

Spring/Summer 2014

COFFEE, CONVERSATION, & CHRIST

Dave, Marybeth, and Makayla Grace
Serving in Poland in Coffee Shop Ministries



Vajta,
Hungry
Conference

POZNAN, POLAND TO BE CONTINUED.... :)

...GREATER THINGS ARE STILL TO BE DONE IN THIS CITY

What I am going to share with you first, might sound a little strange considering the fact that I am also going to tell you about something that God has been teaching me.

First, Dave and I are very happy to tell you that we are going to stay another two years in Poland to continue the work here. We will now be under the title of Specialized Assignment, but at this time we will still be returning to the States to raise funds. For those of you who have so graciously and wonderfully been continuing to support us, please prayerfully consider continuing to do

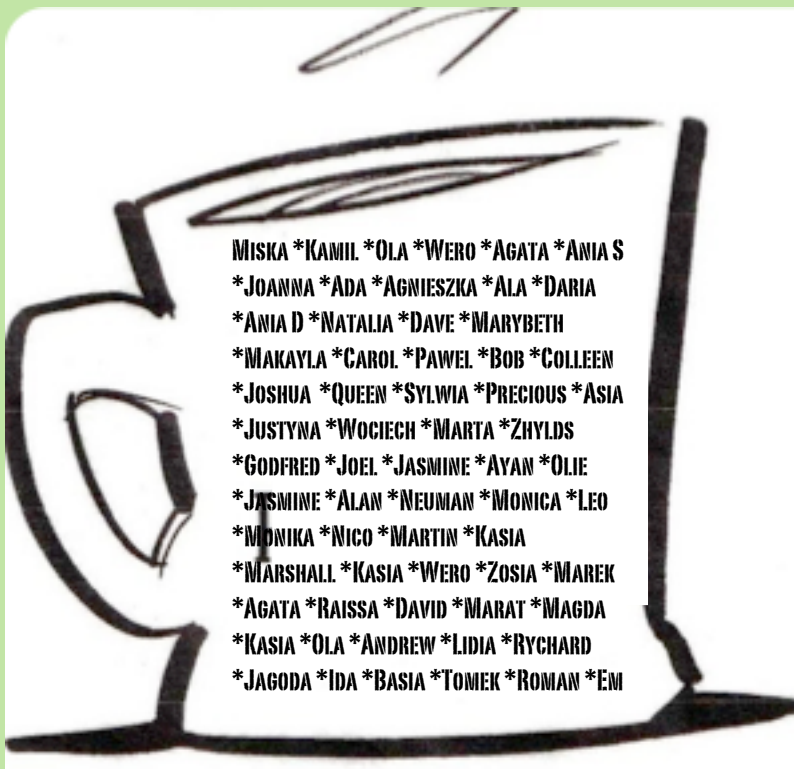
so. We have been so very blessed by your generosity and your continued support in our ministry and all that God is doing here. We are humbled when we think about how he desires to use us to show his love to others and to make disciples....and yet he does! Hallelujah!

There is much going on in Poland these days, and in this type of ministry where it's all about making connections with people, we are thrilled that we will have more time here in Poland to build on these connections and continue to make more.

Colorful Town Squares, Pierogis, and Sausages

When I think of Poland I think of so many different things now. I see red and white (the flag). I see pierogis, sausage, soups; I see beautiful farmland and small villages through the window of the train. (We have ridden on many a train in Poland.) I see concentration camps, museums, gorgeous city squares filled with colorful merchant houses that are now shops, and I see fountains and monuments. I also see letters put together in such a way that I often times struggle to pronounce them correctly.

However, they now carry meaning; they are names. I can think of so many names of people with whom we have met at some point during our time here. Each name represents a person, a relationship, a friendship, a soul loved by God. I wish you could see these faces and know these people. I wish it could be more than just a name to you. Each name represents someone in our shop, our Bible Study, or a friend we have made along the way. Please join us in prayer for each name on the list.



IS ALL MINISTRY COMPASSIONATE MINISTRY?

Now, I would like to address something that I have been thinking about for quite some time now. An internal struggle of sorts. I have only begun to put these thoughts into words, so bear with me as I make my first attempt.

Stop for a moment with me and consider the word `missionary`. When you hear that word, it probably conjures up different images in your mind. More than likely, most of the images probably have something to do with homeless or hungry people in remote villages. We've all seen photos where hungry mouths are being fed, clothing is being given out, or shelters are being built. We can all recall the feeling of joy that we ourselves have felt when we have been a part of filling a hungry belly or helping someone who can't `do it on their own.` Compassionate Ministries. It's what most people think of first. It's nice to make a positive difference in someone's life. I believe this is also true in our ministries, our jobs and our lives. Let's consider scripture for a moment as well. In Matthew 25:35-40 Jesus says, `For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.` We are Christians after all, and isn't that what God has called us to do?! In addition, we don't have to wait to see the tangible results of our ministry. We can see that people are no longer hungry; they have clothes on their backs; they have a place to stay; and though this may only be the beginning of the ministry, we can see that a change has been made and it is necessary to meet basic needs before spiritual needs can be addressed. I love to help people too, and this is where it gets tricky for me to work out. You can feed hundreds of people in a day at a homeless shelter. In a coffee shop you can serve many people coffee, but after that you aren't yet ready to minister spiritually. You are ready to begin building that relationship. Perhaps it starts with a smile, a conversation, or a greeting (dzien dobry). Rome wasn't built in a day. It takes consistency. It takes an opportunity to serve them-first coffee or conversation, and then brick, by brick, relationship by relationship we begin to build, and we pray that we will have the opportunity

to make them another cup of coffee, have another conversation, and add another brick. Building relationships; making connections. It's all about relationships. Where's the fruit? Where are the tangible results of our labor? I have been learning that it is under the soil of consistent sowing and watering. The great commission is to go and make disciples of all nations. Do you know what? Disciples are also middle class citizens that have clothes on their backs, food on their tables, and a place to live. Future disciples in this part of the world are people who don't feel the need for God because they believe they have enough already. Disciples are people who don't understand that they can have a personal relationship with the living God because they think they can do enough good things to get to heaven. In all of this, God is helping me see that everyone needs to hear the good news; everyone including the people who are not the picture of compassionate ministries in our minds. It will not affect you much to see a picture of a modern flat in a fairly prosperous European city like Poznan, Poland. However, I am beginning to embrace the fact that meeting needs in a country steeped in religious traditions is all about making connections that are only less tangible because basic needs are already met. I am beginning to understand that it might not seem like compassionate ministries in the traditional sense of the word, but it is just as important. Everyone needs to hear that a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is possible. I am beginning to see that patience is not just for the farmer waiting for the crops to grow. In a way we are all farmers in some sense in the process of making disciples. Though we may never see the tangible results of our work, we must carry on and live in a manner worthy of the Gospel as Paul says. Even now in my mind, I can trace current relationships to a specific point in the past. I can see how each connection has taken time and nurturing and patience to develop. Though I may not be meeting basic physical and emotional needs, God has shown me that if I am faithful in the relationships, I can indeed make a difference in someone's life and share the good news. For sure Rome wasn't built in a day. Brick by brick. Relationship by relationship.

Ministry Update

The past six and a half months has been full and rewarding.

We were able to attend a Field Strategy Coordinator meeting in Krakow. There we also met and talked with the new Regional Director and Dave was able to present him with some final completed legal documents for the shop in Gdansk! It was a time of celebration to be sure!

We were also able to attend a meeting for our European Field that was in Ankara, Turkey. We met many other volunteers and missionaries. We spent time together in worship, going to classes to learn more about the Word, and just sharing our struggles and victories.

Next, we met with our Central European Field in Vajta, Hungary. We met people from the eleven countries representing our field. What a fantastic time of fellowship. Our time was spent learning about the many different ministries in each country. I was particularly saddened to hear of the major issues facing the church in Romania and Bulgaria: Human Trafficking. Each country has its unique challenges and ministries. God showed us that no matter the challenge he finds creative ways to minister. Regardless of what we as human beings find as impossible; He is still able to make a way. The one commonality is our obedience to heed the call to be filled to overflowing with him, so that there is less of us and more of him. Oh that we could learn this better! How can people deny God's amazing grace if they experience it? Not if they experience our version of this grace, but if they can experience their own! Hallelujah. God is at work in the world still....may it be through us. Consider the reality of God wanting to use us to make disciples in the nations. It is ever humbling and awe

inspiring when we think upon it, and it is only through him that we are able.

Even in Poznan, Poland we have found that it is NOT about us and our ability to draw people in with our great programs or coffee; it's about God's amazing ability to transform us. When we are hungry enough for his presence-for him he transforms us. Indeed it is only then that he can transform us, so others can see that the difference is not in what we do but in who we are in Him. "For it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8 & 9.

Most recently, we had a Work and Witness team here from John Day, Oregon. Thank you God for the blessing it was having them here. They helped in so many ways. They did much hard work on the windows upstairs, but more so they really got in touch with serving others and making connections through our ministries. It was particularly special for Dave and I because they were the last church we spoke at when we were in the US doing deputation. To have them come and be a part of our shop, church, and ministries was a divine appointment by God. They were involved in English Conversation, our Single Mom's Ministry, our Bible Study, doing a read aloud for Children, doing a night of singing, poetry, and jokes at the shop, as well as street evangelism...just to name a few. :>

There is so much to share! We will be coming back to the US in the fall to speak about how God is working. We hope to see you all again and fill you in on what God has been teaching us.

Prayer Requests

1. Our Church body. Almost everyone is traveling for the summer months. Pray that God will keep them safe and that he will give them a time of renewal.

2. The staff of Sweet Surrender. We have hired many new workers, so join us in prayers that they will see God at work here. Pray for the Christians to be great witnesses for a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

3. Pray for James, our new volunteer. He will be with us for a year in Poznan.

4. Pray for us as we return to do

deputation, so we can return to Poland to continue the work that God is doing here.

5. Pray for the people we connected with during our street evangelism.

6. Pray for Poland in general as God is at work here.

7. Pray for Kristen, a SNU student who has been staying here in Poznan with us. She has been helping us a lot! She will be heading back to the US at the end of July.