

## Progress in Poland, July 2008

Over 10 years ago, ADAM replied to a small advert for Polish Bible Basics and was sent a copy. He lives with his wife in a small town in southern Poland. It took him years to get persuaded of the need to leave the Catholic church, with all that implies in a totally Catholic area, where being Catholic is part and parcel of being Polish and living in the area. It's hard to describe the grip the Catholic church has on Polish society in these small towns and villages in the mountains.



*Roadside shrines to Mary are everywhere:*

Since the end of Communism here, Catholic power has become much stronger, as it has in other parts of Central Europe too. Brothers Krzysztof and Duncan were driving around the area this Sunday and found streets packed with people flooding to church. In one town, the Catholics had built an overflow church- from corrugated iron with very basic seating. But despite several services held each Sunday, the place was overflowing- seriously. People were lined up along the side of the simple building, and crowded around the back of it to get a few snatches of the Priest's words:



The people stand in dead silence, and then kneel (even if they don't get a bite of the eucharist): "O Mary lady of all grace we kneel before thee before thy Son before the power of thy one true holy Catholic church". (Notice how God doesn't get much of a look in within their Polish Catholic 'theology'). We snapped this one driving past another church in a small village, where again there was an overflow outside:



The only ones who are going to step out of this system are those willing to accept God's word for the radical document of the Kingdom which it really is, and be serious about following its demands. Adam, his wife and adult son wrote a letter to their Catholic church and resigned, stating that they would no longer be under the authority of this system. Adam's rather proud of this document- he has hung photocopies of it in plastic folders on all the spots where he used to have crucifixes displayed. Here's the letter, Adam re-placing it in the spot where a crucifix used to hang; and us sitting at the table in front of it discussing Bible doctrine with him:



Adam made contact with the Jehovah's Witnesses, but quit with them and has developed a group of other ex-JWs- all with their tales of woe about Catholics and Watchtower. We had to

encourage them to see that God's Truth is not simply a matter of holding true theology and rejecting falsities- it's about having the spirit of Christ and being Him in a dark world- no matter by what our local world has been darkened. Adam's group are very nice, humble folk. None of them wished to be baptized- apart from Adam. They meet regularly in a front room, and they even have a lecturn. They are all very eager Bible students, eager to live their lives according to whatever they understand from the word. The women all had have their heads covered for the meetings and baptism as that's what they understood from the Bible, even though neither Catholics nor JW's make any issue of that matter. It was great to see how much Krzysztof has grown in the Truth, he was able to give some impromptu Bible talks to the group and did a great job.



We noted Adam's humility as he sat amongst his group in his baptism service:



A paddling pool was bought for the baptism, but it took a huge amount of water (from a well) to fill it. And several different bits of piping to get the water from the well to the pool. The argument was that if a pipe is flowing downhill, then the longer it is the less energy one has to use pumping the water... any physicists out there can tell us whether we were right or wrong to think that was not the case, but anyway, that's what happened. And the baptism was done totally openly, with the pool and service in full view of the neighbouring houses, with the women singing hymns for all to here. It can't be over-emphasized how radical that is for a small Catholic village ...



Adam was keen for us to sign a baptism certificate and statement for him immediately. He wanted us to sign as witnesses and to the reality of the event. He also wrote a statement on it, that this is his final baptism, the true baptism, he has now come to Christ from his heart and not into any human organization... and with that we felt that really we had been used by God to bring a man to His Son in spirit and in truth.



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