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Spring 2026



Going to the sea!

Hello, dear friends!

I hope you are enjoying spring! This week, Agnieszka and I are traveling to Gdańsk, Poland, where I will preach at a friend's church and present a paper at a conference at the University of Gdańsk. Please pray for me, as I will be presenting my paper in Polish. It will be a good time to meet new people and visit with old friends. Agnieszka will also meet with some of our former School of Missions students who live in the area. They graduated quite a few years ago, but our relationships continue to this day. In the short time between our meetings, we plan to visit the Baltic Sea!

After we return from Gdańsk, we will send you pictures of the church, the conference, and all the special people.

The need for trust and authenticity

Imagine the following scenario. A church has an open mic policy, allowing congregants to come to the front and share their prayer requests publicly. This practice becomes so popular that the church must limit how many people can share. Later, the church replaced the open mic with a team that prays for people after the service, but people didn't want to participate. What happened? I encountered this type of situation in my doctoral study of a church, and it happened to the church I am currently analyzing. How can crises impact the church community?

In our last prayer letter, I wrote about a church that experienced two major crises: first, the resignation of their pastor, followed by news of his divorce; then, the shutdowns due to the pandemic. These events deeply affected the church, causing attendance to fall from 400 to 150. People left for various reasons, such as the pastor's resignation and tensions with the church board.

What does this have to do with the story concerning prayer above?

Many of the people I interviewed shared with me the importance of relationships. I should add that their value of relationships had

relationships, meaning people share their real problems and struggles with each other. It seems that the negative situations this church experienced made them realize their relationships might not have been as authentic as they thought. One person sarcastically said that the church is a holy place of the sacred, while outside of it is the place for the profane, meaning that the church is the place to sit and look like a good Christian who does not have problems.

If relationships are to grow, people need to trust each other enough to be vulnerable at the right times and in the right spaces. The problems revealed that something was lacking in their church community. At the same time, those negative situations had led to a degradation of trust to the extent that people didn't even want to pray with others from the church about their problems after the worship service. Building, maintaining, and defending trust in the church, as I have come to see, is a very important element of a healthy church. This also enables a church to be more authentic with each other.

One of the problems I see is that people don't reflect on these matters much and don't talk about them, so others don't know that "We see similar things here"! That's why I plan to go back and share with them my findings.

This church has a long road ahead of itself in rebuilding its relationships with one another. Please pray that God would continue to give them wisdom, discernment, and above all, love for each other as they seek to be God's church.

I would also like to leave you with a couple of questions. How are the relationships in your own churches? To what extent do you know that you can trust other people in your church? Are you being authentic in your relationships with them? What times do you have in your churches to talk about real problems?

Important reminder

been changed to Samuel and Krystyna Pike. We made this change on the recommendation of people here in Poland, who said it would be better to distance ourselves from an American Protestant mission organization if I were to take on a part-time role at a university. Keep in mind that Poland is predominantly Catholic and has more closed views on Protestants than the United States does. I do not know if this would be possible since I will turn 62 this year. I may also be able to teach at a couple of seminaries here in Poland. In short, we don't know what doors God will open after I finish my degree, but we are trying to prepare for it. We have no intention of leaving Poland or the mission. We are missionaries. Please indicate that your contribution is for Samuel and Krystyna Pike when giving to us, and also use our missionary number, 4000-237. Thank you.

Mike and Agnieszka

Pray with us

- We are thankful that Agnieszka has been doing better with her fibromyalgia, at least for the time being. But please, keep praying as this condition is quite unpredictable.
- We are thankful that Mike will be preaching in Gdańsk and also has the opportunity to deliver a paper at the University of Gdańsk. Please, pray for the new contacts he will make there.
- Agnieszka is thankful for the relationships she builds with the young women she mentors. One of them recently asked Agnieszka if she would be willing to go wedding dress shopping with her when the time comes, as her mother does not live in Poland :-)
- Pray for our church retreat, which will happen June 4 – 7. Mike will be giving a workshop concerning culture shock and how to adapt to living in a new culture. As the people in our church come from different countries, there is a lack of rootedness in staying here, which results in

people coming and going, I hope that helping people through this process will help them become more rooted and a stable part of our church

- Continue to pray for Mike as he continues to analyze the last church that he studied.
- Pray for Mike and his friend, Chris, who has recently become interested in becoming a pastor. Mike hopes to mentor him and encourage him as he studies at Bible school in Austria.

Partner with us

We hope you'll take a moment to think about partnering with us. There are a few ways you can get involved: by starting to financially support our ministry, increasing your support, or making a one-time gift.

Just click the button below.

Thanks so much!

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