

## **PRAYER LETTER – OCTOBER 2020**

***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome (John.1,1-5)***

How I love this passage! It not only reminds me about the beginning of creation, about the embodiment of Christ, but I am also reminded of the role of the Scriptures today. Through it, everything came into existence, and without it nothing that God made could happen. It's like with our new life: without the Word of God one is unable to rise into their new life. We become Christians in response to it; God allows us to be born again through His Word and the Holy Spirit.

That's exactly what happened to Grzegorz who came to faith through the Word of God. Grzegorz was one of the CEOs of a first league soccer and hockey club (our equivalent of your NHL). He was a harsh man who would instantly fire his employees and hire new ones. He lived under huge pressure of good results and expectations from influential people. The world of sport has its dark side and Grzegorz was very familiar with it. Today, he is ashamed of how he used to live, but let's go back to the beginning of his story.

Grzegorz was born into a traditional catholic family and as a teenager, he dreamt of becoming a priest. God was important to him although he didn't know Him personally, so he decided to become an altar boy and serve during masses. He did that for 9 years. Unfortunately, during that time, he witnessed some terrible things and decided that if priests did such horrible things, there surely was no God, and if God wasn't in the Catholic church, He surely could not be found anywhere else. He carried on living convinced of this, until he met his wife with whom he had two sons. His wife's parents are believers and go to our church.

When a time came for their sons to go to school, they had a dilemma because it's obligatory for Polish students to attend Catholic religion lessons (or ethics if a school has a religion-neutral teacher). Grzegorz told his wife that the only place he would be happy to send their sons to in order to learn about religion was his in-laws' church as he could see the testimony of their life: so very different to other people around him. Besides, he said, that the pastor had a wife and family so his lessons would be based not on theory, but life experience.

That's why Grzegorz would show up in church once a year to watch the Sunday school children minister to the congregation. He would do it for his sons, however, quite reluctantly, always complaining that the service was too long for him.

By the end of March 2020, the world came to a standstill – Poland was in lockdown. All factories and businesses, large or small, stopped working; league games were suspended, and sport clubs were shut.

For Grzegorz, who was used to living a fast-paced life, it was a strange time. He didn't know what to do with himself and no one had any answers. He thought the world was coming to an end so one Sunday morning, he woke up his family and asked whether they could listen to our online Sunday service together. He would do that every Sunday: wake

his family up and say they were going to “go to church” in their living room. During that time, I preached a sermon entitled “Let your hearts not fear,” the Sunday after that “Don’t worry like unbelievers do,” and the Sunday after that “Call to the Lord in the time of trouble.” That was a particularly difficult time for our country and church.

When he was listening to the messages, something stirred in his heart. He began to think about his present life and the dreams to do with God he once had had that led him to becoming an altar boy.

Through the online services, the Lord revived faith in his heart, as well as a desire to come to Him. He started reading the Bible and, when it was possible to do so, he began coming to church regularly. After some time, he phoned me and asked for a meeting, during which he told me about the change the Word of God had made in him.

I saw a changed man who felt the need to confess his sins to me. I led him in prayer to the Lord Jesus and he experienced true forgiveness.

Grzegorz told me he had quit his well-paid job in a time when many people had lost theirs and no-one was hiring. When his wife heard the news, she was very peaceful and told him she was going to pray for him. Since then, they’ve been praying together.

A few weeks later, Grzegorz found a job in a company which deals in hiring the Filipinos in Poland. It appears that he now works with Christians who thought there was no other church in Poland apart from the Catholic. Grzegorz saw this as an answer to prayer and invited his colleagues to our church (see: photo taken by him, with the Filipinos and grandparents).

See what power there is in the Word of God. I had to share this with you and, at the same time, I am asking for your prayers for Grzegorz’s faith. This week I will have a meeting with Grzegorz. We will talk about baptism. We pray for Ania, his wife, who used to come to church as a young girl and even got baptised, but then stopped coming. Today, God came to her family through her husband. May His be all the glory!

### **Other prayer requests:**

We pray for Denis and Jadzia who recommenced youth meetings after lockdown and summer (see: photo).

We pray for Kamilla who teaches Sunday school. We have over 20 children in three age groups.

We thank the Lord for Marcin who got baptised in spring. His wife Ania has joined our worship team and plays the piano (see: photo).

We thank the Lord for our students who have started their 3<sup>rd</sup> year in the mission school in Ruptawa. Together with two other pastors, we have been sharing all our knowledge and experience with the students. In June, I shared about Church- its development and healthy characteristics. In September, I taught 10 sessions on personal spiritual growth.

Our project “Coronavirus and Christ” is underway. From 360 books I had purchased, we have 100 left. People gladly accept books, although most are not too keen to have a conversation yet. Those that are, are grateful for the encouragement. I am planning to purchase New Testaments which we would like to use during our next evangelism event. Tens of John Piper’s books have been distributed by the students (see: photo).

Each of them had the task of giving a copy to one person, praying for that person and then going back to try to have a conversation with them.

Finally, I would like to share something personal. Last week in Warsaw (the capital of Poland), in our evangelical denomination, there was a general church Synod with representatives of local churches from all over the country to elect a new church council. I wasn't planning to be a candidate due to my many other duties at present.

However, during the Synod it appeared that there were not enough candidates to be elected to a new council in order to constitute it. The matter was very urgent because in the current situation we did not know if we would be able to meet again at a later date due to the expected restrictions in large cities due to COVID-19.

I was officially asked to save the day by allowing my name to be added to the candidate list due to my experience. The addition of my name meant that the number of people required to continue election of the church council was sufficient.

I agreed, although I asked everyone present not to vote for me. Unfortunately, the church decided otherwise, and I got one of the highest voting numbers. However, my role is to share advice and wisdom - I have no additional administrative responsibilities, except that I have to attend church council sessions; for the first 3 months they will be held remotely via Zoom from my home office.

I am not writing this to boast because I know that this is for the glory of God – the only wise God! But I see God's finger in all of this, because I have just been given the opportunity to influence the entire evangelical church in Poland. My wish is that evangelical Christians will grow in their faith, that the Word may be more apparent in the lives of believers, and that we will all be known by the Gospel spreading through us throughout the country.

Earlier that day, I had read the Daily Bread and the Lord in this Word said that just as a husband gives up his needs in love, for the benefit of his wife, to fulfil her needs – so did Christ give himself up because he loved the Church and gave himself up for Her. And when he was praying before his Passion, he asked the Father that this cup should pass him, but in the end, he said: after all, let not my will, but yours be done.

When I called my wife and asked what she thought about the fact that they wanted me to run for the council of the evangelical church in Poland, Kamilla read to me the text that the Lord had spoken to her that day from Esther 4:14, where we read: ***"For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"***

Who knows why it happened in those difficult and strange days ... my wife said, "apparently the Lord needs you there." Every honor and position we receive is a result of God's sovereign act. He, too, is my witness that I neither desired nor sought this position. I did not want it, but in such an exceptional situation I surrendered my will to the Father's.

I don't remember ever having such a situation in our church that there were no candidates for the church council. During Covid-19, however, I don't think anything will surprise me anymore ...

We pray that I will make the most of this time; we ask that the Lord may use my presence and influence in the church council. I am asking you for prayer - for God's guidance and wisdom in local mission work and that for the whole church in Poland.

As for our Church Building Fund, we continue to raise money. We are looking for an option to move out of the apartment in the church building. We pray and try to be sensitive to different circumstances in this matter.

Thank you for your partnership, for all your support and for all your prayers.

Tomasz & Kamilla

