

Beit Polska – A National Jewish Outreach Across Poland* How We're Doing....

By Rabbi Haim Dov Beliak



*Warsaw, Poland. New Prayer Leader Piotr Mirski is blessed by two of his teachers, Mimi Sheffer and Rabbi Burt Shuman
Photo courtesy of Beit Polska*

Beit Polska, the national umbrella organization of Progressive Jews in Poland, is engaged in efforts to build Jewish congregations in Poland. In most places there has been virtually no Jewish life since 1968, when the Polish Communist Party expelled thousands of Jewish doctors, intellectuals and professors, or in some instances, since 1939, when the Germans and Russians invaded the country. Beit Polska has succeeded in the creation of 10 communities of Jews where visitors are welcome to observe Jewish holidays, explore their possible Jewish roots, study Hebrew and Judaism,

and/or seek information on the Jewish faith. The 10 communities are: the flagship community of Beit Warszawa (Warsaw), Beit Trojmiasto (Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot), Beit Lodz, Beit Lublin, Beit Katowice, Beit Poznan, Beit Wroclaw, Beit Bialystok, Beit Konstancin and Beit Torun.

Some visitors suspect or know they have a Jewish family background; others are non-Jewish Poles who have a keen interest in Jewish life and history. A considerable number of these visitors stay to become stakeholders in Judaism through conversion. Although most communities are small by most congregational standards, the numbers continue to grow.

**See KulanuNews Spring, 2013: Rejoining the Family, Progressive Judaism in Poland*