Introduction to Agape

Lavern Hershberger

A lot has happened in the fourteen years our family has been here. Being part of God’s work in the church here has been a tremendous privilege. We have witnessed first-hand God’s work in changing and growing people’s hearts, including our own! Our faith has been increased, often through situations that we didn’t see our way through. The Lord loves His church and He will build it!

Ministering cross-culturally poses big challenges but also brings big blessings as we see that people’s needs and God’s solutions are the same in every culture and part of the world. We have learned a lot about flexibility and about seeing things from another perspective. We have learned to appreciate what we have and also appreciate what we can learn from others. We have learned that living by example and walking with someone is worth more than many words. There are not words to express what it means to see a person experiencing forgiveness, peace, and freedom in Christ after years of living in bondage and fear.

The church meets in our English school, Gateway to English. We have taken out the wall between two classrooms to make a large room for church services. Most Sundays the space is packed full with around 45 people.

Our services are less formal than some, and it is not unusual to have someone in the audience helping the speaker find the correct Polish word, or to have to rearrange the chairs to make room for more people coming in. I appreciate the reverent worship in a warm, family-like atmosphere.

Poles and Americans share responsibilities of moderating, preaching, leading discussions, teaching Sunday School, and leading singing and prayer. What an interesting mix of languages, styles, and personalities! It gives I Corinthians 12 a whole new meaning!

We’d be delighted to have you visit! Be ready to share something, we love to hear from visitors. And please pray for us!
The 2014 Hope Singers recording, *Eternal God*, is now available for purchase.

**Tracks**
1. Our Father In Heaven
2. Jauchzet dem Herrn
3. O Lord God
4. Lord, How Majestic is Your Holy Name
5. Blazhen Muzh
6. Pasterzem wym Pan
7. Kiedy Ranne
8. Wsrod Nocnej Ciszy
9. Keep in the Middle of the Road
10. Bonse Abe
11. I'm Gonna Sing 'Til the Spirit Moves in My Heart
12. Te Deum Laudamus
13. Jesus, Lover of my Soul
14. What a Friend We Have in Jesus
15. Eternal God
16. Precious Lord
17. Shalom Chevarim

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**Testimony**

*hearing from Olga Olewinska*

My name is Olga Olewinska. I'd like to tell you about my journey to God. My father is Roman Catholic, my mother is Russian Orthodox, and as a child I was baptized in the Moscow patriarchy of the Orthodox church in Kiev, Ukraine. I never felt comfortable there, because the mass was celebrated in Old Slavonic, and God seemed distant and not interested in what happened in people's lives. My father wanted me to go to the Catholic church and for 10 years that's how it was.

For part of my life I was sure that I was a Christian because I believed in the existence of God. Now I know how shallow that was. Unfortunately, Jesus took a back seat in my life. I thought I could take care of myself. I felt an emptiness in my soul, but I didn’t know how I could change it. From my perspective now, I understand that Jesus directed my life so I would meet Him. He used believing friends who for several years prayed for my conversion, explained the Scriptures, and supported me spiritually.

Over time, I started to consider if I'm walking the way of salvation, and I read the Bible more often and more carefully. I understood that I needed to be rescued, and that the only hope is in Jesus Christ. I knew that I must believe with all my heart and make Him the Lord of my life. All these things helped me to trust Jesus, and to understand and appreciate His sacrifice.

Now I'm a different person, a new creation. I know that God forgave my sins, and that I'm His child. I believe in His majesty and promise of eternal life in the new Jerusalem.

*And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

*Philippians 1:6*

Olga lives in Mińsk Mazowiecki with AIM staff ladies. She was baptized in 2011 and has attended Agape faithfully since then.

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**English Night**

*a report by Dervin Martin*

English Night is a Friday night social event planned and hosted by *Gateway to English* teachers for all students and their families.

This definition gives a basic explanation of what an English Night is, though it is supposed to be much more than a fun event. English Nights were created to build community among students while giving an opportunity for us teachers to get to know our students and their families better. We try to plan an English Night once a month. The evening involves games, food, and fellowship.

We also celebrate American holidays on English Nights, for example, Thanksgiving Day and Saint Patrick's Day. Our last English Night of this school term was June 12. We celebrated each of our students' hard work, as well as the end of school! The celebration was held outside in the school’s parking area. There were a variety of games and activities, food, awards, and certificates, plus lots of smiles and laughter! The evening was an exciting way to conclude the year with many students plus their families and friends!
I'm Agnieszka. I'm married with a 13 year-old daughter and I am a teacher.

About twelve years ago I met an American Mennonite woman, Laura Smucker. In the beginning of our friendship I wanted to improve my English skills, so we started to meet regularly. But besides English lessons we talked about her faith and my religion. I was a Catholic who went to the church and attended all Catholic sacraments, but I always felt a lack of God. So I used to think that I am not worthy to have such a close relationship with the Lord as what I saw in Laura. We spent lots of hours talking about God. My first prayer was also with Laura. I couldn’t really pray. I was taught to say prayers written by the priest or other people. And then my heart started to open.

I remember when Laura and her husband John invited me and my family for their sons’ baptism. From that time we started to come to the Mennonite church. I also read Bible more often. Of course there were still lots of things I didn’t understand but one night when I was studying God’s words I felt that I wanted to go with God, to give Him my life. I felt worthy to be His daughter. I remember the feelings I had. I wanted to laugh and sing loudly and cry as well. I was really happy.

And then I met with my parents’ criticism and even anger that I stopped coming to the Catholic church. But today I can say that God really cares about His children and can take their struggles off if only we trust Him.

Today I try to be God’s light to other seeking people. I pray for my family members who haven’t been born again yet and although I would like them to give their lives to God right now, I am patient. I believe that He can do everything in His time.

Laura was my first step toward God and I am thankful her that she didn’t pressure, condemn or criticize me. Her evangelism started from showing me what the life of a child of God looks like. I desire to have the same.

Agnieszka lives in Mińsk Mazowiecki with her husband and daughter. She was baptized in 2011 and regularly attends Agape.
### AIM Financial Report
January 1, 2015—March 31, 2015

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**Net profit (loss)**: $(1,301)

**Assets released from restriction**: $7,794

**Available restricted funds**: $2,750

**Available unrestricted funds**: $25,917

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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

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