



ANABAPTIST INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES

Pointing people to Christ

Summer 2016 | Issue 67

In this Issue

- What Are We Doing Here?
- Family Conference 2016
- GTE End of the Year Party
- Current Staff Needs
- A Visit from Hillcrest

The last few months have been full of activity at AIM in Poland, including special visits, a conference, and a GTE party. Enjoy a glimpse into these events, as well as Lavern Hershberger's reflections on the greater purpose and impact of AIM's work in Poland.

WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?

by Lavern Hershberger

"If it wouldn't have been for the Mennonites in Ukraine, I never would've heard the gospel." Vitaly, a Ukrainian believer, recently shared this with us as an encouragement. In 1861, Russian Czar Alexander II gave permission for peasants in his lands to join other churches besides the official Orthodox church. Those Mennonites in Ukraine who had a living faith became more active in sharing the gospel with their neighbors, and as a result, evangelical churches sprang up. They have continued until today, and through them Vitaly came to the Lord.

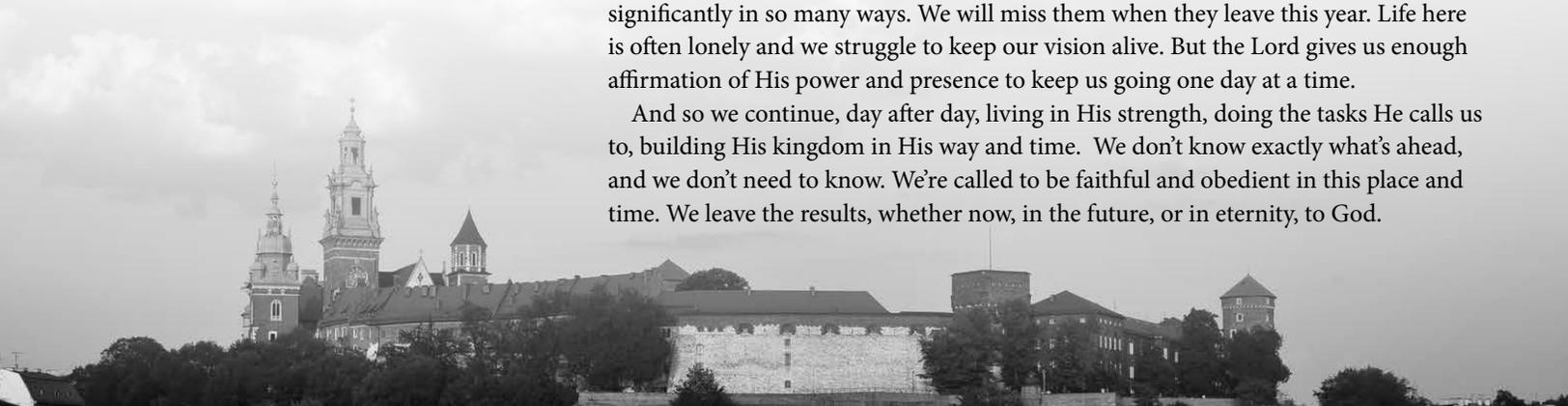
There are times when we wonder what good we are doing. We wonder if anything of worth will remain from our years of effort. Thankfully, we don't have to know. That's not our motivation. Our job is to remain faithful, and the Lord will bring the fruit in His time and way.

Here at Agape Mennonite Fellowship in Mińsk Mazowiecki, Poland, God is at work. Sometimes it's in obvious ways, but often it's more hidden. We are blessed with families and individuals who have stuck with us through thick and thin.

So what makes a Polish person decide to leave the comfortable, familiar, traditional Catholic church and fall in with a bunch of foreigners who speak broken Polish and have a strange lifestyle and clothing? What makes them willing to put up with questions and criticism from their family and friends? The reasons are as varied as each individual, but what all of us have in common is a need to know the Lord and to share life's journey with other believers. And somehow, here at Agape we've found that.

These big changes in people's lives happen in the context of a rather small and insignificant mission. We have four teachers who work faithfully, day after day, at our small English school, Gateway to English. Dervin, Marlin, Jewel, and Sharon—thank you! Jonathan and Heather have been here over 2 years and have contributed significantly in so many ways. We will miss them when they leave this year. Life here is often lonely and we struggle to keep our vision alive. But the Lord gives us enough affirmation of His power and presence to keep us going one day at a time.

And so we continue, day after day, living in His strength, doing the tasks He calls us to, building His kingdom in His way and time. We don't know exactly what's ahead, and we don't need to know. We're called to be faithful and obedient in this place and time. We leave the results, whether now, in the future, or in eternity, to God.



RECENT EVENTS

GTE End of the Year Party

We had a block party in the school parking lot to celebrate the end of another year at GTE. About 30 students came and we had a good time eating, playing games, and talking. It was special that Matthew Mast and Melvin Lehman, AIM board members, could be at the party and meet some of our students.



Sharon with the teens



The teachers did a great job decorating for the party!



Making homemade ice cream at the GTE party



Some of our great students at the GTE party



Awards and prizes for all!



Visiting at the GTE party



The Family Conference services were held in the tent at Gustavs



A group picture of those at the conference

Family Conference 2016

This year our annual conference was June 3-5. We held it at Gustavs as always. Phil Beiler was our speaker. Those who came really appreciated his practical teaching, drawn from God's Word, on marriage, family life, and child training. The time of fellowship for the families was also very meaningful. Some of these families have been coming to the conference for years and we have learned to know and appreciate them. Attendance was around 80. Thank God we had good weather and no mosquitos!

It was also significant to have Alvin and Esther Mast at the conference. They came to Poland as a visit in connection with the Seed of Truth magazine. Alvin was happy to meet many SOT readers at the conference, and hear firsthand how this monthly magazine is impacting lives. After the conference, Lavern and Lolita traveled with them to Krakow where they met some other SOT contacts.

STAFF NEEDS

We urgently need one single man to commit to a one-year term of teaching conversational English at Gateway to English, starting in August/September 2016. Teaching experience is preferred but not absolutely required. To volunteer or to recommend someone for this position, please contact Shannon Lehman at: **814-789-2812** or **personnel@aimpoland.org**

A VISIT FROM HILLCREST

A group of 8 happy volunteers from Hillcrest Home gave us a big boost when they spent 10 days here in March. They loved getting to know our English students while helping out with classes at GTE. This included a scavenger hunt all over Minsk. They spent 2 days in Gdansk helping with a building project and 2 days sightseeing Krakow. They visited a nursing home near Minsk and enjoyed the residents there. Thank you for coming and giving!

Reflections by Janette Martin

“He sits on the park bench with cigarettes surrounding him on the ground. He is sleeping. His clothes are warm because he has so many of them on, but I have a feeling that he needs so many of them because they are old and torn and are fast becoming rags. Who cares about him? Probably no one. Except.....for Jesus. Does he know that Jesus loves him incredibly? Did anyone ever tell him? I think one of the hardest things about being here in Poland is the language barrier. And so I will continue to smile and use the few Polish words that I do know to make a difference.” (This is an excerpt taken from my journal.)

Poland was an amazing experience! We had tons of fun with the staff, Dervin, Marlin, Jewel, and Sharon, and of course Lavern's and Jonathan's. It felt like we were there more to encourage them than anything else. Getting to experience another nursing home was really cool for us, because we all work at a nursing home. By that point in the trip we were all missing our residents from Hillcrest, so it was really fun to see older people again. We also got to experience touring a monastery with some monks as our tour guides. It was very interesting to hear what they believe and what is important to them. There are so many things that I could write about but I will choose to stop there. Special thanks to our hosts for making Poland a very enjoyable experience!

Reflections by Julia Coblentz

Poland was amazing! To describe it in a few words is impossible so I will just say a few things that really stood out to me. One was the number of people embracing Catholicism. We had the privilege of going inside a convent and speaking with some of the nuns, and also got a full tour of a monastery by two monks. They were all so sincere and so on fire for God. This was very encouraging and challenging to me, although I felt sad knowing that they believe that by works alone they are saved. I was challenged by the fact that we do know the truth; why are we not so on fire, leaving everything behind to follow and serve Christ for the rest of our lives?

Seeing how much Poland is still being affected by communism and what Hitler did was interesting. It's a quiet culture and in comparison, we felt like we were really loud! People don't want anything to do with things that remind them of what happened in the war! Until this visit, I never knew so much about Poland's history and how brutal and terrible the war was there. I learned a lot.

The old towns were definitely my highlight of the trip. What made them even better is knowing the history. Some towns were almost flattened, but have been built back as original as possible. The old castles, buildings and churches were amazing, and it is great how the country has built itself back up again. I would definitely do the trip all over again.



Reflections by Leighton Yoder

Poland was an awesome experience! I personally enjoyed all of the rich history that it has to offer. We spent quite a bit of time touring museums, old cathedrals, and walking through the streets of old towns. The youth of Poland are energetic and always ready to learn. The Gateway to English school was full of students that loved to practice their English and to learn new words and phrases. The food in Poland was also very good. My favorite food was a zapiekanka. There's nothing like it in the States. The melted chocolate in Krakow was also amazing! Overall the country is a beautiful place with beautiful people.



Anabaptist International Ministries
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AIM Financial Report

January 1—March 31, 2016

<u>Available balance January 1, 2016</u>	<u>\$18,041</u>
<u>Restricted funds January 1, 2016</u>	<u>\$3,477</u>

Income

Unrestricted donations	\$18,673
Restricted donations	\$7,380
English lessons	\$15,494
Other income	\$1
Total income	\$41,548

Expenses

Labor	\$21,726
Administrative	\$382
Facilities	\$2,749
Personnel	\$3,710
Public relations	\$3,755
Publications	\$2,829
Supplies	\$933
Utilities	\$2,194
Other expenses	\$7
Total expenses	\$38,285

<u>Net profit (loss)</u>	<u>\$ 3,263</u>
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<u>Assets released from restriction</u>	<u>\$7,380</u>
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<u>Restricted funds March 31, 2016</u>	<u>\$3,477</u>
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<u>Available unrestricted funds March 31, 2016</u>	<u>\$21,304</u>
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Response Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Monthly Sponsorship:

___\$100 ___\$50 ___\$20 ___\$10 _____ (Other)

___ **Gateway to English** school

___ **Seed of Truth** magazine

___ Staff Support

___ General needs

One-time donation: \$ _____

___ **Gateway to English** school

___ **Seed of Truth** magazine

___ Church Library/Literature Fund

___ General needs

Anabaptist International Ministries

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Please include this card when sending your donation. Donors may indicate preferences for where their gifts are used and the board will honor preferences where possible. However, the board reserves the right to assign all contributions where needed.