

June 27, 2011

Dear Friends,

I've recently accepted a position with **Burnt Thicket Theatre** as their Producing Director, and part of my responsibility is to raise support for a portion of my salary. I hope that you will consider partnering with me—please consider this letter an introduction to what I do, and if you'd like to know more, I'd love to take you for coffee and tell you about it.

Burnt Thicket Theatre's mission statement and mandate is to **enliven [restore life to] audiences through original performance**. Another way that we phrase that is to say that Burnt Thicket exists to **tell stories that creatively communicate God's heart**. Within that mandate, we can do projects as varied as *Hockey Dad*, a comedy encouraging reconciliation between fathers and their children, which went to the Olympics and toured the Fringe Festival circuit in 2010, and *She Has a Name*, a gut-wrenching drama about human trafficking, which premiered in 2011 to sold-out houses in both Calgary and Red Deer (and for which we are planning a 12-city tour in 2012).

At Burnt Thicket, we are **cultural missionaries** in two ways:

We tell stories that communicate God's heart, created through the **integration of spiritual and artistic practices**, and these stories **call people to action** in response. In *Hockey Dad*, audiences were called to reconciliation. In producing *She Has a Name*, Burnt Thicket partnered with several human rights organizations to compel people to act against human trafficking in a way that goes beyond simply watching a play.

We tell stories **professionally and with excellence**, gaining acclaim and respect from both the arts community and general audiences. *She Has a Name* was given 4 stars by both the Calgary Sun and the Calgary Herald, giving it exposure and credence that comes with validation by the professional community. By paying artists well, creating an ethical work environment, pursuing artistic excellence in our work, and seeking to be truly creative and original in our programming, we are given opportunities to connect with the arts community in a way that the church as a producer cannot.

Our funding reflects this dual nature of being professional artists and cultural missionaries. Because of our mandate, there are certain avenues of funding that we have chosen not to pursue (i.e. provincial grants, which are primarily funded through lottery income), and instead, we are finding funding through a hybrid of project income, missions giving, and arts patronage.

- ❖ **Project-based income.** Half of my position is based on specific projects (such as the *She Has a Name* tour in 2012), and that percentage of my salary is built into the budget for each project. Funding for these comes from a variety of sources, such as individual donations, corporate sponsorships, grants, and earned income from ticket sales.
- ❖ **Operating income.** My salary for the work of strategic planning, project development, and growth of the company is raised through monthly support. I need to raise \$1750/month (pre-tax) for half of my time to be devoted to the operational work of running a theatre company. **This is where you can help. Will you champion the stories that Burnt Thicket is telling?** Your monthly, tax-deductible donation will be invaluable in ensuring that Burnt Thicket Theatre continues to grow and becomes a sustainable organization.

We are calling the greater church community to **re-examine the role that the church plays in the arts**. The arts have always required patronage, and through history, the church has been one of the most significant patrons, providing financial support for artists who have created work that reflects God's heart in new ways. In recent years, the church has moved to the position of a producing entity (i.e. producing Christmas and Easter plays), but this model is only half of what we believe is **necessary and beneficial** for the arts to have the most significant cultural impact. While we fully support the use of the arts within the church, we also believe that there is a need for Christians to support professional artists who are working to affect change in their spheres of influence outside the church.

Burnt Thicket Theatre operates under the umbrella of Epic Ministries (charitable status # 88154 3870 RR0001), which gives us tax-deductible status and helps to further their mandate in a creative way. You can choose to give via monthly automatic, pre-authorized payments. An authorization form is enclosed, if you'd like to take advantage of this. If you have any questions about the process, please call me at 403-614-7723 or email alida@burntthicket.com.

If you choose to donate by cheque (either a one-time donation or monthly post-dated cheques), please make them payable to **Epic Ministries** and write "Burnt Thicket Theatre" in the memo line. Cheques can be mailed to:

Burnt Thicket Theatre
240 – 15 Ave SW
Calgary, AB T2R 0P7

When donating either way (by cheque or by automatic donation), please also include a **separate note** indicating that the donation is for support of Alida Lowe.

Again, if you're interested in talking with me about this opportunity, please feel free to call or email. I hope that you'll consider being a part of the incredible stories that are being told, and that you will be a part of this exciting step in my artistic development and spiritual impact.