

MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE

When the communist era ended in Eastern Europe, the SILESIAN CHURCH faced a great opportunity and a large challenge in the Czech Republic. Only 30% has any affiliation with Christianity, as Christians are viewed as unusual in that society.

How could a church begin to fulfill Christ's command to LOVE one another when so much of society seemed beyond the churches reach?

Many Czech citizens were suspicious. "They would not come to where we as Christians meet", said Bishop Vladislav Volny of the Czech Lutheran Church. "So we need to meet people where they are." "We hope they will come to recognize Christ thru our acts of love and compassion of the poorest of the poor and for those in greatest need."

This denomination of 35,000 set out to do just that in 1990. It had no social service institutions and no social ministry. Today the social services arm of the SILESIAN CHURCH has 43 service institutions. Including

- Centers for disabled
- Orphanages
- After school programs
- Elder care facilities

Its workers and volunteers indeed meet people where they are.

Grants and scholarships from the ELCA are helping them grow in their capacity for social service, advocacy, and global mission.

Thank you Woodland members for the HELP and HOPE you bring to so many.

Rick Antin
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