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NEWSLETTER & BUILDING UPDATE Nº23:11-5-2021

Seeds and shoots

Dear Friends,

I've always had a fascination with seeds. Everything in nature starts out as a tiny seed. It amazes me that a tiny little acorn in my hand can grow up into a mighty oak tree. All the DNA, everything it needs to create the tree, is contained inside the seed.

God works in the same way with us.

He puts a tiny seed inside us that has everything it needs to fulfil its destiny. That's the unique calling He has for each one of us. For much of the time we don't know what the seed is or what it is meant to be. But as we follow the trail, pick up the clues, and step out in obedience, the seed begins to grow.

A couple of weeks ago, some friends of ours from Germany gave us a very precious gift for the Prayer House. It's a sculpture of a hidden seed, carved inside an old 18th century wooden beam, that was part of a Moravian house located in the town of Hermhut, Germany.

Here it is, standing in the Prayer Room.



In order to understand the significance of the sculpture, we need to know what happened in Hermhut all those years ago. I have included the story here because it's so encouraging!

Here's a brief sketch of the history

For those of you who are unfamiliar with this, the Moravian church has its origins in the Czech reformer Jan Hus, who was burned at the stake in 1415 for speaking against the practices of the Roman Catholic church. Before he was martyred, he predicted that one day, **his teachings and praying among the Moravians would spring up into revival.**

Some people say that his life and teaching was a **seed that went into the ground and died**. That seed was embedded in the life of the Moravian church.

During a later time of persecution, in 1628, a man called Comenius was driven out of his country into exile. As he was crossing the border, he looked back and prayed… that God would "preserve a **hidden seed** that would glorify His name". He believed there would be a **seed in the Moravian church that would grow and bear fruit at a later time.**

Fast forward 100 years later to the start of the 18th century…

Count Zinzendorf

Count Ludwig Von Zinzendorf was born into a wealthy, Austrian noble family. Many say that he was the rich young ruler who said "YES".

In 1722, during another time of persecution, some fleeing Moravian families asked if they could take refuge and live on Count Zinzendorf's estate. He agreed. Little did he know that this would be the major turning point in his life.

There they built the community of Hermhut (which means "the Lord's watch") and were joined by other persecuted refugees. By 1726 the population had grown to around 300.

In 1727, a spirit of prayer began to spread among the community. They covenanted together to meet as often as they could to pour out their hearts in prayer and hymns, sometimes praying and worshipping through the night.

Revival happens!

Suddenly, on 13 August 1727, during a communion service, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them all. They experienced a "Pentecost" that ignited a fire that spread across the world.

Within a few years, Hermhut had become a hub for sending out Moravian missionaries. Some sold themselves into slavery in order to reach the slaves, some were martyred, many died. But there was much, much fruit. Whole nations were affected by them, including Britain.

It also marked the beginning of **a continuous 24/7 prayer movement that lasted 100 years**.

That was the fruit that came from the hidden seed that was buried so many years before.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much fruit." (John 12:24)

+++ SELAH +++

So, what does that have to do with what God is doing here, in Auschwitz-Birkenau?

That, we don't fully understand – YET. So often with us, we get to find out later, when we're further along the journey.

But what we do know is this.

Our German friends commissioned this piece of art a couple of years ago and were planning on giving it to the Prayer House when it officially opened. But then the Holy Spirit interrupted their plans and said, **give it now!**

Why now?

That was the question on my heart that I was asking the Holy Spirit. For months now, we've felt that we've been in this "crossing over" season. We've been in a squeezed place. Things are not going to be as they were, but we can't yet see what they will be. God is doing something NEW!

Just as the Moravians in Hermhut experienced something new that they'd never seen before, we believe that we also – not just us but the whole body of Christ – will see something new that we've never seen before.

I felt the Lord say, "**It's not about the seed, it's about the LEAVES**".

What we see in the sculpture, are 2 small leaves and a shoot breaking out of the soil. That's new life breaking out. What has been hidden and buried for so long is about to be seen! The sculpture was also given at the time when tiny green leaves appeared on the trees. Spring had just arrived. As I was talking to the Lord, I felt that the sculpture symbolised the seed of the New Creation.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a NEW CREATION, old things have gone, behold all things have become new." (2 Cor. 5:17)

I don't think we've seen the fullness of what the New Creation is. Perhaps, not even a fraction of it. But what we've been feeling for some time – what we sense the Father is saying – is that something **new is breaking out** – something new in each one of us – something new in the body of Christ.

Could it be that God is saying that the seed is now beginning to sprout? Have we entered a new era? Is it possible that we will start to see a new level of manifestation of the Kingdom of God?

It feels like that, even as we're going through this narrow Coronavirus place, which for some has been a terrible time of loss and grief.

It's so easy to see what the devil is doing.

But the question on our hearts is, "**Father, what is it that YOU are doing?**"

"Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. Look! The winter is past, the rains are over and gone. Flowers appear on the earth; The time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove Is heard in our land." (Song of Solomon 2:10-12)

+++ SELAH +++

Building Update

Work inside the building has slowed down over the past month or so.

Good news is that the oak floor in the Prayer Room has gone down. We've also finished the surface of the stairs that go from the ground floor up to the top floor. And the tiler finished the 3 upstairs bathrooms. You can see some photos at the end of the newsletter.

Domestic Wastewater Treatment Plant

We've also installed the domestic wastewater / sewage treatment plant. If you remember from the last time I wrote – we had just been given PLANNING PERMISSION to do this. Well, the treatment plant went in at the end of March and everything went extremely well… EXCEPT, when we applied to the local authority to USE the treatment plant – our application got refused (!!).

What followed was a legal argument between the local authority and the Water Authority who said that what the local authority did was illegal (!!). (There have been so many legal changes in Poland recently, it seems to have left all the officials confused). And to stop all this from escalating further, we were advised to withdraw our application to the local authority and apply directly to the Water Authority for a Water Permit.

It seems to be the only way out. But it's not that easy!

It's a complex and difficult application that's meant for large factories and businesses. We are making enquiries, but we may have to get a Professional to do this for us.

What's happening in next few months?

In the meantime, we've ordered some stairs for the Prayer Room. These are the ones that go from the floor of the Prayer Room up to the balcony. We've also been looking at laminate floor panels for the rest of the upstairs floors that are not yet finished.

Thank YOU, Father, for all the amazing things that You've done so far!

To see the photos, please "click" on the pictures below.

Europe is slowly coming out of lockdown…

Auschwitz-Birkenau has re-opened its doors once again after a sudden closure on the 20th March. But this time, only on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. However, we think this will change as the number of infections in Poland decreases. Let's see.

We have been extremely blessed by the two German groups who managed – in between lockdowns – to squeeze across the border this year. So, if you are able, and when the borders are open, please come and see us!

With love and blessings,
Mark & Cathy





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