

**From:** Johann <Vanderbijl@94485477.mailchimpapp.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 11, 2026 2:22 AM  
**To:** Brendan Kimbrough  
**Subject:** Standing in the Gap: A Call to Prayer for Europe



## Johann and Louise: Training Disciples to Make Disciples in the Netherlands

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**As we look back over the past few months, Louise and I have much for which to give thanks to God. In fact, before we say anything about the challenges before us, we want to begin with praise!**

Louise continues to be cancer free, and we are profoundly grateful for every prayer that has been offered on her behalf. We do not take this good news for granted but give thanks to the Lord for His mercy and faithfulness.

I have also recently received a very encouraging report from the cardiology department. My heart is doing so well that the doctors have taken me off some of my medication because I no longer need it! This is especially significant when I remember what life was like in Africa. There, I was experiencing episodes of atrial fibrillation almost every day, sometimes two or three times a day, and some would last



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Johann and Louise spent two years helping to develop the St. Frumentius Seminary in Gambella, Ethiopia. They then worked in Southern Africa, serving in seven southern

hours, leaving me completely exhausted.

Since moving to the Netherlands, I have experienced only few very brief episodes, sometimes lasting just seconds, and even those are becoming less frequent. Health-wise, our move to the Netherlands has proved to be a very wise and timely one.

But I have come to believe that our move here was about much more than our physical health.

Europe is a remarkable continent. Its history has shaped much of the modern world, but it has also been marked by enormous suffering. Two devastating World Wars were fought across this soil. Yet there is another battle taking place...one that cannot be seen on a physical battlefield and measured by military strength and is yet devastatingly real. Europe has become a spiritual battleground.

As the number of people who actively follow Jesus continues to decline in many parts of Europe, a spiritual vacuum is developing. Increasingly, as people are turning to humanistic philosophies and alternative spiritualities, other religions are becoming increasingly visible through immigration and demographic change.

But we do not believe that Europe is beyond the reach of God. Quite the opposite. We believe God has sent us here to shine the light of Jesus into a place where that light is desperately needed.

The odds may sometimes seem overwhelming. The few remaining churches are often small. Christian influence appears to be diminishing. Many believers have laboured faithfully for years without seeing the fruit they long for.

But the gospel has never depended upon favourable circumstances. After Jesus' resurrection, the disciples gathered together and devoted themselves to prayer. Then, at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out, thousands were added to the Church, and the missionary movement that followed spread throughout the world. A handful of ordinary disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit, turned the world upside down in the first century (Acts 17:16).

However, it is no coincidence that prayer preceded the outpouring of the Spirit and the pouring out of the Spirit filled.

One of the things we sense God doing increasingly in our own lives and ministry is calling us to pray more earnestly and intentionally than ever before.

It is fascinating to see how many 24/7 prayer movements and

African countries, while continuing to work with the Diocese of Egypt, North Africa through engaging in a disciple making movement in order to grow the body of Christ. They are now serving in Heiloo, the Netherlands.



We are sent through the Society of Anglican Missionaries and Senders, a missionary sending community, engaging in building relationships with the worldwide church to experience the broken restored, the wounded healed, the hungry fed, and the lost found through the love and power of Jesus Christ.

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prayer communities are being raised up around the world, and particularly here in Europe. Centres devoted to prayer, meditation, creativity, hospitality and biblical learning are emerging in cities and rural communities alike. Even in our little church here in Heiloo, we sense the Lord drawing us towards a deeper commitment to prayer.

We need you to pray with us. Not simply to pray for us, but to pray with us, to stand with us before the throne of God and ask Him to do what only He can do.

- Please pray that God will reveal Himself to the unbelievers around us.
- Pray that He will turn hearts towards Jesus.
- Pray that He will grant true repentance and faith.
- Pray that He will pour out His Holy Spirit upon individuals, churches and communities throughout Europe.
- Pray especially for discouraged believers who have laboured faithfully for years without seeing substantial fruit from their work. Ask God to renew their strength and give them fresh hope.
- And pray that we might see a genuine spiritual awakening...a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will awaken the Church and draw people who have never known Jesus into His kingdom.

Jesus told His disciples that the gates of hell would not prevail against His Church. He spoke of binding the strong man and plundering his house. These are not merely theological ideas for us. They are a call to spiritual engagement.

So we are asking you: stand in the gap with us. Pray.

Persevere. Believe God for Europe.

And we don't want to give the impression that we are simply looking at darkness and despair. Quite the opposite. We are seeing encouraging signs of God's grace.

This has been an exceptionally busy summer for us. We have had opportunities to stand in for ministers who have taken their summer holidays, as well as continuing to serve in our own congregation here in Heiloo. Louise and I have been grateful for every opportunity to serve, preach, teach and encourage God's people.

We also recently had a wonderful Vacation Bible School, with 18 children attending! It was a joy to see young lives being exposed to the gospel and to watch the enthusiasm of those

who helped make the week possible.



And then there is another particularly encouraging answer to prayer.

A young man who has recently come to faith in Jesus after a background in Humanism and Buddhism has asked to be baptised! What a testimony to the grace of God. Please pray especially for his wife and son, that they too will encounter Jesus and come to know Him personally.

These may seem like small things when measured against the spiritual needs of an entire continent. But the kingdom of God often begins with what looks small: one person, one family, one church, one prayer, one act of obedience.

We are asking God to multiply those small beginnings. Will you stand with us?

Ministry in Europe is not something we can do alone. We are deeply conscious that every prayer, every word of encouragement and every financial gift makes it possible for us to remain here and continue the work to which God has called us.

Some of you have supported us faithfully and sacrificially for many years. Thank you. We genuinely could not do this without you. But we are also asking you to consider whether God might be calling you to deepen your involvement with us in this season.

Perhaps that means praying more intentionally for Europe. Perhaps it means sharing our prayer requests with your church or small group. Perhaps it means asking someone else to join you in praying.

We do not make this appeal lightly. We know that everyone faces personal pressures and that support is a matter of prayer and obedience before God. But we also know that ministry requires partners, people who are willing to stand alongside those who have been sent.

Paul reminded the Philippians that their partnership in the gospel was precious to him. Mission has always been a partnership between those who go and those who send, between those who labour on the front lines and those who faithfully hold the ropes.

We need you to stand in the gap with us.

Europe desperately needs the gospel. We believe God has placed us here for such a time as this. And we believe that what He is doing is far greater than anything Louise and I could accomplish on our own.

So would you join us?

Pray with us. Give with us. Stand with us. Believe with us.

Let us ask God for nothing less than a spiritual awakening across Europe...for churches to be renewed, for discouraged Christians to receive fresh courage, for the lost to encounter Jesus, and for the Holy Spirit to breathe new life into this ancient continent.

The battle is real, but so is the power of God. And so is our hope.

With gratitude for your partnership and with great expectation for what God may yet do,

Johann & Louise van der Bij

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Attention to: Johann and Louise van der Bijl

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