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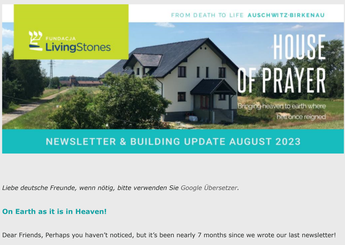

NEWSLETTER & BUILDING UPDATE AUGUST 2023

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On Earth as it is in Heaven!

Dear Friends, Perhaps you haven't noticed, but it's been nearly 7 months since we wrote our last newsletter!

It's not that we didn't have anything to write. We've had groups, the building has progressed. It's just that I (Mark) went through a season of testing that lasted much, much longer than I anticipated. And while that was happening, I wasn't able to do much. Thankfully, I'm standing on the other side of that now :)

A problem with Mark's voice

In a nutshell, I had a problem with my voice. I found it difficult to speak. Sometimes even a few words were all I could manage. It was like the enemy wanted to silence my voice and I had to fight for it back. I didn't have much energy either.

After a while, as I was seeking God for healing, He started revealing things that needed dealing with, in my life. He was taking me through a process and wanted me to work with Holy Spirit to get more freedom and wholeness in my life. So, while the enemy was doing his thing, God was using it to bring about His purposes. I remember someone telling me once, "What the enemy intends for evil, our Father turns around for good!". That was certainly true in my case.

I believe it was also an intercession. Every prisoner who walked into Auschwitz-Birkenau between 1942 and 1945 had their voice "stolen". The enemy wants to steal our voice, to silence our ability to speak out against what he's doing. He wants to stop us speaking what we hear the Father speaking, and he does it through intimidation, fear, and bullying.

Jesus said, **"The words that I speak to you are spirit and life"** (John 6:63).

Many of us have had our "voice" stolen! The enemy does it in so many different ways – traumatic experiences in our past, things that people have spoken over us, even sins and curses from previous generations. But whatever the reason, Jesus always wants to restore us. He wants to give us our "voice" back!

Life... and life abundantly

Over the years, there's a verse that has often stood out for us.

"The thief comes ONLY to steal and kill and destroy, but I have come that they (we) may have LIFE and have it ABUNDANTLY" (John 10:10)

It so beautifully sums up the contrast between the nature of the thief (the devil) and the nature of Jesus. This is graphically displayed when we look out of our bedroom window. We see Auschwitz-Birkenau and everything it represents, a huge manifestation of the kingdom of darkness. But we also see the Prayer House, something that Father is building, an outpost of the kingdom of Heaven.

At this point I want to talk about the identity that Father has for the Prayer House. Over the past 6 to 7 months, God has been stirring our hearts again and again with His calling for this place. I think it's because we are entering a new phase of this ministry, and so He's reminding us, what the Prayer House stands for and what it represents.

What draws most people to Auschwitz, including believers, is to visit the camp and to see the evidence of the Holocaust with their own eyes. (It's good to do this, but when you do, please keep your eyes on Jesus and go in as an agent of redemption!). The official tour lasts about 3 ½ hours and people often come out feeling heavy and depressed.

Then, they come to see us! They step into the beautiful Presence of the Lord and into an atmosphere of freedom and joy, right in front of the gates of Auschwitz-Birkenau. For some it comes as a quite a shock. It's a huge contrast!

The Prayer House is an outpost of heaven. I can't really explain it. We didn't fast or pray hard or do anything except obey Jesus and build the Prayer House in the location He told us to. But during the process (and we're still building by the way) God chose to open the heavens over the Prayer Room, and there are many, many angels assigned to this house. All I can say is – that it's a sovereign work that Father is doing, and we have the privilege to be a part of it!

Establishing His kingdom

Father wants to establish His Kingdom on the earth.

This is His calling and mandate for all of us, wherever we are, and whoever we are. And it's the calling and mandate of the Prayer House too. To establish His Kingdom government in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Jesus said we should pray like this:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come; Your will be done ON EARTH as it is in heaven" (Matt 6:9-10)

Father wants what's happening on earth to look like heaven!

When Jesus taught this prayer, Israel was governed by an occupying army, and it wasn't a very friendly army! There was a lot of oppression and suffering, which Jesus also experienced. For Him, it wasn't just the political opposition, he also had to deal with all the hatred and opposition from the religious leaders, who wanted to kill Him! And yet, through all of this, God was working out His plan. And He even used the devil's plan, to bring about the greatest victory of all time – Jesus' victory over sin and death.

When we see what happened with Jesus, and with Mark's voice, we can see how God takes the devil's plan for evil and uses it to bring about His plan for righteousness. He does it despite all the suffering the devil inflicts in the process.

And God is doing the same thing here in Auschwitz-Birkenau. In a place where there was so much death and destruction, God wants Heaven to come down – His Presence, His Life, His Love, His Peace, and His Joy. This is the identity of the Prayer House. We focus not so much on the past, but on what Father is releasing from heaven.

Fountain of Life

Here in Auschwitz-Birkenau, which is iconic for the Holocaust, the devil killed over 1 million Jewish lives for his own purposes, and for those who survived the Holocaust, so many lost their faith in God, believing that He had completely abandoned them.

That is why Father is pouring out His Life and His Presence in this place. He wants to remove the veil from the eyes of the Jewish people, so they can recognize Yeshua (Jesus) as their Messiah and be reconciled with the Father. When this happens, the apostle Paul says it will be **"life from the dead"** (Romans 11:15).

There is a second purpose for this outpouring. The Holocaust has also affected many places and people in Europe. There is a map in Auschwitz museum with railway lines coming from all over Europe ending in a little dot marked "Auschwitz". These are railway lines of death. Father wants to turn these railway lines around and from this little dot restore life into all those areas in Europe where it was stolen. Auschwitz-Birkenau is destined to become a Fountain of Life.

Father has a heart for the nations of Europe. He wants to pour out His love, forgiveness, healing, and wholeness, not just on the families of the victims, but also on the families of collaborators and perpetrators.

As we pray, **"Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"**, our focus is on heaven and what heaven is doing. The Prayer House is here to establish heaven and heaven's agenda on the earth. Father is bringing life from the dead. Death is never the end. Jesus conquered death!

"Behold I make ALL things new!" (Rev. 21:5)

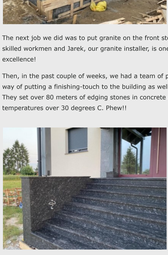
+++Selah+++

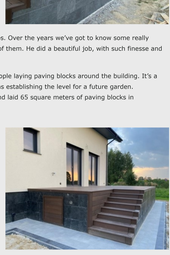
Building Update

We've done quite a lot of work over the past 6 months, despite Mark not being able to speak much. The main event was to build the terrace, which was like building a small house. We started in the snow (!) and the concrete was eventually cured by the Spring.

On top of the concrete base, we installed wood-composite decking. We chose that because it looks great, is guaranteed for 25 years, and needs very little maintenance. Then, on the sides of the terrace we put black slate, like we have around the rest of the house.

By the way, there are lots of photos... please click on the link at the bottom of the newsletter.





The next job we did was to put granite on the front steps. Over the years we've got to know some really skilled workmen and Jarek, our granite installer, is one of them. He did a beautiful job, with such finesse and excellence!

Then, in the past couple of weeks, we had a team of people laying paving blocks around the building. It's a way of putting a finishing-touch to the building as well as establishing the level for a future garden. They set over 80 meters of edging stones in concrete and laid 65 square meters of paving blocks in temperatures over 30 degrees C. Phew!!

Next step

Our next project is to buy and install a platform lift for the disabled for the front steps. We hope to sign a contract next week, including the deposit, and hopefully, all the rest will happen at the end of October, early November.

It's expensive, but we didn't feel comfortable having the low-cost caterpillar machine that the architect recommended. There the person goes up the stairs backwards at an angle of about 35 degrees with someone guiding them along the way. It looks a bit scary, and we don't feel it's very dignified...

Here we want to honour those who are disabled! The disabled were among the first victims of Nazi Germany, so we want to make the Prayer House accessible to everyone, including those of us who have dodgy knees!

By the way, although it's not a building requirement, we've designed the house for chair lifts to go up and down the stairs to the Prayer Room and the basement.

Finally, for those who have supported and prayed for us, especially over these past months, please receive from us a BIG, BIG "thank you!".

With our love and blessings

Mark & Cathy

Fundacja Living Stones
ul Boczna 4
32-600 Brzezinka Oświęcim
Poland
+48 519 433 612
f.livingstones@gmail.com
www.livingstones.com.pl