



parakletos

Dear Friends,

Julka and I send warm regards to each of you as we enter this most blessed Christmas season – our Messiah is born!! May your hearts and homes be filled with awe once again with the enormity of God's unspeakable Gift!

SEMINARS

The Lord has been gracious in allowing us to serve Him by holding many seminars and conferences throughout the Czech Republic. Pavel's seminars included topics such as conflict, sexuality, relationships, dangers and effective uses of the internet, and relationships with parents. Mother daughter relationships, being a godly woman and finding joy in that role were Julka's topics. Thirty to fifty young people participated in our seminars – how we value the opportunity to interact with the newly emergency generation! We were both disconcerted and given hope by the observations we made about the discussions surrounding these relevant issues.

We encountered much confusion about what truth is and what is valid for today. The impact of popular culture and trends is overwhelming. Many of these young people come from dysfunctional families in which trustworthy Christian values are not passed along. In fact, we rarely encounter a young person from a stable, emotionally healthy home. Parents are often too busy or too unclear about a Christian message to meet their children's spiritual needs. Often churches seem far behind in giving messages that are relevant to life today. As a result, young people acquire their belief system from peers and

often lack biblical answers which would be both profound and practical.

The source of our hope was the level of openness we found in these young people. Their response to what is honest and authentic was encouraging. They often have hurts and know what pain is about. While pain seems to prevent some from opening up, others become more open. Actually, we have learned to open relevant topics by first addressing the pain, then we can seek the causes of that pain. Only then can we uncover biblical perspectives which can both explain the pain and offer a better way to live. Sometimes the level of pain these young people have experienced is worrisome. Many of their stories break our hearts.



"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.

www.parakletos-cz.org; parakletos@volny.cz

MARRIAGE & FAMILY SEMINARS

Our family and marriage seminars were often held during church retreats or as a part of church programs. In one seminar we focused on the issue of mediocrity in marriage during which we attempted to encourage couples to reach beyond convenient estrangement. This estrangement in marriage can lead to a “stress free” feeling, not because there are no issues to deal with, but because there is a loss of hope that change can occur or there is fear of intractable conflict. Many times people give up after several unsuccessful attempts to resolve issues. Boredom, resentment, passive aggressive behaviors, along with pain and hurt in mediocre marriages also lead to this



estrangement. We challenged couples to have the courage to take steps towards real intimacy by seeking new ways to get closer to one another instead of repeating old mistakes.

Please note that there has been a change of address of Bridge to Life 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 1893 Noblesville, IN 46060-1893 for Parakletos.

Online giving at: www.leadedge.org

From the UK:

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

From the CZ:

ČSOB Bank, AccNo: 186 694 169 / 0300

Another seminar was entitled *Reaching Beyond in Our Marriage* that focused on learning how to face our fears and release our desire for more authenticity and intimacy. It was good to wrestle with these challenges with such engaged participants.



Other seminars focused on parenting and family life, areas recognized as needs in many churches and also as bridges to non-believing friends. It is a privilege to have a part in helping others become more Christ-like in both their personal lives and in their relationships.

VYSOKE' MYTO CHURCH

We continue to be involved in our local church where Pavel serves as an elder and where he has been preaching once a month. As a church we are working on moving from immediate operations concerns to long term strategic issues so that we can have a greater capacity to focus on people. Please pray with us as we seek to build greater unity, understanding and humility to address more conflictuous areas in the church.

Family

- Jana continues her studies and full time employment and IS surviving! However, after Christmas she will seek a new job in order to focus more completely on her studies.
- Kristyna remains in Thailand where she is working and traveling to neighboring countries.
- Care giving for our mothers keeps us busy. Julka's mom seems to be recovering nicely following serious heart surgery while my mom has been struggling with mental issues.

We thank you for your prayers and support which enable the work of Parakletos to continue.

Asking God to fill your hearts with joy and peace,

Pavel and Julka Raus