Christmas story Mat.2:13), is the account of Jesus leaving as a refugee to Egypt, where he spent his early years with his parents, ordered by God through an Angel to Joseph, due to danger and violence in his native country. God, the Prince of Peace, came to this world as a human being starting his life as a refugee. Not only does Scripture account many refugee situations, Church history also has many significant refugee situations, such as the Pilgrim Fathers, (remembered at Thanksgiving), who fled from religious persecution in Britain and the Netherlands to start as (a white) migrant population in North America.

Our response.

I remember a theological statement from Samuel Escobar (retired IM-missionary in Spain) saying that "Christianity is a religion on the move". Which significantly means that each generation needs to adapt or respond to new cultural and sociological circumstances and encounters. When our primary allegiance is to God's kingdom, then we really are 'foreigners on earth' like Abraham (Heb.11:9,13 & 1Pet.1:17; 1Pet.2:9). At various times I was drawn to reflect on the authority of Scripture this year, and I noticed influential N.T.Wright's perspective that, the way in which Scripture is written and passed on, requires each generation in each culture to wrestle anew with the text, translation and its interpretation. By God's intent the Bible remains therefore by nature always current, and can speak renewing and refreshing for every generation in every culture as prime source to know God, and be a manual for our live's purpose.

Let us read refreshingly, beyond the well-known common theological jargon, with keen eyes and open minds, for what that actually means regarding God's continuous work of renewal and hope in our daily lives, renewal in our churches, and renewal in our society, our world, and the community around us, as actual leading thread and challenge throughout Scripture for us every day and throughout our lives.

With these eyes or such glasses for reading Scripture, can we help the migrants/ refugees better to read the Bible in a relevant way for them, as foreigners on this earth from a perspective that looks at a Godly person? Often it is a help for us to be out of our daily environment in order to see with God's eyes, God's presence and purpose for our lives in a refreshed and new way. Often a short term mission trip helps to re-focus of being foreigners on earth in a Biblical sense, and refresh our relationship with God as central purpose and joy of our lives, with love, holiness and righteousness rather than earthly interests.

That is why we, Nora and I, facilitate life-changing mission experiences and help you and others in your church and in your region to see God at work while serving for some time on the mission field. Is He calling you in your local church, in your county, or overseas?

Various response option abroad and at home.

For example, If you feel a call to serve in Europe, please contact us through our website: KalkmanEurope.org. We have multiple short-term mission options open all over Europe. Consider serving in Belgium helping with light construction in renovations of African immigrant churches, (speaking some French would help). Consider serving in Austria with light construction, by renovating outreach facilities at a classic former hotel, for the student and migrant church. Consider English Camps (VBS-style), in Central Europe, specifically Hungary or Czech Republic. Consider helping with newly evolving refugee outreaches from different churches in several countries. Various other options are listed on our website for yourself or a group from your church.

If you do not feel the call to serve overseas, then guided by prayer, consider arranging to having a face to face 'sit-down' meal with a foreigner in your neighborhood, discern how God is working in this person's life, practice to communicate where God is in your own life, and taste and enjoy how God reveals Himself to you and this new friend.

A new life, and a renewed life through Jesus, is the promise throughout Scripture for those who believe and call Jesus Lord (Rom.10:9), God's promise, God's promise of Christmas for us today.

"As for you, do not be afraid, . . . God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result to preserve many people alive" (Gen. 50: 19a, 20b)

See the WMO promotion videos on what God is doing in Hungary at: InternationalMinistries.org . Click at the bottom of the home-page on 'WMO 2015 resources', scroll halfway down until 6 links appear starting with 'Video 1 - 5, . (etc). . '.

See the video clip tailored to our ministry at the bottom of the home-page of our web-site: KalkmanEurope.org.

Look also at our website under 'resources' for:

A report on 'Refugee Response Mapping', mapping church- out-reaches to the crises in different European countries. and for: The 2015 'EBF Resolution Migrant . .' for European Baptist churches on how to respond Biblically to this crisis.

Please Pray for:

Christ's Glory may be revealed to the refugees and the displaced, through God's children as they show God's care for them. Pray for wisdom for responding Churches.

Churches and its members may grow and mature spiritually in knowing God better through their outreach and make new dedication and commitments to Him.

That this crisis may cause many to put their lives in order with God and experience Christ's peace in their hearts.

More laborers in the harvest (Lk.10:2), more volunteers for short term mission in Europe.

For us to be a blessing to the churches where we speak.

For us to meet our fundraising goals during this deputation year.

Please consider participating in our ministry through financial support, as we are closing the gap of about 10% to our full support goal to return to the mission field in Europe which is with only 2.5% evangelical Christians a priority mission field.

You could give by: 1). Sending a check to Inter-national Ministries with 'Target Kalkman in the memo-line; 2). Give by phone 1-800 222-3872 x2323;

3). Give online by clicking "give" (and follow the prompts) on our web-page at the International Ministries web-site:

<https://www.internationalministries.org/teams/70-kalkman>

All recurrent or committed support counts toward our required fund-raising target...

The Lord Bless you,

Pieter & Nora Kalkman