



Fall 2011

Dear family and friends,

Thank you for supporting our ministry this past month.



### Linda's Ministry in Georgia

Linda, Jo Owens, Darcy Wall, Janath Kindler, and Julie Burnett spent a week in a conference center near **Tbilisi, Georgia**.

Our purpose was to bless the women of Georgia with refreshment in body and spirit. But our team was equally blessed by their wonderful acceptance and enthusiastic reception. **41 women from all over Georgia** came to a conference for three days. Our team gave them haircuts, new hair color, manicures, make-up tips, in addition to sharing about God's great love for His dear daughters. We laughed, cried, and loved each other despite our language difference.

As the conference drew to a close, the women began to share how God had worked in their lives those three days. T\_\_\_ told us that these days were the best of her whole life! (We had learned that her alcoholic father had beaten her mother to death recently and left her (at seventeen years of age) to care for her grandmother and two teen age brothers—all on about \$75.00 a month.) N\_\_\_ told us of her hope for the future in spite of the past, when she and her family were forced to flee a life of relative comfort because of a recent war and live in a refugee camp. D\_\_\_, a nearly blind woman, was thrilled to receive a Bible Stick in Georgian so she could listen to the Bible being read. **Among our attendees were women from Muslim backgrounds, as well as Orthodox. Several told us they had accepted Christ or were much closer. Others shared how much they were encouraged to learn that God really does care for them and that they have value and purpose in their lives.**



The generosity of many of our supporters was overwhelming. Some gave supplies, beautiful scarves, and even hand made quilts, as well as, money. The Georgian ladies told us that they had never known that there were people who could be so giving to people they had never met. But we told them that just as God loves them, so do their Christian brothers and sisters in America.



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## Joe in Albania and Kosovo

**I (Joe) just returned from Albania from a week with Dr. Jim Neathery**, who has led our Albanian ministries for several years. One very significant ministry that has opened for East-West involves the governmental leaders in both Albania and Kosovo. Last year Jim brought **Eric Metaxas, the author of the book and movie, *Amazing Grace*, to Albania to share the story of William Wilberforce and share the gospel with the Albanian parliament.**

When I arrived in Tirana, Albania, Jim informed me that one of the leaders of the Albanian parliament had made **arrangements for us to speak to the President of the Kosovo Parliament and the Leader of the Cabinet of Kosovo.** We were greeted with local television crews who filmed the meeting and interviewed Jim to be aired on the local television. It appears that we may be able to arrange for Metaxas speak again to the Albanian parliament and also to the Kosovo parliament next year. We may bring a former US Senator with us as well to share his testimony.



**Jim Neathery's Story.** I would like to share with you inspiring Jim's story. Jim grew up in western New York where he was a very competitive hockey goalie. He received a hockey scholarship to Cornell University and later attended Dallas Seminary, where he received both the Master of Theology and Doctor of Ministry degrees. He joined the Seminary faculty serving in the Howard Hendricks-led Center for Christian Leadership at the Seminary and later received a Masters degree in International Relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

In the late 90s, Jim and Melissa and their two sons joined East-West Ministries and moved to Tirana, Albania, to lead a school in partnership with Christar, International, which they also called the Center for Christian Leadership. He learned the local language and for five years led a very effective ministry, and then tragedy struck. **He contracted a rare disease that has left him crippled, with limited breathing capability, constantly shaking, and regularly fighting pain**—thus forcing him and his family to relocate in Dallas. For most this would have rendered them home-bound, but Jim is a fighter.

**Traveling with Jim is both challenging and inspiring.** Getting his rolling walker in and out of restaurant entrances and cars and watching him mount several stairs using his cane and personal grit reminds you of his determination. Watching dozens of people come up to him and warmly greet him reminds you of his long standing love and servant heart for the people of Albania and the missionaries who serve there. Meeting with people or just walking on streets with a walker as cars whiz by and listening to his ever-present, dry-humor comments are a delight. And meeting several of the leaders of Albanian ministries (Campus Crusade, Christar, etc.) and leaders in the government that are friends of Jim's is impressive.

For many, Jim's disease would have totally sidelined them from ministry, and some would have become bitter. For Jim it has not been easy, but he has always been a competitor, and God has and is using his disabilities and suffering to open many doors of ministry.

He has spoken in various venues about suffering in the Christian life, and recently **wrote the chapter on "Global Suffering" in a book with several other Christian leaders like Joni Eareckson Tada, entitled *Why, O God?: Suffering and Disability in the Bible and the Church.*** It is a privilege to know and serve with this great man of God! I hope many of you will get to meet him sometime.

Please pray for:

1. Growth of Georgia church from the women's retreat.
2. The presentation to the Kosovo Parliament would take place and for hearts to be receptive to the gospel.