

The Johnson Family

Planting churches in **Poland**



May 2011

Change of Ministry

I am not sure how to share this important news with you, except to just get to the point and explain it to you the best I can.

My family & I returned to the States on March 29th. This was supposed to have been the beginning of furlough for us. But, due to God's working in our hearts for almost a year, we will not be returning to Poland.

We have complete peace it is God's will that we remain here in order to pastor a Baptist church in the States. This has been the most difficult decision we have ever made, because we thought God would leave us in Poland until He called us home to Heaven.

God began putting a very strong desire in my heart to pastor in the States, which is something I never thought would happen to me. My family and I have not only be satisfied but also very thrilled to be sent by God to serve in one of the most RC countries in the world, and especially in the hometown of Pope John Paul II.

Latest Events

We have worked very hard to contact all of our supporting churches by telephone, but due to the shortness of time, extremely busy schedule, and especially not being settled the last weeks we were in Poland and since our return to the USA, it has not been possible to speak with every pastor personally. **This is something I regret terribly.** We did not want you to hear this news from rumor, secondhand, or even in a letter like this one. We truly wanted to tell each of you this news ourselves so you would have a chance to ask any questions you wanted and so you would know my heart in this whole matter.

I want to emphasis that we did not leave Poland due to any kind of sin problems, discouragement or any other problems. It was simply the result of God's Holy Spirit placing a strong desire in my heart to be a pastor in the States.

After reaching about 35 of our supporting pastors by phone, it has been a great blessing to not have one negative response from even one pastor. **I only regret I could not have spoken to each of you personally before sending this letter.**

Sadly, due to time passing so fast in the past month and many important events having already taken place, we have no choice but to tell you about all this in a news letter.

In February, **Temple Baptist Church in Scottsburg, IN** was recommended to us after we had heard their pastor had died, after he had been their 25 years. After corresponding, talking a few times by phone, then we finally met them in April. We spent about 10 days with them, getting to know them, allowing them to know us and so we and they could ask as many questions as possible.

On May 1st, this small church of eight members voted to have us become their pastor. The church has been through some terrible difficulties in the past few years. About 3 years ago (*during the same time when the pastor's wife had just died*), a group in the church split off and took over $\frac{2}{3}$ of the members with them. This left behind a very heart-broken 73 year old pastor, who had just lost his wife, had bad health, and at that time only a hand full of church members left. Then in Dec. 2010 this same faithful pastor died at the age of 76. Since that time the few church members left have stayed faithful.

The church has a building and property that is paid for, no housing for a pastor, but eight faithful (*elderly*) church members. There are a good number of visitors (*10-15*) who have been waiting on the sidelines to see what kind of pastor the church would have before joining the church. I feel the church will gain most of these folks as members soon, but there is still a great challenge ahead to see the church grow enough to support itself fully.

Next Step

Due to the size of the church, they are barely able to pay church utilities, much less pay a pastor. So, I will be looking for a job to support my family. This is not ideal, as many of you know. (*We are starting from "zero" concerning physical possessions.*) We have dear friends who pastor some of our supporting churches, who have been working a secular job and pastoring their churches for many years. I admire and respect them greatly.

We have had two of our supporting churches, as well as our home church in TN, say they would be sending support to us for a specific amount of time, (*6-18 months*), in order to help us be able to spend more time helping the church to get back on its feet and grow again. If this is something your church might be interested in helping with, we would be very grateful, but not expecting this from anyone. We are not planting a church, but I suppose in a way it could be seen as a *rescue ministry* initially. We plan to stay at this church so, we would **not** accept financial help from other churches to help support us as pastor, **except for a specific time period of time.** Please feel free to contact me if you feel God would lead you to help in this way.

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Home Church: Victory Baptist Church; 5608 Amy Drive; Talbott, TN 37877; 423-581-1540

Mission Board: B.I.M.I.; PO Box 9215; Chattanooga TN 37412; 423-344-5050

Field Address: Skrytka Pocztoowa 19; 30-444 Krakow; Poland

Furlough Address: 5608 Amy Drive; Talbott, TN 37877

email: darrell@djpoland.net

Concerning BIMl

Today I sent a letter of resignation to BIMl. This was a step that I needed to do just so everything would be official. I have already met with our director at BIMl and discussed everything with him, but of course the first thing we did was spend a lot of time discussing this with our home/sending pastor. We are thankful to say that our home church, home pastor, and BIMl are all behind us in this decision. We have been very open about every detail with them, just as we want to be with you. *(That is why we did not drag this thing out a long time before writing to you. We believe it is dishonest and unethical for a missionary to take a furlough, knowing he is not returning to the field, then after several months of receiving support, to write and finally say he is not going back.)*

BIMl will make sure any support we might receive during the next three month gets to us.

If your church feels that your support to us should stop immediately, we understand completely. We would hope you would quickly send that money to another missionary. *(We would even suggest you consider our co-workers in Poland, the Glass family.)* What ever God leads each church to do is a decision each one has to make according to God's leading.

Ministry in Poland

Jon Glass, our co-worker in Poland since 1997, is still leading the ministry there. God is blessing in wonderful ways, just as He has always done.

We would still ask you to pray for several dear lost people in Poland.

- Wiesiek, Tomek, Kamil, Ela, Jacek, Mateusz, Bartek, Magda, Janusz, Sylvia, Romana, Elvis, Malgorzata, Gaja, Witek, Iwona, Magda & Ania.

The Believers in the church are continuing to grow and share the Gospel with others. Please remember to pray for them as they fight the fight of faith for Christ everyday in a very spiritually oppressive RC country:

- Irena 1 and Irena 2, Agata, Piotr, & Joanna.

Jon & Karen Glass continue to be the solid & self-sacrificing missionaries that we have known for the past 14 years. It has been fantastic to see how God allowed our two families to work together for so many years. I have learned a lot from Jon. We are thankful that God gave us such faithful, godly co-workers in the ministry in Poland.

Special Thanks

We would like to end this lengthy letter by saying a very special thanks from our hearts to each of you who have sacrificed for so many years to help us serve in Poland. Most of you have been with us since the beginning. You have prayed, cared and given sacrificially, and we want you to know that even though we may never know everything you have done, God knows and He is faithful to bless your obedience and faith.

Thank you for allowing us to represent you for Christ in Poland. None of us may never know in this life what wonderful ways God used you to make a difference in the life & eternity of those in Poland, but someday God will show us just how much He used you to keep a Polish person from going to hell.

We treasure each of you as dear friends in Jesus Christ our Lord,

Darrell, Glenda & Hannah Johnson

Please use our email address:

dj2poland@mac.com

(the old address at the bottom of this letterhead still works but it is being phased out)

Our new contact info:

PO Box 395

Scottsburg, IN 47170

Temporary tel: 423-258-2040

Please feel free to write or call if you have any questions.

Bro. Bo + Church family,

Thanks so much for so many years of faithful support, prayers and sacrificing for our family, and the work in Poland. Your friendship and encouragement has meant more to us than words can describe.

We thank God for you and we will continue to pray for you.

In Christ,

*Darrell + Glenda
Johnson*