

SEPTEMBER 2016

# VINESONG

THE POLAND EDITION



Poland 2016 Tour Map

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# THE MESSAGE

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Pastor John delivered two messages during our time in Poland: 'Get Back in the Race' and 'Christ in You: The Hope of Glory'. Both messages were well received and many people remarked on how the message was just for them.



'Get Back in the Race' focused on an incident from the men's marathon during the 2004 Olympic games in Athens. A Brazilian was clearly in the winning position as they neared the stadium finish line when the unthinkable happened. A crazy man came out of the crowd and pushed him down - out of the race.

The man sat dazed and confused, wondering what would happen, but he didn't stay down. After being passed by second and third-placed runners, he got back up, and struggling to regain his rhythm, he eventually finished the race. He received a bronze medal for third place and another special medal for his attitude. This message of running the race likens us to that man: We have all been pushed out of the race of life; through death of a loved one, sickness, divorce etc., we have all been blindsided by an unexpected tragedy. However, with the help of Jesus, we can and we must get up and finish the race.

'Christ in You' is based on Colossians 1:25-29 where Paul writes about the mystery hidden in every age and in every generation that has now been revealed to those who love God - Christ in you - the hope of glory. When we receive this revelation we become mature and we have to be responsible for our actions as Christ is not up in heaven looking down at us to see what we're doing wrong, but He is in us, empowering us to do what is right.

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# THE TOUR

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Week 1  
POZNAN



We arrived in Poznan on a Wednesday evening at Teresa Szopka-Bartol's house. This was to be our residence for the next 5 days and it was great that we were all able to stay together. We were treated to a fantastic feast. Teresa's friend Inge joined her from Germany to help look after us during our stay there.

On Thursday morning we met with Pastor Piotr Wiselka, who was in charge of organising all our meetings in Poznan, and Łukasz, our interpreter who was going to travel with us for the whole tour.

We hit the ground running with 3 radio interviews. Charlene and Rachael were broadcast live on a national radio station and then did two recorded radio interviews. That night we had our first meeting, which was an open air meeting in Poznan city centre. We thought it was quite appropriate to begin our tour and each meeting by lifting up the name of Jesus for all to hear. God was very much alive

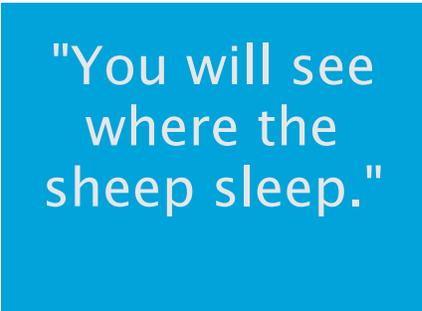


and present as we worshipped Him in the street with hundreds of people. We prayed over many who were hurting, those suffering from suicidal thoughts, alcoholism, addictions, and the like. The local church fed the homeless who came. When the ministry was over we headed off for a late dinner at a lovely hotel owned by one of the street evangelists, Isabella. She gave us a tour of her hotel and told us of how the décor had been given to her in a series of dreams. We were all treated to a wonderful meal. We couldn't have asked for a better start to the tour.

On Thursday morning Charlene and Rachael were interviewed at a local TV station WTK TV, which also has an internet presence. Here's the link to the interview:  
[http://www.wtk.pl/video-id-27420-gospelowcy\\_z\\_vinesong\\_spiewaja\\_i\\_nadzieje\\_daja](http://www.wtk.pl/video-id-27420-gospelowcy_z_vinesong_spiewaja_i_nadzieje_daja)

#### WRONKI

After 19 years, it was a real honour to be able to be back ministering in Wronki prison. The previous team had ministered there before twice shortly after the fall of communism and in very cold Polish winters. Pastor John has often spoken about the team's time there. When the team arrived back in 1995, the Governor - who John says reminded him of Mussolini, the WWII Italian dictator - said that he didn't know how the team had got to be there, but it was "too late to do anything about it, so they should continue". Before the meeting John says that he heard a voice say, "You will see where the sheep sleep".



"You will see  
where the  
sheep sleep."

He asked all the members of the team that were around if they had said it or if they had heard it said and no-one knew what he was talking about. During that ministry John recalls that when it came time to the call for salvation, he asked every person in the room to close their eyes and that he would wait until everyone's eyes were closed before he proceeded. Once all eyes were closed he told them that this was probably the only time that they were going to get true privacy and if they wanted to accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour they should raise their right hand. Nearly every man in the meeting gave his life to the Lord that evening.

Following the ministry, the team was invited for a meal. The Governor, who was noticeably changed and softened, asked if they would like to see the prison. He took them up to the guards central lookout. From there they could see all the prison cells and they could hear all the coughs and noises the men were making in their sleep. John then recalled what he had heard: "You will see where the sheep sleep".

The Governor asked if the team would please come back again. John agreed with one condition: That the men that have become Christians would be allowed to have regular bible study facilitated by a Chaplain. By the time the team returned in 1997, a Chaplaincy had been instated. Pastor Piotr Wisetka, who is now the head Chaplain for all prisons in Poland, was one of the initial chaplains at Wronki.



The meeting in the prison was phenomenal and the men could not stop thanking and praising God. It was clear to see that many of them had had a real encounter with the Lord. Just before the meeting ended, we were told that some of the men wanted to make a presentation to us. Some of the men who had been there for over 20 years remembered the ministry of Vinesong and in the months prior to our visit they worked on a very special gift for us. They presented us with a handmade origami grand piano constructed with card and paper. The attention to detail was stunning and we were speechless. They also made us a beautiful rose out of bread and had somehow hardened it and painted it. The entire team was humbled by their love and gifts!

Following our ministry at the prison, we were invited for dinner at the Catholic Priest's residence. We were spoilt with such a feast and the Priest shared with us how God had saved him from alcoholism and was given a heart for those now struggling with addiction, homelessness and the prison inmates. He

spoke about how he wants to share his life with others that are as he was, so that they can receive God's love, grace and transforming power.

#### BORUSZYN

In Boruszyn, a country town outside of Poznan, we had a meeting at a Catholic Church. The Priest invited us for a meal and spoke about his relationship with God and how he has been teaching the people to have relationship with Jesus and not Mary.

The church was packed out with people from Boruszyn and 3 neighbouring villages. The atmosphere in the church was unbelievable, it was like being under an open heaven. People just drank in the worship, with some even commenting on how the presence of God was tangible. Words can't do justice to the freedom of the Spirit that we experienced during our meeting.



#### POZNAN CHURCHES TOGETHER

On our final Sunday in Poznan, over 10 different churches cancelled their Sunday morning meetings to come together as one body at the University Congress hall. It was truly unique to have Pentecostals, Baptists, Lutherans, Free Churches and other denominations worshipping God together under one roof.

Over 500 people were present and the presence of God was strong. Many people gave their lives to Jesus. We were told that the news of our ministry in the prison had spread amongst the staff so that the present Governor attended this meeting with all the churches. Praise God!

### Week 2

PIŁA, SWIDWIN, SZECZIN, KOŁOBRZEG, GDANSK

We have a saying in the ministry that we go from prisons to palaces. This tour, we did just that, beginning with Wronki and passing through Swidwin where we ministered in a Castle nearly 700 years old!

We had a great time in Piła at well-attended open air meeting in the town square. Many people living in the surrounding high rise apartments even stood outside on their balconies enjoying the ministry! Afterwards, the church's sound engineer informed us that the town regularly puts on many events, citing the fact that they never have more than 50 people. So to have well over a hundred in attendance was unheard of!

In Swidwin, a small town of about 15,000, the Pastor commented that everybody knows everybody and everybody knows everyone else's business, so he mentioned how it is not so easy for non-Christians to attend an event such as this one in the Castle. He said that when he looked out over the people, he could see that 50% were from the church and 50% were not and he was amazed at the response.

### Week 3

OSTRÓDA

In Ostróda, we once again ministered at an open-air event hosted in the courtyard of an old castle. It was the night before school officially began in Poland. Many people from all backgrounds attended, including the former Mayor of the town. The Pastor told us that the former Mayor was really encouraged by the worship and the message. The event was a great testimony to the power of God.



We had a wonderful outdoor meeting at the ARKA church in Warsaw where again we saw many people respond to the call for salvation. It was a great pleasure to see people from such a deprived community in Warsaw come and experience the love of God through worship and the Word. Pastor Pawel wrote and told us of the great reports from those who attended the meeting, including the gain of members to their newly planted church.

In Chelm we were blessed to see so many people turn out to the local Baptist church to enjoy the ministry. We are thankful to all the pastors that did all that they could to make the meetings that they hosted a huge success by reaching out to other churches and to the local community. The response was fantastic, showing exactly how God blesses those who reach out in faith.

#### CIESZYN

The next day, we travelled 500km from Chelm to Cieszyn for ministry in their town square. A rarely bright and hot Sunday afternoon was the perfect setting for God to draw people out for an unexpected meeting with Him. The church had prayed and fasted for months about the event and for good weather. Needless to say, God answered their prayers in abundance!

The church is only a church of about 40 members, but more than 200 people joined us on the square and in the surrounding bars and cafes.



The brightness caused a problem for our projector, so the words of our songs were not as clear as we would have liked, but God made up for everything we felt we lacked. As we sang and ministered, people were captivated. Even those in the café bars and restaurants around the square did not move whilst we ministered. There was such a tangible presence of God, and a holy hush enveloped the square as we sang 'Peace Like a River'.

After we finished, a man, who had been born in the city and had lived in and around the square all his life, said to us that he had never sensed such an powerful presence of God in that place during all his years. The crowd simply sat as if they couldn't move, such was the presence of God.

## Week 4

In our final week we were blessed by the churches in the surrounding area to stay in Swidnica in a hotel next to the biggest timber frame church in Europe. It was such a peaceful place and so rejuvenating to stay in one place for the last five nights of the tour. We really saw God moving in all the places, big and small, and we are grateful for His presence and the anointing, without which none of the tour would have been possible.

### WALBRZYCH

One of the biggest meetings of the tour took place in Walbrzych at the Philharmonic hall. There was literally standing room only. At the end of the meeting, well over a hundred people gave their lives to the Jesus.



### SWIDNICA

In Swidnica, the church organised two separate events, one at a local hall and one in their church on Sunday morning. Many people attended the meeting in the local hall and many also stood for salvation. The Sunday morning meeting at the church was also an incredible meeting. The church was full and people basked in the presence of God. It was wonderful for us to see people opening up in God's presence and we know that God did many wonderful things among them.



Our final meeting of the tour in Wroclaw was the biggest. It was held in the Radio Wroclaw concert hall and the organisers invited many of the city's dignitaries and leading business men and women to reach them with the Gospel. As we sang and ministered to them we saw their faces and body language soften and as we continued, we saw many people crying as God touched their hearts.



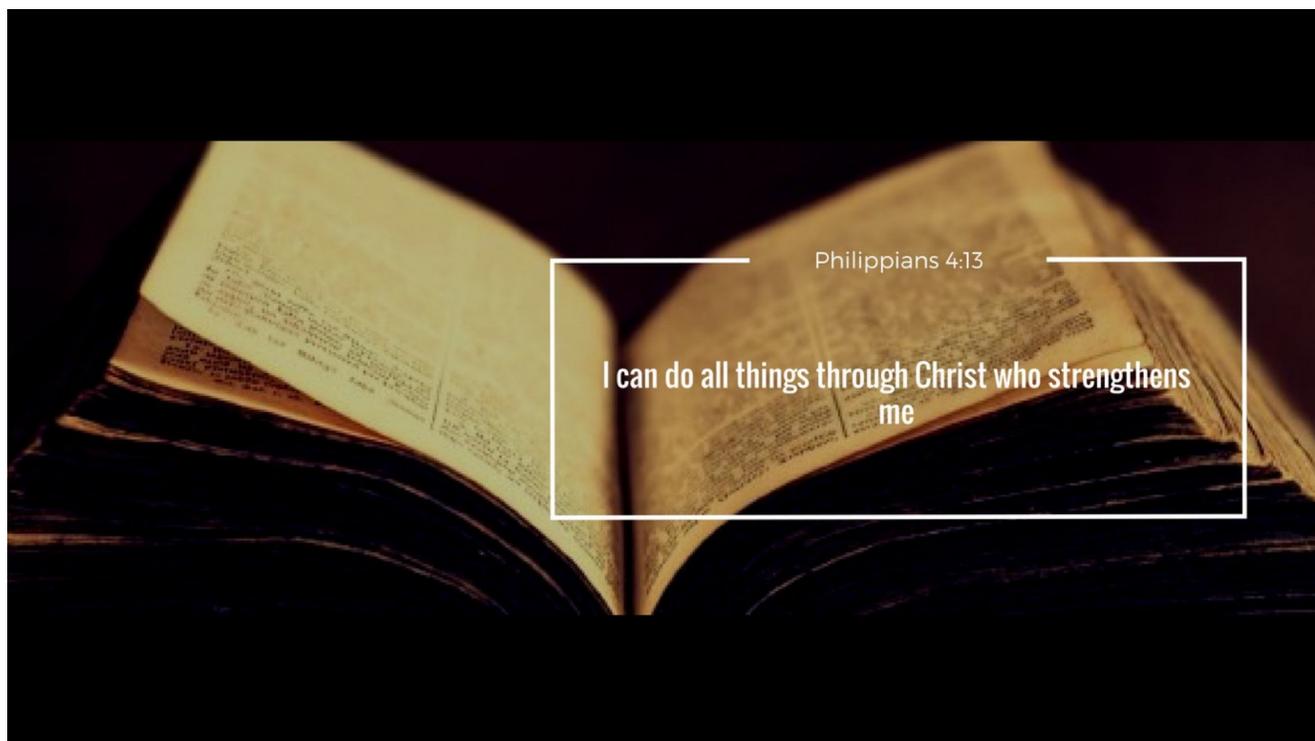
### A Final Note....

Throughout this tour we have been privileged to see how God has met with people, believers and non-believers alike as they have responded to His love poured out through worship and the Word. The hospitality that we have experienced has been second to none.

We cannot say enough about the love and deep respect we experienced when we arrived in Poland from our host Teresa and Pastor Piotr Wisetka who organised our ministry in Poznan and the surrounding area. Teresa was Vinesong's translator on one of the previous tours and has remained a good friend to us. Teresa and her friend Inge served us so selflessly whilst we stayed in Poznan and we were so blessed by their thoughtfulness and everything that they did to help us to a good start.

In Swidwin, we were all hosted by Isabella, a lady who lived in a rural area who's husband had passed away only 3 months earlier. It must have been a difficult time for her, but she opened her home and her heart to us. All the food that she prepared for us demonstrated not only her gift of hospitality, but also her love for God and for us. There are many more wonderful people who blessed us by giving their all through service and hospitality. We are so grateful for the love that was poured out on us by our hosts and those who helped them. We know the Lord blesses those who give out of their hearts, and nothing done for God ever returns void. We saw many people give their lives to Jesus and many others renew their commitment to Him. We would like to thank everyone who shared their personal testimonies with us.

We thank God for all those who were involved in putting this tour together. We thank God for Monika Pałka who not only translated our songs into Polish but also co-ordinated the whole tour. We thank God for every Pastor who reached out in faith to use our coming as a tool for evangelism in their towns. We thank God for his provision of Łukasz Kula, our translator for the whole tour. We give God all the glory for everything that He did through people to reach people! God truly loves Poland, because He loves people and we saw the way He lavished His love on so many and on us throughout the tour. Our God is an awesome God and we give Him all the glory for every life touched and changed by the power of His unfailing and unconditional love.



Philippians 4:13

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me