



# parakletos

Dear Friends,

As Advent is approaching, we wish to stop for a moment and share with you our fall experiences from the Czech Republic. The whole year has been an amazing time with God for us. Truthfully, just this summer for the first time in two years since his physical exhaustion, Pavel started to feel well with only a few very reduced physical symptoms remaining. That is a great reason to give thanks to God.

The fall season was quite busy with lot of travel to different churches, conferences, and meetings with pastors. We still have a rather busy schedule in December. Then we look for Christmas. Our daughters plan to arrive home right before Christmas so we will enjoy that time together, hopefully resting with karp and potato salad and Christmas cookies. And music and walks and talks. Just what we like to do.

## US VISIT

In September we visited Wheaton, Illinois where most of our time was spent working in the Wheaton College library. We were also able to visit with just a few friends. Unfortunately, we were unable to connect with others whom we would have enjoyed visiting. Without a car, and with certain outdated contact information, that was not possible.

## CONFERENCES

At the end of October and into early November we traveled to Poland and to the Slovakian mountains to speak at two bigger conferences with 180 and 250 participants. Both were for families. But whereas the first was predominantly for Christians, the second was composed of both believers and non-believers. Together, Pavel and Julka had 13 lectures or seminars. We spent more than two weeks on the road, but it was a good

opportunity to encourage marriages and families and help couples to prevent serious marital problems.

Because one of those conferences was attended by about 50% non-believers, we found it challenging but also motivating to learn to communicate the Christian worldview from within the culture. We as Christ followers have identical questions, are exposed to similar cultural ideas, and have the same struggles as our neighbours. We may have dissimilar reference



“I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.” Acts 26: 17-18

We exist to facilitate the church to be a safe, honest, and intimate place to meet, know, and grow in Christ and His Body. Parakletos creates a safe place through means of individual and marital counseling, teaching, and mentoring.  
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points and different sets of assumptions and values. We trust in God. But we can speak about God in an effective way when we disclose the reality of our lives. In our weaknesses Christ becomes only more visible even for those who may not know him. Therefore one of our strategies is in honest and truthful descriptions of what we live. In our experiences is where people respond because they can identify with what they hear. They may not go as far as to consider God to be indispensable for their changes. Some still think they can manage on their own. But at least they see that God is relevant. In each encounter with our friends who do not know God we feel that we learn so much about the Gospel and about ourselves.

## MEN'S RETREAT

One weekend Pavel spoke to men from one church in a retreat setting. It was a smaller group of about 25 men. Their interest was in being better husbands and fathers. Interestingly, even though Pavel prepared some talks, most of the time was really spent in discussions. There were many questions, comments, experiences. Simply, it was a very interactive and personal time. It was interesting to observe how honesty stimulates honesty in others. Men sometimes find it uncomfortable to share their imperfections and failures. But once safety develops,

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Or send check to – please note change of address: LeadingEdge, PO Box 27, Strasburg, OH 44680 for Parakletos. Online giving at: <https://www.leadedge.org/parakletos>.

From the UK: CAF Bank, Acc Name: Central Eurasian Partners, Sort code: 40-52-40, AccNo: 00016282, designate to Parakletos.

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they do it naturally. There is a desire in men to be able to share the reality of their lives and hearts.

There are always certain types of participants at those smaller groups. More or less they appear in every bunch. I (Pavel) attempted after the retreat to categorize them just to be able to better to communicate with each individual adequately. I think that Jesus was the master of such an art. There is always a quarterback who throws the ball. There is a thinker who asks hard questions. There is a doubter who does not take everything easily but does not always want to be disruptive. There are careful observers who, once encouraged, can ask excellent questions. There is someone who sucks in all that has been said. There is the developer who takes the idea and evolves it further. It is fun to get to know each person in their individuality and to work with each.

## FAMILY

As both our daughters, Kristýna and Jana, are studying in the UK this year, they are both living on student incomes. They struggle with one aspect of the British culture. The houses in England are rarely heated properly. So they are often cold. Recently Jana sent us a picture of her thermostat which showed 15°C which is 59°F in a fully heated room. Hopefully, they will be warmer over the Christmas when they plan to be home. And we with them.

We wish you a very peaceful and meaningful reminder of what God has done for us when Christ was born in Bethlehem. Have a merry Christmas!

Thank you very much for your prayers and support!  
Pavel and Julka Raus