

# HeartCry

MAGAZINE

## THE LOCAL CHURCH

A PRICELESS TREASURE

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

UPDATES FROM

POLAND, ARMENIA, RUSSIA, AND MYANMAR



## GREETINGS

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, the Author and Perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:2) and the Foundation and Cornerstone of the Church (Ephesians 2:20). We are living in tumultuous times, and there is great upheaval among the nations. Nevertheless, Christ reigns! Psalm 2 assures us that God has established His King upon Zion (verse 6) and that He rules over the nations with absolute sovereignty (verses 8-9). When the nations rage, He laughs (verses 1-4).

In the midst of difficult times, the Church must always remember that we have the *only* solution—the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Church must not capitulate to the philosophies and social constructs of men. We must not compromise its stand on the Scriptures, and we must not seek a truce with the world. The Church is the only repository of truth among men; we must strive to be a faithful steward of the message that has been

entrusted to us (II Timothy 1:14; 2:2). We must keep our message undiluted and our lives unstained by sin.

As a few of our missionaries help us take a closer look at the local church in this edition of the *HeartCry Magazine* (pages 3-13), may we remember that the Church is the light of the world (Matthew 5:14) and the epicenter of world missions. Although the Great Commission is a difficult task, it is not a complicated one. It involves biblical churches training up elder-qualified men and sending them out to plant other biblical churches. This is the focus of our elders, our congregation, and our mission arm—the HeartCry Missionary Society.

We thank the Lord for your prayers and support for this ministry. We hope and pray that this edition of our magazine might be a blessing to you.

Your brother,  
Paul David Washer



# THE LOCAL CHURCH: A PRICELESS TREASURE

PETER SCHILD  
GERMANY

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*"They who had no news of Him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand." - Romans 15:21*

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**A**t the beginning of my mission work in Frankfurt, I had some sleepless nights. Living in an apartment in the city is extremely expensive. I was plagued by the thought that I lived on donations from beloved saints around the world; I was aware that, in other places, several missionaries could live on the amount I received as one individual. For this reason, I often thought about pursuing a full-time job next to my mission work.

One day, I shared my concerns with Brother Paul Washer. He asked me a question that would change my thinking: "Peter, how much would you say a biblical church is worth?"





I immediately understood what he was trying to tell me. A biblical local church in Frankfurt is, of course, priceless. Its value cannot be measured. To work for the establishment of such a church is worth any amount of money and every effort. Brother Paul was right. By the grace of God, our church has now been in existence for four years. The Lord has accomplished this, and it is worth everything it has cost.

All this reminds me of something we learn in the last book of the Bible, Revelation. Of all the images the Lord could have chosen to symbolize a church, He chose the golden lampstand. In Revelation 1:12, the Apostle John sees seven golden lampstands, and we receive the interpretation of this image in verse 20: the seven lampstands are seven churches.

We can learn a lot from this fact alone, that the churches are represented by golden lampstands. First of all, we are aware that a lampstand is meant to shine. Churches should radiate into the darkness of this world through the pure and bright light of the gospel of Jesus Christ. However, I would like to

focus your attention not on the function, but rather on the nature of the lampstands. It is explicitly pointed out that they are golden. In the eyes of the Lord, therefore, a church is exceedingly precious. Do you share God's view of the local church?

In the sanctuary of Israel, in the tabernacle, there was a golden lampstand. It was not a small, simple, cheap candlestick. This lampstand was to be made of about 75 pounds of pure, 24-carat gold (Exodus 25:31ff.). The production was an extremely costly affair. But the lampstand was not only remarkably valuable but also an extraordinarily beautifully designed work of art. The goldsmiths crafted it from a single piece of gold, hammering and shaping it into its form—not glued, not composed, but a single hammered piece. The lampstand had seven artfully decorated arms, and seven golden oil lamps were placed on top. It looked like a golden almond tree with seven branches, with blossoms, flowers, and other ornaments (signifying the vitality and fruitfulness of the church). It was truly a masterwork of craftsman-

ship, an ornate and most magnificent work of art, like an enormous piece of jewelry. Since the lampstand was so artistic, its design was very laborious and time-consuming work for the master goldsmiths, who were equipped by the Holy Spirit to fulfill this task (Exodus 31:1ff.).

Is the image clear in your mind? Such a lampstand was not to be found in private households. It was a unique, priceless artwork, set aside for the

holy sanctuary of God. It was a true treasure.

Once we understand this, we can only marvel at the fact that it pleased the Lord to symbolize His churches as golden lampstands—even a financially poor church like the one in Smyrna. Should we not realize how precious a biblical local church is?

What John writes is not a human view of things. In Revelation 1:10, the Apostle John, who was in the Spirit,







writes from a spiritual and heavenly perspective. The golden lampstands reveal to us how the Lord views His churches. We may look at congregations and see no beauty or glory; but the Lord sees churches as His precious and holy lampstands, masterpieces of His pierced hands.

We do not have this great value from ourselves. The Lord Jesus Christ paid the most precious price for the Church—His own life. It is this sacrifice that has instilled such value—precious beyond all measure!

Has He not cleansed the Church with His blood from all sinful filth and all uncleanness and purified it with His Holy Spirit? And has He not formed the Church with great effort and artistry? Has not the Lord labored tirelessly to build His Church? He sweat

in the Garden of Gethsemane, and He bled on the Cross of Calvary. He worked vigorously to build His lampstands for His glory. And does not the Lord call and equip His craftsmen, in whom He dwells and through whom He works? Has he not called men who toil to build His Church, not according to their ideas and wishes, but exactly according to God's heavenly blueprint? And is their effort—these hours of toil, sweat, tears, and sleepless nights—not a worthwhile calling?

Does this match your view of the Church? Do you recognize this wonderful masterpiece and its unmatched value? Do you treasure Christ's Church? Do you value your local church? On earth, there is truly nothing comparable and nothing more valuable! May the Holy Spirit open our eyes anew to see the incomparable worth of a biblical church! Whoever has the Spirit shall have a spiritual view of the Church, a view of the utmost esteem.

A biblical local church is indeed a priceless treasure. . . . .

# THE MINISTRY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

MARTIN MANTEN | SWITZERLAND







**A**re you not glad and thankful that—while we wonder and search the Scriptures about what we are to do, how we are to do it, and why we are to do it—nothing our God and Father in heaven has planned in His eternal counsels can be thwarted? All His plans will certainly come to pass (Numbers 23:19)! I am profoundly grateful to know that we do not need a “master plan,” because we have a Master who plans perfectly. We have a good Shepherd who loves and leads us to salvation, sanctification, and glorification. All that is ours to do is to follow Him and stay close to Him (John 10:27; 15:1-8; Mark 1:17)!

One of God’s eternal determinations here and now on this earth is that he will build His Church, the Church for which His Son gave his life (Ephesians 5:25-33). Are we not privileged beyond measure to be called to be a part of this endeavor? But how do we do this? Thankfully, the Bible instructs us regarding both *how* and *why* this is to be done.

The first question at hand, then, is: “How can we fulfill Jesus’ Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20)?”

This question is one that every believer needs to ask, because every believer is called to participate. Make no mistake, this is not optional, but God’s declared will.

So again, how do we go about this? There is no need to be creative, innovative, or progressive in this area. On the contrary, the only need we have is to be faithful—faithful to His Word. His Word is all we ever need in order to do all that He ever wants from us (II Timothy 3:16-17).

The Great Commission then can be summed up as follows. By the proclamation of the gospel in word and deed, we want 1) to bring sinners to salvation in Christ, and 2) to bring the saved to maturity in Christ by teaching them to obey all that Christ has commanded us. This is the task, done in and through His Church!

In order to live the Word of God, we need to read it, understand it, and practice it *within the context of a biblical local church*. In this way, we show ourselves approved for the edification of the church itself, with the goal of living in this lost world as salt and light. By doing just that, we live up to what Jesus taught in the Great Commission and thereby bring glory to God.

This brings us to our second question: “Why must we fulfill the Great Commission?” It is the will of God that the gospel be taught and proclaimed; we do it, then, because we love Him, His



Word, His people, and the lost (John 21:17). The primary instrument to advance the kingdom of God in this day and age is the local church. Churches equip the saints and plant new churches. Biblical churches are the pillar and support of the truth. Churches are the instruments God has chosen to let His light shine in this dark world, so that people may see “our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

Seeing the immense importance of the local church for the furtherance of the gospel, it is worth noting a few of its key aspects. **Biblical preaching, teaching, and prayer** build the safeguard of the local church. They keep us on the narrow path and help us avoid sin, heresy, and extremes. They provide wisdom from above and discernment that we need for the road that lies ahead of us. They also prepare the ground for fruitful fellowship and God-honoring observance of the Lord’s Supper. These basics provide the good soil for fruitful

and sound church growth. Take away the solid foundation of sound proclamation and prayer, and the house will fall. The importance of knowing and believing these fundamental truths cannot be overemphasized.

**The local church exists to hallow the name of Jesus, to advance His kingdom, and to help His people understand the will of God—that it might be done on earth as it is in heaven. Only sound and strong churches can plant sound and strong new churches!**

God loves His Church. And we love His Church! However, it is despite our efforts, not because of them, that God builds His Church—it is *His* Church after all. We are aware of our limita-



tions and our own hearts, which are prone to wander; but we have a great and good God whom we trust to do what only He can do! Nevertheless, we will work, for so we have been called, to train and equip God's people for ministry.

*"You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." (II Timothy 2:1-2)*

My friend, I hope and pray that these words will encourage you to be a faithful student of the Word of God and servant of the local church—one who does not look forgetfully into the mirror, but remembers what he has learned and applies it by the grace of God to his own life.

*"The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person." (Ecclesiastes 12:13)*

*"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (II Peter 3:18)*

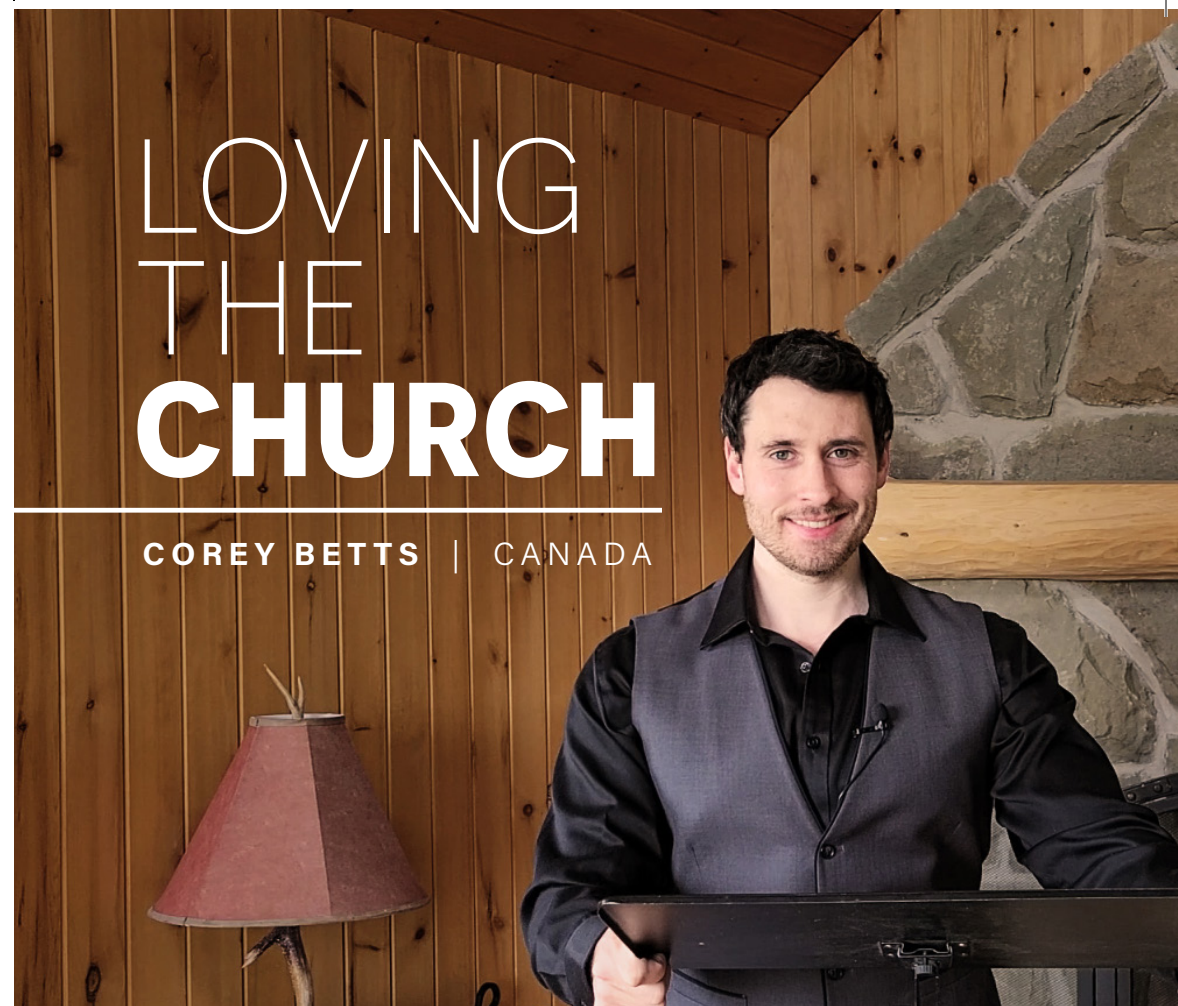
May we ever trust in the power of the Word! This short article was written with the aim, hope, and prayer of encouraging my brothers and sisters to fight the good fight, to finish the course, and to keep the faith (II Timothy 4:7)—for the good of Christ's Church, for the salvation of the lost, and for the Glory of God!

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# LOVING THE CHURCH

COREY BETTS | CANADA



Last November marked a special milestone for our church, Christ Community Church. It was five years before, in the fall of 2015, that the church was officially planted. But what does it mean to "plant" a church? Was there all of a sudden a group of faithful people who appeared and, under the compulsion of Scripture, formed a local church? We are indeed compelled by Scripture to plant local churches, but it never happens suddenly, as if by providential magic. No church is planted without much prayer, many trials, and hard work.

I must confess, as far as church planters go, I have had it easier—substantially easier—than many others. This is thanks in no small part to Dave Sto-

rey, another missionary with HeartCry here in New Brunswick. It was Dave who initially planted the seeds that would grow into this local body.

While living in Fredericton, Pastor Dave had tried to start a church plant while working many hours a week teaching guitar lessons. The church plant never really materialized, but many of his guitar students heard the gospel and came to Christ, getting involved in other churches in the city. In 2006, Pastor Dave moved back to his home of Doaktown, led by the Lord to plant Miramichi Valley Church (MVC). Almost immediately, thanks to a various array of providentially designed circumstances, hard work in evangelism, and dedicated prayer, the



endeavor was successful. Within a year, the church had found its feet. After leaving a Wesleyan church with a decidedly liberal and heretical pastor, I joined MVC as an 18-year-old university student who loved the Lord and wanted to serve the church in whatever capacity I could. Over the next five years, I helped with various ministries at the church, volunteered for other ministries, spent time advancing my biblical studies, directed a few Bible camps, graduated from college, and built a strong and brotherly relationship with Dave.

The church in Doaktown firmly established, Dave eventually turned his gaze back to Fredericton and the students who had been converted under his ministry while teaching guitar lessons. He reached out to some of them, and plans were again made to begin a church plant. He led monthly Sunday evening Bible studies in the city while looking for and praying that God would provide someone to lead the small body of believers.

In 2013, he asked me. Without hesitation and full of confidence and conviction, I answered him, “No.” I told him I had no interest or ability to pastor a church. Further, I told him, “I cannot see myself ever pastoring a church; I promise I will pray about it, but you may want to look for someone else.”

And I did pray about it.  
But my prayer was not for revelation or opportunity.  
My prayer was aimed at what I knew in my heart to be the problem: I did not love the Church.

Oh, of course, I loved my brothers and sisters in Christ. I loved the Lord, and I loved His people generally. But the Church as a whole? All of those people together? It is one thing to love individual sheep; it is quite another to love all the sheep. And I knew if I would ever be fit to pastor a church, I did not need a “green light” from God as much as I needed a change wrought in my heart. I needed to love



the Church. And that was my prayer: “If You would have me pastor these people, if You would have me to lead this congregation, then I pray, Lord, give me a love for Your Church. If You do, if You grant me an elevated love, a special love for Your people, then I will know You have called me to lead them; and I will go.”

I prayed this for two years; by the spring of 2015, I knew He had answered. The Lord had, by degrees, cultivated a love for the Church in me. A love irrespective of the individual, but for the Church itself as a whole. And now that love was ripe. I called Pastor Dave and asked him if the church still needed a pastor. They did. I told him, “I would happily become the pastor of this small group of believers.” And that is exactly what the Lord ordained.

In November 2015, we began regular Sunday Morning Meetings at a

small lodge we rented from the City of Fredericton. I laid a foundation of preaching a clear gospel and expounding on the doctrines of God’s sovereignty and wrath. Our numbers first dwindled below our initial 24 congregants, but we have since grown to over 80 people. There have been at least a dozen saved from the kingdom of darkness and delivered to the kingdom of light. There have been many sheep—loved by God yet abused and starving—that have been found and brought to good pasture. God’s Name is being made great here in the city of Fredericton. Thank you for your continued support and prayers.

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# Missionary Spotlight:

# ADAM WEGRZYK

## Poland



*After being converted and leaving Roman Catholicism, Adam joined an Evangelical church. He later attended a seminary in Poland, where he now ministers in a small but growing congregation in Krakow. He and his wife, Elisa, have two children. HeartCry has provided part of the needed financial support for Adam and his family so that he can end his career as a police officer and focus his efforts on pastoring.*



## Adam's Testimony

I was born in Poland in 1987. Like almost every person in this country, I was a Roman Catholic from the beginning. My parents led me through all the Roman Catholic sacraments. Because of this, all my life I was convinced that I was a good person who was going to heaven. I saw my merits before God in going to the mass, participating in the Catholic festivals, and accepting in my heart the reality of a god of the Roman Catholic doctrine. When I was 19 years old, my sinful lifestyle reached its apex. Yet, in that moment, I was not aware of that, because being a Roman Catholic gave me a false assurance that my merits before God were more than my sins. So I continued to think I was a good person with no need to be worried—even if there was sin in my life, I surmised, God would not be displeased with me, because I did everything the Roman Catholic Church required me to do.

Before I turned 20, I completed my first job application, which was very important to me. Because of my high self-esteem at that time, I basically had no doubts that my application would be approved. In the end, I failed to get that job, which ignited in me a hatred against God. The Lord had put me in circumstances that injured my high self-esteem. I started realizing that I did not actually have control over anything in my life. My family members were dying, and I was helpless. My work application did not go through, and I was helpless. These and other factors brought me to the point where I started thinking more and more about my life. I was feeling highly disappointed and even angry at God because I thought that He should have given me all I wanted in return for my religious life. In the course of time, as I continued not to get my way, my anger with God increased.

A few months later, I went to visit my family in a different part of Poland. Spontaneously, while driving, I decided to stop and visit a friend that I had not seen for years (he lived in a town on the way to my destination). The meeting with my friend lasted only fifteen minutes, but I believe that it was a divinely orchestrated appointment in order to save me. During the conversation with my friend, I started complaining about God and telling my friend how much I expected Him to do for me

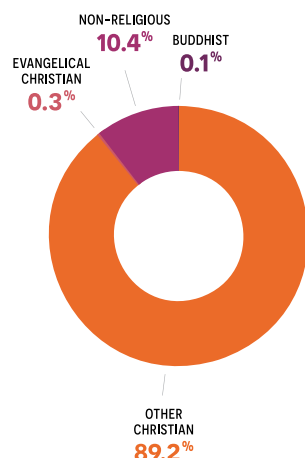


## POLAND at a Glance

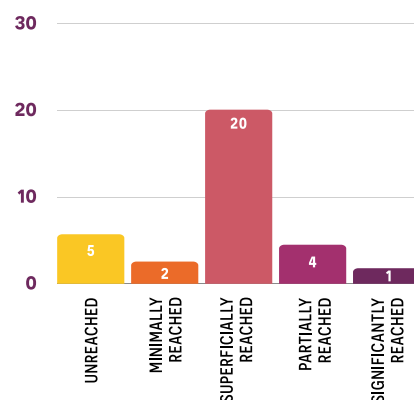


TOTAL POPULATION  
37,768,000

### MAJOR RELIGIONS



### PEOPLE GROUPS: 32



Source: Joshua Project

and how much He did not do. In response to my complaints, my friend told me, “Adam, just trust God. Trust Him, and you will not die.” It sounded simple—actually too simple to me. I had heard such phrases all my life. But at that particular moment, the Lord used those words in a tremendous way. After I left my friend’s house and before I got back into the car, I was overwhelmed by those words. So I looked to the sky and mindfully said to God: “If this is so...if it is all about trusting You, then I trust You. I don’t depend on myself anymore, because I don’t know anything and can’t do anything with my life. Please God, take over my life and do what You want to do with me.”

I started thinking and meditating on God, waiting to see Him work in my life. Several weeks later, I was in my house when I suddenly thought to myself, “If I believe in God, then I want to know more about the One who saved me.” I took the Bible in my hand and started looking at it. I thought it was a huge book. I quickly estimated that, if I read about ten chapters a day, I would be able to read the Bible four times a year. So I started reading. I finished reading the Bible after about three months, and my conclusion was that I did not understand anything! So I started over again. The more I kept reading the Bible, the more inconsistencies I saw between the Roman Catholic Church and the Word of God. Not being able to reconcile the two, I began to think

about what I should do. On one hand, I was passionate for the Word and excited about how it was changing me and giving me a desire for the Lord. On the other hand, I was still officially in the Roman Catholic system. Eventually, as I saw the grossly blasphemous teaching and practices of the Roman Catholic system in light of the Word of God, I decided to officially leave it by submitting the act of apostasy (or defection) in the eyes of the Catholic authorities. I simply wanted to have nothing to do with their false gospel or practices.

As I look back to the past and see how the Lord saved me, I can say that He led me by His perfect will to my friend, whose words directed me to ask God for help and trust Him with all my heart. I started reading the Word, which showed me the glory of the Lord, His holiness, and my own sinfulness. As a result of my new desires, my entire life started changing dramatically. I became a new creation

in the Lord Jesus Christ, and my life now belongs to Him. “Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!”

## Adam’s Call to Ministry

After my conversion, the Lord gave me an unusual desire to read the Word. I read the Bible for hours every day, which I did not consider unusual. I was sure that reading the Word so much was a natural and normal thing in the life of every person who had been amazingly saved by God’s grace. But now I see that the Lord had His purpose in giving me such a desire not only to study His Word but also to read and listen to different Christian materials.

At some point, the Lord showed me the joy and the importance of being in a local church. I found an Evangelical church in my town that seemed to be good (actually, given the fact that Protestants constitute less than 1% of people in Poland, finding any





Evangelical church within a sixty-mile radius is almost an achievement in itself!). I visited that small church, which was conservative and comprised primarily of older people. They had one pastor, who was zealous for the Lord but was not gifted in preaching. Because I did not see any other choice, I decided to stay with them and continue my personal study of the Word.

In the midst of that, I was exposed to some clips on YouTube that showed people who had been hurt and deceived by false teachers. I became very angry with these false preachers and thought to myself: “If only I could meet with those people who were led astray, I would tell them what the Bible really says.” This is how my



desire to preach the Word began. I was motivated to speak the truth of the Word of God to people so that they would not be misled by false teachers. Somehow, at that moment, I found it necessary to study theology before I ever became a preacher. As so many people in Poland are Roman Catholics (who by default consider Catholic priests to be the only ones who can teach the Bible), I thought I ought to get a theological education in order to gain people’s attention and trust. So I searched for any Evangelical seminaries in Poland; I found just four. I joined the closest one and studied theology there for four years. During my studies, one of my professors explained to me that I needed to start practicing preaching in my local church. I did not want to do that, as I did not think I was even ready. But the professor called my pastor and asked if it could be possible. My pastor consented and allowed me to share a bit from the Word one Sunday morning. In hindsight, I see everything was terrible—I was not qualified at all to stand in the pulpit, nor was I skilled to exegete the Scripture. My message was a compilation of what I had heard on the internet from other preachers. But for some reason, the people were impressed and kept commending me. Because of that, the pastor started having me preach for the church longer and more frequently. Thus the Lord brought me into ministry, despite my weakness.

### Elisa’s Testimony

I was born in Paris, France, in 1990. My parents are not Christians, but I have a godly grandmother who always

shared the gospel with me when I would see her. I did not pay much attention to what she said, though I believe now that the Lord used her words and prayers later in my life. My parents did not have a good marriage and divorced when I was thirteen years old. Later on, I started having negative thoughts about any religion and told myself that only weak people needed to believe in a god.



When I was 15 years old, I traveled to Fort Worth, Texas, for a year as an exchange student. In my Spanish class, there were two Christian girls. They did not share their faith at first, but they were different from all the other teenage girls I knew. They became my really good friends.

A few months before I had to go back home, they invited me to their church. I lied initially in order to avoid going, but they kept asking. So I went, hoping they would then leave me alone. It was a Baptist church, and the day I

went was a Wednesday evening service for the younger people. I remember having very judgmental thoughts toward most of the people there. I just wanted to be back home. They sang songs, and I hardened myself, determined that nothing would impact me that evening. Then the pastor gave a gospel presentation. I listened but did not pay much attention. Then he said, “A lot of you in this room need Jesus

Christ.” In my heart, I responded to him, “You need Jesus; I don’t need Jesus.” But, in a way I cannot explain, I found myself on my knees only a few moments later, asking God to forgive me and confessing that I needed a Savior. It was as if the Holy Spirit opened my eyes to see that there were two Elisas: the one that I portrayed to others, who people thought was genuine; and then the real Elisa, the one God sees, with all my sins and everything I had hidden from everyone



else. That thought put a genuine fear in my heart.

After that day, I was not the same girl anymore. I had the desire to live for God and read His Word. He gave me a heart of flesh in place of my heart of stone. Unfortunately, even though I attended many churches after my conversion, I did not find a biblical church until I was 21. In that challenging period, the Lord sustained me through Christian friends at school, good books, and sermons online.

## Recent Update from Adam

Greetings and love from us to the HeartCry brethren. My wife and I highly appreciate all the prayers and support we have been receiving from you. As we look back over the past year, we clearly see that the pandemic has been a great blessing to our church. I could list all the things that come to mind, but let me just emphasize one: a greater understanding of Christ's Church. Many unexpected trials and challenges are forcing us as a church to humble ourselves, understand our weaknesses, confess our sins, strive for unity, and give ourselves in sacrificial love to one another. We have many expectations and many unknowns in 2021, but we have started this year with confidence that the Lord always proves to be faithful; there is never any reason to doubt His good intentions and wisdom as He leads us through various challenges!

Three weeks before the end of 2020, Brother Kyle offered to visit us and preach for me the first Sunday of 2021, so I could have a rest from sermon preparation. Kyle and his

family moved to Poland from the United States about two years ago after he graduated from the Master's Seminary. His talk with a friend of HeartCry, Tomasz, who explained to him the need for the gospel in Poland, was instrumental in bringing Kyle to our country. Kyle is a part of a church in the same community where Tomasz ministers, Grodzisk Mazowiecki. His coming to us has definitely strengthened the loving relationship between our church in Krakow and the church in Grodzisk Mazowiecki. The foundation of our partnership in the gospel is being built by Christ. Kyle preached for us a very practical sermon from Titus 2:1-6. My family and I spent a lovely weekend with his family.

We are excited to have some young people who desire to join our church. They are regularly attending and eager to belong to our community. However, I asked them to wait a little longer as we get to know them better. They received this encouragement well.

I see no opportunity at this moment to train anyone for the ministry or to have anyone to become a co-elder or a deacon in our church, which is our desire. Please pray for the Lord to raise up laborers here in Krakow! Nevertheless, the Lord has His purpose even in having me pastor this fellowship alone for this time. I am an under-shepherd of the Chief Shepherd. Thank you very much for being engaged in our life and ministry.

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# Armenian Translation Work Continues

BY FORREST HITE

Since 2017, HeartCry has partnered with Armenian publishing house LPH to translate, print, and distribute sound Armenian literature throughout the nation (and beyond). Recently, we completed our sixth translation project together, the workbook Understanding the Discipline of Fasting by Paul Washer. Below are a few of the responses we have received from grateful recipients. Please be in prayer for the nation of Armenia, which experienced a tragic war in late 2020.

*"Dear Paul Washer and HeartCry, I cannot find the proper words to express the gratitude of my heart for arming us spiritually with your books. Understanding the Discipline of Fasting has been a total*



SCAN ME

You can learn more about the literature ministry as well as current events in our video here.

*revival for us. It has been water for our thirsty hearts. This book helped us to understand the importance of fasting and its usefulness for our spiritual progress. The workbook has been a medicine for our hearts, eyes, and ears. I can say for sure that this is a most important study for us especially during these difficult days for our country."*

– Pastor Andranik



*“Again and again, I want to say thank you on behalf of our prayer group! In Armenia, these books are received as a torch of light in the darkness. We lift gratitude and glory to our God for this book providing true guidance. I pray for its truths be known to all pastors and churches in Armenia.”*

– Marinosyan

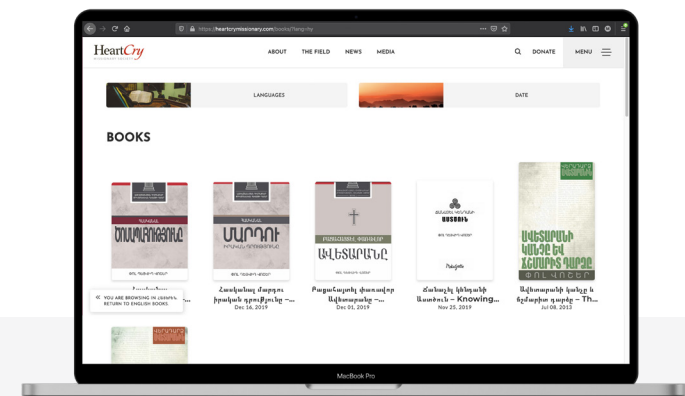


*“While reading Understanding the Discipline of Fasting, from the very first pages, I was strongly touched not only by the large list of Scriptural references to fasting, but also by the tactful presentation and explanation of the material. In my opinion, this is the best written Christian study out there, because this book is impossible to read without being moved by it.”*

– Harut

*“Thank you and your staff so much for getting these spiritual treasures to us and our people! May our Lord bless the great work of love that you are doing in Christ.”*

– Hovsepyan



A free downloadable PDF of the translation is available on our website: [heartcrymissionary.com/books](https://heartcrymissionary.com/books)





# A FAR-FLUNG SPIRITUAL RESORT

ANATOLY | RUSSIA

*Anatoly lives in Belarus (where he pastors) and travels to visit missionary families supported by HeartCry in Belarus, Russia, and beyond. In the following update he writes of a recent trip to visit Pastor Zhenya. Read of the lasting impressions and encouragement this visit produced.*

**W**hat is your idea of an ideal holiday? What are the places and the environments where you will enjoy rest and comfort for your body and soul? Many people seek exotic places. Many people save up money to stay in expensive hotels and enjoy sophisticated entertainment. We gospel preachers are a strange breed though. Our delights are peculiar and difficult to understand for those who do not have Christ as their biggest treasure.

This month the Lord gave me a special treat as I visited Pastor Zhenya, who serves in a small church in a small town in southwestern Siberia. He picked me up from the airport and immediately began to talk about his church. “I was on drugs for ten years, and then the Lord saved me; the man who is now my co-pastor was on drugs for several years, and then the Lord saved him; another brother spent fifteen years in prison, and then the Lord saved him. Here we are now, the core of our church body!” There was something special about the way he spoke. I felt like a visitor being shown a collection of treasures that his host had carefully gathered over many years.

He went on to talk about the families and children of the church. Several of the wives are very seriously sick. Someone has three types of hepatitis all at the same time. Someone else suffers from liver cirrhosis. Then there was a wonderful couple who loved the Lord: “They died in a car accident. Right on this road. Here, here... See this juncture? Their two kids survived. But our friends are with the Lord now. We didn’t see it as a tragedy. This is

how the Lord willed to take them.” And then there was a story of Zhenya’s mom, whom the Lord saved. She has spoken about Jesus ever since: everywhere she goes and with everyone she can. Zhenya enthusiastically continued with a story about a Russian lady with German roots who said she was Lutheran and did not want to “change her faith.” Once she got the courage to step into their church service though, she never turned back.

And on and on he went!  
I realized I have rarely  
seen pastors talking  
like this. I could see a  
shepherd whose life  
was about his flock. This  
small congregation is his  
biggest investment and  
his delight. What else is  
there to talk about?

In the evening, we arrived at the facility where they worship. One of the families in the church gave a piece of land on their property. The men in the church did their own construction work and put together a large rectangular box that suits the needs of their church. As he gave me a tour of the building, he explained how the Lord provided every need. One sister donated this clock. Another sister furnished the bathroom. And on and on he went again!

The next day, we briefly visited Zhenya’s sister-in-law Tatiana. She is a Christian. Her husband abandoned her with four children, so the church helps her as much as they can. She



Interview with  
Pastor Zhenya



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gives everyone free haircuts. Tatiana feels very strongly about doing this as a ministry and says that it brings her joy.

We were invited for lunch by another one of the ladies from the church, who is in her sixties. She came to Christ late in life. Before that, she was a deceitful liar, an alcoholic, and an immoral woman. She boasted in any sin you can imagine. She shared her testimony with us with tears in her eyes. Three other ladies at the table told their stories as well. The same motif ran through each of their accounts: “This is the church where we are truly cared for. Our elders care for us, and we deeply care for one another. Our brothers are so diligent in teaching us the Word. We wish we had better brains and better memory at our age. But we still learn and grow!” One of the ladies is known for helping everyone even beyond her capacity.

“Well, yeah... That’s just the way I am. I am so happy our dear guest is here. I wish I could cover some of his travel expenses!”

On the second day, in the evening, we gathered for worship. There are no musical instruments or musicians in this church (some of us may wonder how the church even exists this way!). We sang “Before the Throne of God Above” in Belarusian, a cappella. Then we moved on to study the story of the resurrection of Lazarus. I spoke to people who love their Savior. There is no higher delight than to deliver the Word of God to such a company! If only they knew how much their love, faith, and hope encouraged me! Even if I had told them, they would not have believed me!

They see themselves as just a bunch of simple folks living in a place that is hard to locate on the map, struggling to be faithful to the Lord in

small things, and making little “global” difference. But no! They are the Lord’s treasured possession. They are His chosen people. They proclaim His excellencies with all the might they have. The Lord is greatly exalted in their midst—not in visible achievements or externals, but in lives that feel like the book of Acts or a letter to the Thessalonians.

On the third day, Zhenya and his wife drove me back to the airport. With some effort I managed to persuade them to let me pay for their lunch. I could see that she found it uncomfortable, as someone who is used to giving rather than receiving. She married Zhenya even when he was a drug addict. She believed that her love would change him. Eventually, it was the love of Christ that changed them both! She has been behind him through all the years of his ministry. As Zhenya himself confesses, she was faithful and patient through his terrible immaturity—both as a husband and as a minister.

I was privileged to spend time with some of the greatest people in the



world. And I do not mean “fun” people or “interesting” people. I use the word “great” in its plain, primary meaning; their greatness will become abundantly evident when Christ returns. What a blessing to be their partner in the gospel! I am writing this for you, our friends, who pray and give and inquire about the state of gospel work in far-away places. Together we are making a contribution to the most magnificent building, Christ’s Church. The Lord uses all of us to build up communities that serve not only as a beacon to their nations but also at times even as a spiritual resort to a visiting preacher. God’s power and grace is made tangible across the world. Have no doubt about this!

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# SOLDIERS ARE NEAR

## TURMOIL IN MYANMAR

*On February 1, a coup d'état (government takeover) began in Myanmar, performed by the nation's military powers against the will of the majority of her citizens. The takeover was successful, and the resulting transition of power has yielded intensely terrible results for the people of Myanmar. Military rule has stripped all power from the citizens, and the military forces have taken to doing whatever they want—to include killing civilians in the streets. HeartCry has supported missionaries in Myanmar for a number of years now. Below are some heartbreaking perspectives of what life is like on the ground in their various areas of labor. We hope these accounts from several different missionary families will help you better understand the situation so that you can be in prayer for Myanmar as a whole and for our brothers and sisters there.*

### March

#### Account 1:

Dear loving brethren, I am writing this report with a broken and trembling heart. My eye is filled with sadness and tears of hurt. First of all, I want to beg you to pray for our safety and protection. I pray that the angel of the Lord will continue to surround every home in our country.

The military has taken control and is killing civilians. Every day we have

had to collect dead bodies on the road with tears and pain. Banks are being shut down, and it is more and more difficult to get online.

It breaks my heart so much. Everywhere is filled with smoke and fire as factories are burned and destroyed. Thousands of people don't have work, food, or a place to stay now.

Almost all of our church members fled back to their home villages. There is neither market nor a store where

we can buy food, because every road is blocked. How long will we last if it continues like this?

Just a while ago, a truck with soldiers came and stopped near our house. We were terrified; they captured six people who were having tea in the nearby shop. We don't know what they will do to them. God is our only hope.

All missionaries are suffering the misery of this situation greatly. My faithful missionary friend has a wife who is about to give birth, and there are no hospitals open. He said to me they would have to deliver the baby themselves in their small house by trusting God [see April Account 5].

Dear friends, I have two little girls—one is two years old, and the other is six months. I don't care if I don't have food to eat, but I think much of them and their safety. Please continue to uphold us in your prayer for our safety, provision, and protection. Soldiers are catching people from every house, and now they are near to us. Please pray for us.

#### Account 2:

Today is not a good day. In cities, big towns, and small towns, there are shootings and killings. People are fleeing the turmoil from cities to rural areas and the mountains. At a local children's home, the kids hear the military's activities and gunshots every night. These children are suffering mentally, trembling each night. I cannot find words to express how difficult a situation this is. What will happen tonight? We do not know. As a whole, the conditions grow worse and worse. Please continue to pray for God's people. Pray for the whole country too.

### April

#### Account 1:

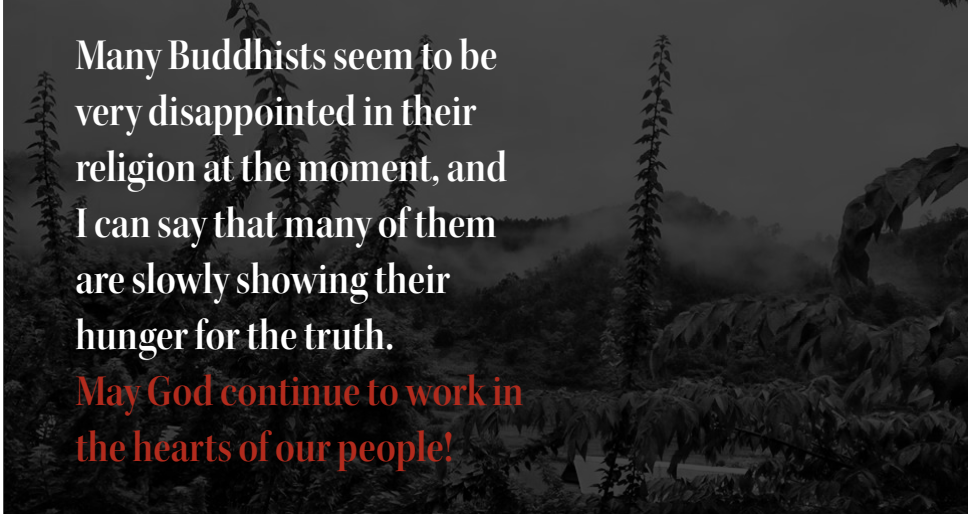
I praise the Lord for his sovereign power over everything. It is such a heartwarming thing to know that God's people are praying for us without ceasing. Dear friends, the Lord continues to protect his people amid horrible, dangerous shootings. God is indeed good all the time.

Ever since the military junta [ruling council of a military dictatorship] took over the country, everything grows more difficult. The wireless internet connection has been cut off totally, making it harder for our fellow missionaries to contact us. I have been able to ask them about their situation. By God's grace, they all are safe and well in health. Martial law has been declared in every state. We are not allowed to go out between 6 PM and 4 AM.

**It is a fearful thing to go out and buy basic needs. Even when buying food, we need to be very alert and careful. Having just a little food a day at our kitchen table is good enough at the moment.**

Almost every international store owner has shut down their business. The prices of food and other goods are increasing day by day. If this continues for the next three months, it will be very hard for the common people. Our church members have already been the victims of this, and they will suffer more.





Many Buddhists seem to be very disappointed in their religion at the moment, and I can say that many of them are slowly showing their hunger for the truth.

**May God continue to work in the hearts of our people!**

As much as we don't want the current evil military regime, we as Christians recognize the sovereign rule of our God. I trust that God will glorify Himself even in a terrible crisis like this. Continue to pray for us in Myanmar.

#### Account 2:

We started our Bible study and worship service again this month. Our town is currently under the rule of the military, so it is quite dangerous to gather as a group. But by trusting the Lord with much prayer, those of us who can are meeting with each other and having prayer meetings. There were six members who came and prayed with us recently—it is a great blessing to see. On the Lord's Day we have more. It had been a long time that we were not able to meet together to worship the Lord, so we missed each other very much.

#### Account 3:

Last week, we held services for two days; there were fifteen people. Three of them trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and are now candidates for baptism. Praise the Lord! Isn't

it amazing to see souls saved even in miserable circumstances? Please continue to pray for the growth of this mission work.

#### Account 4:

For one month, we were completely confined to our house, since we were in the midst of riots and shootings. It was a very scary experience, but the Lord Jehovah always protects us. The only ministry that I could do for that time was prayer—and I spent a lot of time in prayer. My heart was full of peace. After one month, we were able to restart our worship service. I can see that our people seem to have more hunger to listen to the Word of God.

#### Account 5:

Thank you so much for your prayer support for the emergency matter with my wife, who was about to deliver a baby. We were in a very difficult circumstance, since there was no hospital, doctor, or nurse who could help or whom we could call. We trusted the Lord and prayed. The only person who helped us was our grandmother; but that night, by the grace of God,

she delivered a very healthy baby boy. Please continue to pray for my family.

#### Account 6:

We are surrounded by military everywhere around us; they are very strict. Though we cannot meet in one place together, I can go to our members' houses individually and conduct Bible studies. In that way, we continue our worship. Please continue to pray for all of us to be able to meet in one place eventually.

#### Account 7:

Brethren, thank you for your prayer and support. All of us have experienced a very terrible nightmare these past few months. But we hold on to God's guidance and protection, and He has kept us.

**I am living in the midst of people who support the military, so I have to be extra careful. With my family, we always pray for God's leading hand.**

God has protected us and allowed us to have worship services with our church members again. Our people are so very eager to listen to the Word of God—they are the ones who called me and asked me to have a worship service. It's been months now that we continue to study the Word of God together in secret.

#### May

#### Account 1:

The political situation here is not getting better, but worse. The military terrorists still kill and arrest civilians.

Local people are forming defense forces in towns and villages to defend the citizens, but they have no weapons. War is unabated. The killing continues. Demonstrations and protests have been held, but to no avail. Yesterday, thirty demonstrators were shot to death by the military terrorists. Please continue to pray.

#### Account 2:

Just ten minutes ago, one of our missionaries called me and told me that his town has been surrounded by the military junta for four days. Many of the people have left and gone into the forest for safety. Another town has been bombed by military terrorists for the last four days. Almost all the people of the town have fled. Only older people and the sick remain in town, and they are often tortured severely. Some eighty thousand people are in the forest, having escaped from the towns. They are without food, even the people who are left in the town; the terrorists cut off the water pipeline yesterday too. The military uses heavy weapons and even fighter jets to fight and kill civilians.

Myanmar currency is very rare now. Private banks are still not functioning. Myanmar foreign trade is controlled by the junta, and sending money from outside is strictly limited. Everyday prices continue to rise.

It is hard to say that now is better. In some places, it is better, in the sense of fewer mass-killing events; but in many places, killing, shooting, arresting, torturing, and robbing continue. Life really is dangerous here. As we believe in the sovereignty of God, there is peace only in Him. Thank you for praying for Myanmar.

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# CHRIST IN THE TABERNACLE

JACQUES BRUNT  
NETHERLANDS

Well-known English preacher Charles Had-  
don Spurgeon once said:  
“Some parts of the tabernacle point  
to Christ, such as the veil, the manna,  
the showbread, the mercy seat, and  
the lampstand. But in heaven there is  
no need for a tabernacle, temple, or  
lampstand. In heaven all images have  
been replaced by the actual presence  
of the Lord and the Lamb.” This  
statement is all too true. At the same

time, important principles are hidden  
in the tabernacle for the benefit of our  
spiritual life even today.

The Latin-derived word “tabernacle”  
is the translation of the Hebrew word  
*mishkan*, meaning “tent” or “residence.”  
This earthly tent of God occupied  
a prominent place in the life of the  
Israelites. As believers, we are taken  
from the mere shadows of the taber-  
nacle to the full reality of the Lord  
Jesus Christ. Still, during Jesus' walk

on earth, He urged people to search  
the Scriptures because they testify of  
Him (John 5:39). And when Jesus  
explained the Scriptures, He started  
with Moses and the prophets because  
they speak of Him (Luke 24:27). It is  
therefore notable that we find most of  
the information about the tabernacle  
in the five books of Moses (the Torah).  
These first five books of the Bible thus  
already bear witness of the Lord Jesus.

Aside from the fact that the taber-  
nacle speaks about Jesus, it is also a  
representation of the heavenly reality  
(Hebrews 8:5 and 9:8-9). We live in a  
visual age. Presentations of companies  
and sermons in churches are often  
supported with visual material, which  
help convey the message more clearly.  
Speaking with reverence: in the taber-  
nacle we see a heavenly “visual” to awe  
us even more about how it is possible  
for a holy God to be able to associate  
with a sinful people. The tabernacle  
shows how God met us in Christ and  
how He subsequently opened the way  
to the Father through His death on  
the Cross, His resurrection, and His  
ascension.

Just as every spiritual work begins  
with God Himself, so also did the  
construction of the tabernacle. The  
Lord saw the oppression of His  
people in Egypt, and He took notice  
of them (Exodus 2:23-25). Then the  
Lord called Moses, the mediator of  
the Old Covenant, to lead His people  
out of Egypt, the house of slavery. He  
eventually appointed Joshua to lead  
the people into Canaan, the Promised  
Land. The exodus from Egypt, the  
passage through the desert, and the  
entry into Canaan all bear witness of  
God's wondrous works (Psalm 78).

After the exodus, the Lord did not  
leave His people to themselves. On the  
contrary, He shared His desire with  
Moses: the construction of a sanctuary  
(Exodus 25:1-9).

Before we elaborate on this, we  
should take note of something. The  
Apostle Paul describes a number of  
privileges that the Israelites had that  
the Gentile nations did not have  
(Romans 3:1-2 and 9:1-5). He writes  
that God specifically intended “glory”  
and “worship” for them (Romans 9:4);  
through the worship in the taberna-  
cle, God first shared His glory with  
the Israelites. And is that not true  
regarding the Lord Jesus as well? He  
first came to the world to the Jewish  
people (John 1:11). But because they  
largely rejected the Messiah, God also  
revealed His glory to the Gentiles.

The saving grace of  
God has appeared to all  
people (Titus 2:11). All  
who come to faith and  
rebirth are drawn away  
from the house of slavery  
to sin (of which Egypt  
is an image). Through  
faith in the Lord Jesus,  
peace, tranquility, and  
justice have become their  
portion—not deserved,  
yet still received. We call  
that “marvelous, infinite,  
matchless grace”!

We can divide God's desire for the  
construction of the tabernacle—ex-  
pressed in Exodus 25—into three





“sub-desires” with regard to His people:

1. The Lord desired a **sanctuary** (Exodus 25:8a). That means He wanted a place where everything and everyone was focused on worship and devotion to Him. It is about God and God alone. In the fullness of time, the Lord Jesus came: God came to “tabernacle” among us (John 1:14). Reverently speaking, He “pitched His tent” (sanctuary) among us and showed His glory in the person of His Son. And today God lives in believers through His Holy Spirit. Thus, God's children individually and the Church collectively are the temple (sanctuary) of the Lord through which He reveals His glory (Ephesians 2:21-22). It is therefore our high calling not to live for ourselves any longer, but for Him who died and rose again on our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:15).

2. The Lord wanted to **dwell** in the midst of His people through the tabernacle (Exodus 25:8b). The word “dwelling” indicates God's desire for a permanent place of residence. He required the central place in the life of Israel. The Lord is entitled to that; it is His right by virtue of creation and regeneration. That is why today He desires to have the central place in our hearts and lives. It is through faith that Christ has made a home in our hearts (Ephesians 3:17). Paul also urges the Church to let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly (Colossians 3:16). How essential it is to partake of the Word of God daily, so that we are renewed in our thinking and so that Christ is more and more formed in us!

3. The Lord longed to **meet** with His people to then **speak** to them (Exodus 25:22). Another name of the tabernacle is therefore “tent of meeting.” God desires intimacy

with his people. The Christian faith is first and foremost about relationship, not religion. The Lord Jesus suffered and died, but it did not end there—He has risen! He is alive! And as sure as He lives, He also speaks, particularly through the Bible (Hebrews 1:1). The Father's voice came from the cloud, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased—listen to Him!” (Matthew 17:5). Throughout the Bible, there are encounters with the Lord Jesus, so that persons are changed through that very encounter into His image and likeness (Romans 8:29). Here in Holland, we say, “What you associate with, you become infected with.” Speaking reverently, we may also apply that saying to Christ and the Church. It is God's desire to change us from the inside out, from glory to glory, so that Christ becomes more and more visible in our lives to the glory of God the Father!

I will close with the same words I quoted at the start of this article: “In heaven there is no need for a tabernacle, temple, or lampstand. In heaven all images have been replaced by the actual presence of the Lord and the Lamb.” Spurgeon was referring to the following awe-inspiring Bible verses:

*“I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God illuminates it, and its lamp is the Lamb.”*  
(Revelation 21:22-23)

What a day, glorious day, that shall be!

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