



parakletos

Dear Friends,

One morning my phone rang and there was a lady on the other end. With tears she asked if we had time because she needed to speak to someone. She and her husband have a good and effective outreach ministry to children and teenagers. On the evening of the previous day everything went wrong for her. A part-time coworker did not come to work and gave a rather unconvincing reason. One mother was very rude, unfairly blaming the leaders of her child. She was completely disinterested in understanding the uneasy situation. On top of that, the lady speaking with me realized that her subordinate had not followed instructions which contributed significantly to the outburst of the whole conflict.

We have all had days when everything goes wrong. In the past, this lady would have had a hard time managing a situation like this one. She would have been confused and internally crushed. On the outside, she might have caused even more damage. Today she has done what she has gradually learned to do. She calls us, sometimes choosing to talk with Pavel and other times Julka. But she talks to one of us first. After about 40 minutes of talking, she obviously calmed down, clarified what was going on and decided her course of action. In the past she may have been quite destructive. Now she has grown into a constructive person.

It sounds rather idyllic but there has been fifteen years of hard work to reach this point. We walked with her and her husband through many difficult

situations. At one point she did not want to talk with us anymore. Several times she wanted to quit. But in the end, she always came back and continued with greater sincerity and better insight and with more trust building between us. The level of her self reflection and honesty is amazing. Despite her disorders, she has learned to cope with escalating emotions and arduous situations. And we know that it has cost her a lot. We have great respect for her and her husband. We are, probably, the only people who have had a privilege to see inside their lives. And we observed, behind all the struggles and mistakes, good and soft hearts and a love for God.

That lady and her husband lead a unique, innovative ministry which is growing. They do great things. We just think what inappropriate candidates God often chooses to do his work, and how much patience the Lord has for me and each of us. We learn to have such patience with others who serve him.

That is a snapshot of our everyday life. There are days when we have several such emergency calls and other days none. But if our schedule permits, we desire to stand behind as many of Christ's servants as we can. Our shift to the support of pastors and Christian leaders during the last four years has been intentional because God opens more and more opportunities, but also because that is what we feel is strategic at this stage of our lives, to support leaders and invest in the younger generation.

"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 counseling, seminars, and mentoring.

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During the rather strict lockdown in the Czech Republic during the last two months (Czech Republic has had, for several weeks, the worst number of infections and the highest mortality in the world), we find ourselves being busy with many personal calls. Even though almost all of them are done by phone or by internet, the number of those calls doubled. They range from counseling and therapy to regular „catch up“ conversations. Some represent intensive work on a specific referral issue, others are closer to mentoring, and yet others are in the form of personal support or growing friendships. It all depends on the need. We enjoy supporting each one to process new and changing personal, family and ministry situations. We also learn so much from the men and women we are in touch with.

SEMINARS

We were supposed to have a very busy fall. In spite of the fact that all the seminars and conferences planned were cancelled, more precisely postponed until next year, there was a demand for online seminars as was probably the case for most other organizations. We have been learning to communicate that way and have found that it works quite well. We try to utilize its strengths and compensate for its weaknesses. The truth is that the number of stream viewers was much higher than in person endeavours and three time more watched it on the internet later.

Please note that there has been a change of address of LEI for your donations!

For financial support from the US you can send tax deductible contributions to Bridge to Life Ministries, 17194 Van Wagoner Rd, Spring Lake, MI 49456. Make the check out to Bridge to Life and designate the gift for CCMCR or Parakletos.

Or send check to LeadingEdge, PO Box 27, Strasburg, OH 44680 for Parakletos. Online giving at: <https://www.lededge.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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One of those seminars became quite popular. It was titled Pandemics and Relationships. It was meant as a help for families and singles to manage the new changes relationally. As we all face many new challenges without being prepared, we attempted to overview the needs and suggest some ways to adjust. Specifically we encouraged viewers to take care of their close relationships and be aware of unavoidable tensions caused by the massive unknown. We also encouraged some creative ways to make the indispensable adjustments. The seminar attracted quite some attention. Probably, because it was a timely theme. It was broadcast by a Christian radio station and we were asked to write an article for a Christian journal.

2021 PLANS

It seems rather uneasy for churches and Christian organizations to make final plans for the future. Nobody knows how the situation is going to develop. We, therefore, have only a few seminars in preparation. But the needs are still there even though those might be different needs. So we explore those new topics. Having a lot of deeper relationships with individuals, we map the areas where people need to expand their understanding and be equipped with new strategies. Once we know those, there are different forms to communicate them.

FAMILY

Jana has been back in the UK since September. She accomplished her studies and is working to complete two years of experience to practice law. Kristýna visited the family of her boyfriend in Denmark and they both traveled to Tanzania where he is a missionary. We hope to have our girls with us for Christmas but it is not sure due to continuing restrictions.

We pray that your Christmas will be the time of peace and security in the midst of unrest and insecurity. Such is the world God sent his Son into. That itself affirms him as the one who cares and is Immanuel, God with us.

Thank you for your prayers and support! Joyful Advent and Merry Christmas!

Pavel and Julka Raus