FROM INSIGHT FOR LIVING MINISTRIES



SPRING 2023

ON THE AIR





Check the Insight



We don't speak on our own behalf but on Christ's. It isn't our message that we convey but His gospel. God is making His appeal to the world through us as ambassadors of Christ.

- Pastor Charles R. Swindoll



AMBASSADORS **OF CHRIST**

INSIGH IVING MINISTRIES POLAND T FOR L

So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

(2 Corinthians 5:20-21)

is phone didn't normally ring at midnight. But the brand-new Bible-teaching broadcast, Pełnia Życia, meaning "Fullness of Life," ended at 11:00 p.m., so listeners assumed he was in the studio ready for their calls. Zygmunt, pastor of Insight for Living Ministries (IFLM) Poland, will never forget his conversation that night with a man feeling empty and ready to end it all.

"You are the last person I will ever speak with," he told Zygmunt, "because I am ready to hang myself." Zygmunt, however, knew this phone call signaled that the caller sought for a reason to live. So Zygmunt kept the listener on the phone and soon learned the man's name and address. During the call, Zygmunt used another phone to call a pastor friend, who quickly traveled to the caller's address and extended Christ's comfort. In those dark hours, a ray of hope shined. The caller lived.

insight.org

Continued inside



Zygmunt Karel serves as pastor of IFLM Poland. He helped open the office in 2009 and launched the broadcast in 2011. He continues to translate Pastor Chuck Swindoll's messages and to shepherd our Polish ministry. A well-known leader within Poland's evangelical circles, Zygmunt has pastored four churches, earned a PhD from Christian Theological Academy in Warsaw, Poland, opened an evangelical seminary that he then led for fifteen years as president, and is now spearheading the expansion of Polish Bible-teaching throughout the world.

Ambassadors of Christ rarely know the details of His mission for them. They simply go. They proclaim. They serve, give, listen, build, organize—moving long-term initiatives forward while responding to the urgent needs of the day. It is the ever-present King who governs the ambassador's time and orchestrates the ambassador's schedule. The whole mission is carried out in faith, hope, and love while representing the Lord of Life and following His leading.

From the beginning, the IFLM regional office in Poland has operated with that biblical

attitude and posture. Christ faithfully raised up its leaders. He is using them to expand the presence and influence of clear, accurate, relevant, practical Bible teaching in the Polish language across the world. God's faithfulness is encouraging. The fruit is nourishing and inspiring. Our goals are God-sized because the needs are God-sized.



Ambassadors of Christ not only speak the content of His message but also imitate the manner of His character.



PREPARATION

Zygmunt Karel did not begin his ministry with the aim of teaching God's Word on such an array of platforms like we do at IFLM. IFLM did not have in place some strategic three-year plan for finding an evangelical Polish-speaking pastor, establishing a Poland office, and launching a Polish-language Bible-teaching ministry. Christ, however, prepares His ambassadors through immediate assignments and partnerships for later assignments and new partnerships—all to accomplish His unfathomable plan by His own manifold wisdom.

In 1955, when Zygmunt was only five years old, he and his family witnessed communist police beat his father, a pastor, in their living room. In those days in Poland, it was a crime to evangelize. Zygmunt lunged toward his father to help him, but his mother held him back, "If we



Zygmunt and Maria have been devoted to each other, to their five children and six grandchildren, and to Christ's mission for five decades. In September 2023, they will celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary!

attack them," she warned, "... they will put your father in prison, this time, for good." Authorities harassed preachers to spark retaliation. But

there was none in the Karel home that day. The police left disappointed. Zygmunt's father gathered the whole family in the living room where they all knelt and prayed for those who had just abused him.

In 1964, while traveling on a streetcar with his father, Zygmunt read about the need for personal faith in Christ. Immediately, he committed his life to the Lord Jesus Christ and desired to serve Him in fulltime vocational ministry.

Zygmunt's mom and dad were reluctant about his career decision because they knew the hardships of such a life. Zygmunt's father had been arrested numerous times and Zygmunt, too, would spend nights in jail for preaching the gospel. Yet, God's call was undeniable. In 1973, Zygmunt began pastoring his first church, and he married his sweetheart, Maria. This year marks both their fiftieth year in full-



Christ sends His ambassadors to carry out His mission regardless of how chaotic the place or times may be.



time vocational ministry as well as their fiftieth wedding anniversary. God is faithful!

In 1982, Zygmunt met an American missionary and Bible teacher named Mark Young. The two immediately realized they shared the desire to train pastors, so they developed curriculum and traveled across Poland conducting seminars from 1982 to 1986. During this time, began they dreaming of starting Polish а

evangelical seminary. Earning a doctorate degree took Mark back to the states from 1986 to 1988 until he received a call from Zygmunt to move back to Poland and launch a seminary—**underground!** Communism still ruled Poland in 1988, so authorities would have never allowed an evangelical seminary. In their eyes, it would have been "too Western . . . too American."

By April 1988, Mark completed his PhD and returned to Poland. As they developed their plan for the seminary in 1989, the first free Polish parliamentary elections occurred. The overthrow of communism and the overhaul of Poland's key institutions shortly followed . . . including nation-wide upheaval.

The abolition of communism enabled Zygmunt and Mark to **publicly** launch Biblical Theological Seminary, now called the Evangelical School of Theology, in the summer of 1990. Zygmunt served as president from 1990 to 2005. Mark served as dean from 1990 to 1995 before moving to Texas to teach as a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary.

Zygmunt transferred the baton of leadership into new hands at Biblical Theological Seminary in 2005. Then, God led him to Brooklyn, New York, to pastor a Polish-speaking congregation until 2008. In fact, it was in 2008 when Mark invited Zygmunt to Texas to connect with Pastor Chuck and Cynthia. The Swindolls invited Zygmunt to serve as IFLM's Polish translator and pastor. Zygmunt's family history, education, ministry, leadership experience, and kingdom partnerships prepared him for and led him to his next ambassadorial undertaking. With joy, Zygmunt said, **"YES!"**



Upon returning to Poland in 2008, Christ soon connected Zygmunt with a fellow ambassador named Dorothy who worked as a lawyer and donated her time and expertise to establish IFLM Poland as a legal foundation, which occurred in January 2009.

"From day one, I was translating Pastor Chuck's sermons!" Zygmunt recalls. Patiently



Christ connected Zygmunt Karel and Mark Young in 1982 to strengthen and develop evangelical church leaders throughout Poland. In 1995, Mark left his post, as dean of the seminary they founded, to serve as a professor at Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS). Pastor Chuck was president of the seminary at that time. A former board member at IFLM, Mark taught at DTS until 2009 when he accepted the call to serve as president of Denver Seminary where he remains. Mark also served on the pastoral staff from 2000 to 2009 at Stonebriar Community Church, in Frisco, Texas, founded in 1998 and still pastored by Chuck.

and faithfully for more than two years, Zygmunt translated and recorded sermon after sermon after sermon. Often, a solitary and unglamorous endeavor . . . but vital if there is to be a proper storehouse of Bible-teaching messages for the program's consistency and longevity. Amid the production work, Zygmunt reached out to his close friend, Dr. Henryk Król, who owned Radio CCM, a Christian radio station in Poland.

In July 2011, *Pełnia Życia*, meaning "Fullness of Life," hit the radio airways! To this day, Dr. Król serves on the board of IFLM Poland proving to be a vital partner in our shared faith and mission.

Kuba Cieslar joined IFLM Poland in 2013 as its first executive director. This young, dynamic leader helped Zygmunt expand the ministry's



Kuba Cieslar served as the executive director of IFLM Poland from 2013 to 2021. Due to his careful attention to detail, organizational acumen, and understanding of the digital world, the ministry's presence multiplied.

presence on the airwaves and online. In 2021, Kuba transitioned to a pastorate, and Marcin Karel, Zygmunt's son, stepped in as the new executive director. Marcin has now built on the foundation established by Kuba, taking the quality of their digital presence and the extent of their outreach to the next level. Marcin's ambassadorial attitude shines through his recent statement, "I aim to do my work with excellence that God might be glorified in all we do!"

Christ wants His ambassadors to laugh a little. Regardless of the intensity of the mission, His joy enables them to have some fun. In the spirit of fun, Zygmunt likes to take visitors on "joy rides" in his car. When IFLM leaders, Bill Gemaehlich and Tom Hayes, traveled from the United States office to visit the Polish office, Zygmunt wanted to introduce them to Dr. Król who lived in Wisla—about a three-hour drive from Wrocław on the A4 motorway.

Marcin Karel serves as IFLM Poland's executive director. He has taken our digital presence to the next level and has rapidly increased the ministry's outreach across Poland including our pastortraining initiative!



In various sections, the speed limit is higher than in the United States. Wanting to give Bill and Tom the full experience on the motorway, Zygmunt once increased his speed to 125mph. Yet, sports cars were still blazing past them. Zygmunt recalls Tom's grip on his seatbelt getting tighter and tighter as Bill's eyes got bigger and bigger. Conversation froze. Zygmunt started to grin.



Christ wants His ambassadors to laugh a little. Regardless of the intensity of the mission, His joy enables them to have some fun.



Ministries Poland Insight for Living would not be possible were it not for other ambassadors of Christ who pray for the ministry and fund its work. Consistent giving from the United States has enabled the continued operations of the ministry while key supporters from within Poland also contribute toward special initiatives. Zygmunt says some of the most touching gifts come from elderly people who live alone and depend upon the reliable presence of the broadcast. They receive a meager pension to live on, but they wish to help so they give a significant percentage of their livelihood to assist the ministry. "All of us at IFLM Poland are blessed by their gifts which we view as signs of God's favor and direction to continue in this work as His ambassadors."

Continued on back

MINISTRY IN POLAND



ygmunt and the leaders of IFLM Poland minister with great sensitivity ✓ to their cultural and religious context. Poland is predominantly Roman Catholic. The mind-set of many is that "the church will take care of my relationship with God and my eternal salvation." Meaning, one does not need to be involved in such things. Cultivating a personal relationship with Christ and connecting with Him through His Word are uncommon ideas often understood with difficulty. Furthermore, the influence of the Reformation touched Poland far less than other European countries, so biblical concepts are not as commonplace in the average vocabulary like they are in languages such as English or German.

Zygmunt exercises extreme care to translate Pastor Chuck's messages into everyday Polish so people will learn that God's Word is useful and beneficial <u>RIGHT NOW</u> and that Christ is present and relevant, ready for a relationship RIGHT NOW.

e co

Timeline

- **2008:** Zygmunt Karel joins IFLM.
- **2009:** IFLM Poland becomes a legal entity.
- **2011:** The first broadcast airs.
- **2012:** IFLM Poland launches its website.
- **2013:** Kuba Cieslar becomes executive director.
- **2015:** Prison ministry begins.
- **2017:** IFLM Poland launches a mobile app.
- **2017:** The new office opens in Wrocław.
- **2019:** Pastor training gets underway.
- **2021:** The thousandth Polish broadcast airs.
- **2021:** Marcin Karel becomes executive director.

A FAITH-FILLED REPORT

- More than 30 sermon series have been translated.
- Iflpolska.pl had more than 28,400 page views in 2022.
- The broadcast airs six days a week on three radio stations in Poland.
- The broadcast received more than 1,800 downloads per month in 2022 on the mobile app and website.

- BRANCH.FM airs the broadcast for Polish-speaking communities in the United Kingdom.
- Four of Pastor Chuck's books were translated and published between 2018 and 2022.
- More than 100 church leaders have been trained.

— Pastor Training

Equipping church leaders for gospel ministry has been on Zygmunt's heart for more than 40 years. That desire aligns well with IFLM's vision. In 2018, we began developing pastor-training curriculum to help church leaders who lack access to such training. The IFLM United Kingdom pastor, Terry Boyle, creates curriculum and seminars based on Pastor Chuck's books, like *Searching the Scriptures*, to offer insight and practical tips from Pastor Chuck's more than sixty years of ministry experience.

Zygmunt could not have been more thrilled to hear about this new curriculum and initiative. In fact, he began translating it, late into the night, the first day he received his copy! He finished translating the first volume in 2019. IFLM Poland has trained more than 100 church leaders since that time.

An Urgent Assignment

On February 24, 2022, Russian military forces began attacking major cities across Ukraine. Quickly, humanitarian organizations marshaled their resources to meet this urgent crisis. Displacement is one of the disastrous effects of this war. Millions of people have fled Ukraine into neighboring countries such as Hungary, Romania, Moldova, and Poland, which has received the most refugees—topping nine million. Many refugees in Poland have since moved to other countries, but approximately two million currently remain.

Zygmunt recalls in 2008 reading a surprising provision in IFLM Poland's bylaws: to "help war victims." Zygmunt questioned Dorothy about it, but she said it was necessary to keep. What prescience! With that legal authority, IFLM Poland has partnered with other churches and organizations to alleviate agonizing pain created by the war and to extend biblical hope and compassion to those who are desperate for comfort and light.

IFLM Poland helps support more than 70 refugees, mostly women and children, by giving them long-term housing and daily necessities like food and clothing. Furthermore,

IFLM Poland has helped sustain more than 350 families by delivering goods across the border into Lutsk. The war is likely no longer at the forefront of people's minds outside of Eastern Europe. But it remains an ongoing humanitarian crisis on the doorsteps of many in this part of the world.



Millions of refugees—like this hurting family in need of assurance that someone loves them—have fled Ukraine since February 24, 2022. IFLM Poland is helping Ukrainian people by offering biblical counseling, delivering resources such as food and clothing for people in Ukraine, and providing long-term housing and care in Wrocław, Poland. Scan here to learn more about the challenges Pastor Karel faces as he ministers in Poland.



Your Prayers and Support

When you give to IFLM, a percentage of your gift helps fuel our global outreach which we call **Vision 195**: our goal of proclaiming the truths of Scripture and the person of Jesus Christ to all 195 nations in the world. All of us at IFLM are deeply grateful for the ambassadors of Christ, who take seriously His Great Commission, by sending out God's Word across the world through this Bible-teaching ministry.

Zygmunt and IFLM Poland ask you to pray for:

- 1. The spiritual impact of their Bibleteaching content
- 2. The funds to translate more of Pastor Chuck's books
- 3. The expansion of our pastor-training efforts
- 4. A deeper desire in Poland for Christ and His Word

Spending any amount of time with the IFLM Poland team will make evident that these ambassadors not only carry the message of Christ but also represent His heart. They embody the apostle Paul's expression about his own ministry in 2 Corinthians 5:14, **"For the love of Christ controls us."**





IFLM POLAND'S GOD-SIZED GOAL

If anyone in Poland wants to learn God's Word and walk more closely with Christ, we want their first thought to be to connect with Insight for Living Ministries Poland.

—Zygmunt Karel and Marcin Karel



I first discovered Chuck Swindoll while reading his book on Abraham. Chuck's deep study of Abraham made the patriarch of the faith so real and relevant. Then, I discovered his Searching the Scriptures study method, which has increased my passion for teaching God's Word and for helping other leaders study it themselves. The broadcast in Poland is a source of spiritual nourishment as well as a model for church leaders in our country!

-Pastor M. K.

Insight for Living Ministries USA • Post Office Box 5000 • Frisco, Texas • 75034-0055 • USA • 1-800-772-8888 • Spanish-language materials, please call 469-535-8433 • Churches and bookstores, please call 1-800-641-5485 • International orders, please call +1-469-535-8436 • CANADA • Insight for Living Canada • PO Box 8 Stn A • Abbotsford BC V2T 6Z4 • CANADA • 1-800-663-7639 • insightforliving.ca • AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, AND SOUTH PACIFIC • Insight for Living Australia • 2/280 Dorset Rd. • Boronia, VIC 3155 • AUSTRALIA • +61 3 9762 6613 • ifl.org.au • GUATEMALA • *Visión Para Vivir* • 6ta Av. 0-60, Gran Centro Comercial Zona 4 • Torre Profesional II, Of. 511 • Guatemala • (502) 2338-0027 • visionparavivir.org • UK AND EUROPE • Insight for Living United Kingdom • PO Box 553 • Dorking RH4 9EU • UNITED KINGDOM • 0800 787 9364 • insightforliving.org.uk • Copyright © 2023 Insight for Living Ministries. All rights reserved worldwide. No portion of this newsletter may be translated into any language or reproduced in any form without prior written permission from the publisher. *Insights* is published by Insight for Living Ministries, the Bible-teaching ministry of Charles R. Swindoll. Insight for Living Ministries is an autonomous ministry. Cover inset of Pastor Chuck Swindoll: Edmonson Photography. Printed in the United States of America.