


Glorious Hope Slavná naděje

Vol. 38, N° 1, 2012

Ročník 38, číslo 1, 2012



**"He himself bore our sins in his
body on the cross..."** 1 Peter 2: 24a

**"On sám na svém těle vzal naše
hříchy na kříž..."** 1. Petrův 2; 24a

**"On sám, na vlastnom tele vyniesol
naše hriechy na drevo..."** Petrov list 2; 24a

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Convention Mission Statement

The Czechoslovak Baptist Convention of USA and Canada exists 1) to assist in extending the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in lands of central and eastern Europe, particularly the Czech and Slovak Republics; 2) to support the work of Baptists and other evangelical churches in North America that minister to persons of Czech and Slovak descent, and 3) to provide a Christian context for worship, fellowship, teaching, and appreciation of heritage among those in the United States and Canada who bear interest in the nationalities we represent.

Misijní posláni konvence

Československá baptistická konvence Spojených států a Kanady byla ustanovena za účelem: 1) napomáhat v šíření evangelia našeho Pána Ježíše Krista v zemích střední a východní Evropy, zvláště v České a Slovenské republice; 2) podporovat práci baptistů a jiných evangelikálních církví v severní Americe, které slouží českým a slovenským potomkům; 3) předkládat formu bohoslužby, obecnství a učení, vážit si dědictví těch, ve Spojených státech a v Kanadě, kterým leží na srdci národy, které reprezentujeme.

Glorious Hope/Slavná naděje

Volume 38, N° 1, 2012

(USPS 009334), ISSN 0700-5202

Published Bi-Monthly by

The Czechoslovak Baptist Convention
of USA and Canada.

Periodical postage paid in Detroit, MI.

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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

Publication Office:

Glorious Hope / Slavná naděje

P.O. Box 441516, Detroit, MI, 48244, USA.

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Faith Comes by Hearing

Faith is a knowing, an inner attitude, which manifests itself in action. The history of our convention underscores this truth. From this convention's members there have emerged servants who devoted their lives to evangelism and mission work. We have read about them in the pages

of *Glorious Hope*, from this magazine's very beginning.

Pastor Milos Solc Sr., an enthusiastic witness for Jesus Christ, who combined a successful athletic career with spreading the joyous news of salvation as his life-long calling, shows us the first steps of reaching out to our loved ones. An excerpt from his book, *What Life Is Like for Those Who Love God*, emphasizes the importance of hearing God's word. The memories of this Czech evangelist are sometimes almost unbelievable. With his indomitable enthusiasm and infectious passion for Jesus Christ, he influenced countless numbers of youth during the totalitarian regime in former Czechoslovakia.

Athletics plays a huge role in the Solc family. The comparison between athletics and Christianity is made by Dr. Josef Solc, Rev. Milos Solc's younger son, in his

book entitled, *Communicating on the Playing Field*. In this issue on the Youth page, we conclude the chapter *The Similarity between Christianity and Sports*.

In an article written by Neville Callama, treasurer of the World Baptist Alliance, we meet Thomas Helwysem, the leading Baptist figure in the 17th Century. The author appeals to us to continue Helwysem's legacy.

The theme of this *Glorious Hope* issue is Easter. The main article, from Rev. Kathy Shereda, speaks to us about Lent, a period of fasting that precedes the holy day.

Every reader of *Glorious Hope* surely has his or her own experiences spreading the gospel or sharing Christ with others. The power of the cross is at the forefront of our minds during Easter. Jesus took our sins on the cross so that we might "live for righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24b). Preceding that of course is dying to sin. *Dying* in today's language simply means separating oneself from sin. A practical application of this is consciously living in harmony with God's command to love, made manifest in the life of Jesus Christ.

Editor-in-Chief *Natasha Laurinc*

Translated by *Elizabeth Jane Fields*

□

Víra pochází ze slyšení

Víra je druh poznání, vnitřní postoj, který se projevuje činy. O tom svědčí také historie této konvence. Z řad členů konvence vzešlo mnoho služebníků, kteří své životy zasvětili evangeliu a misijní práci. Na stránkách *Slavné naděje* o nich čteme již od založení tohoto časopisu.

Kazatel Miloš Šolc starší, nadšený svědek Ježíše Krista, který unikátním způsobem skloubil úspěšnou dráhu sportovce s šířením radostné zvěsti spasení jako svého celoživotního poslání, nám přiblíží první krůčky ve službě těm nejbližším. Úryvkem z knihy *Jak život šel těm, kdo milují Boha* upozorňuje na důležitost slyšení Božího Slova. Až neskutečně zní zážitky a vzpomínky tohoto českého evangelisty, který svým nezkrtným nadšením a zapálením pro Ježíše Krista ovlivnil nesčíslné množství mladých lidí v dobách totalitní vlády v tehdejší Československu.

Sport hraje v roli rodu Šolců nemalou úlohu. Srovnání sportu a křesťanství velice vhodně ztvárňuje ve své knize *Komunikace na hřišti* Dr. Josef Šolc, mladší syn

kazatele Miloše Šolce. V tomto čísle, na stránce pro mládež, ukončujeme kapitolu *Podobnost mezi křesťanstvím a sportem*.

V článku Neville Callama, tajemníka Světové baptistické aliance, se setkáme s Thomasem Helwysem, vůdčí osobností baptistů 17. století. Autor nás vyzývá, abychom pokračovali v jeho odkazu.

Tématem tohoto čísla *Slavné naděje* jsou Velikonoce. Hlavní článek od kazatelky Kathy Šeredové nám přibližuje období půstu, který těmto svátkům předchází.

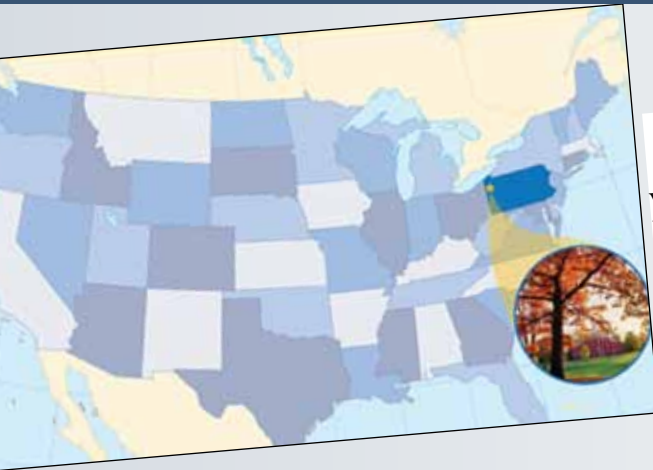
Každý čtenář *Slavné naděje* má jistě osobní zkušenosti v oblasti šíření evangelia nebo sdílením se se zvěstí evangelia Kristova. Zvláště v období Velikonoc si uvědomujeme moc kříže. Ježíš vzal naše hříchy na kříž, abychom my „ožili spravedlnosti“ (1. Petrova 2; 24b). Tomu však předchází zemřetí hříchu.

Zemřetí v soudobém jazyce znamená oddělení se od hříchu. V praktickém životě se jedná o vědomé úsilí žít v souladu s Božím přikázáním lásky, zjevené v Ježíši Kristu.

Nataša Laurincová, šéfredaktorka

□

Allegheny College — Home of the 103rd Czechoslovak



MEADVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

The town of Meadville (population 13,000) is located in beautiful north-western Pennsylvania. Just 45 minutes south of Erie, 90 minutes north of Pittsburgh, two hours east of Cleveland and two hours southwest of Buffalo.

The region is ideal for: hiking, canoeing, boating, swimming and fishing—in fact, there are eight freshwater lakes within a 40-minute drive of campus.

Meadville also offers plenty of “local flavor” with more than 30 restaurants from fast food to fine dining.

Those who love to shop will find that Meadville is within short drives of Erie's Millcreek Mall (just 40 minutes away) and the Grove City's Premium Outlets (50 minutes away).

REGIONAL ATTRACTIONS

Amusement Parks

- Wild Water Kingdom
- Conneaut Lake Park
- Cedar Point
- Waldameer Park and Water World

Outdoor Recreation

- Presque Isle Peninsula State Park
- Pymatuning Lake State Park and Dam
- Allegheny National Forest
- Erie National Wildlife Refuge
- Woodcock Lake and Recreation Area

Historical Sites

- Baldwin-Reynolds House Museum
- Old Fort Niagara
- Meadville Market House
- The flight 93 Memorial



The Arts

- The Academy Theatre
- Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh
- Erie Art Museum

Shopping

- Millcreek Mall
- Grove City Premium Outlets
- Slovak Folk Crafts



For more info and links to the specific attractions please visit our web site www.czskbc.org.

Meadville, Pennsylvania

slovak Baptist Convention

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE

Founded in 1815, Allegheny College ranks among the oldest 1% of colleges and universities and is the 32nd oldest college in the United States. Perhaps as many as 100 colleges were established and failed before the Civil War. Allegheny is one of the hardy survivors that testify daily to the determination and vision of those early pioneers of higher education in America.

Allegheny is a national liberal arts college with approximately 2100 students. Their 77-acre campus is located in the city of Meadville PA, and features 36 major buildings and 203 acres recreation complex.

Within walking distance to downtown Meadville, Allegheny boasts one of the country's most attractive campuses, set in a region that offers a range of activities and outdoor opportunities.



Accommodation

North Village 1 feature townhouse-style suites, each with five single bedrooms, a full kitchen, living room and two bathrooms.

North Village 2 opened in fall 2010 and houses 230 persons in one and two bedroom suites that include kitchen and bathroom. All bedrooms contain two-drawer dresser, three door dresser, desk, chair, and bed.

All buildings have laundry facilities. All rooms have Internet jacks or wireless connectivity and a cable box.



Ford Memorial Chapel

Built more than a century ago, Ford Memorial Chapel was a gift of John Baptiste Ford in memory of his wife Mary and was dedicated in June 1902.

With an exterior of Cleveland sandstone, the structure could seat 600 and featured a pipe organ and beautiful colored glass windows – gothic windows on the north and south, a rose window to the east, and smaller windows in the chancel area, facing west.

Various interior changes were made over the years, including a major restoration project of the woodwork throughout the building completed in 2009.

All evening services of our Annual Convention will be held at the Ford Chapel.



Henderson Campus Center

Newly renovated 66,000 SF Henderson Campus Center at Allegheny will host most morning activities of our convention as well as all the meals will be served in the large atrium space and the McKinley

Snack Bar.

A Main Street concept was developed on the second floor that features coffee shop, bookstore, mailroom and game room. The meeting rooms, offices and other activity spaces are located on the third floor.

Sport Center

David V. Wise Sport and Fitness Center opened in 1997. This multi-million dollar building is the hub of all indoor athletic activities on campus. The building features a 1,200 seat Performance Arena, a multi-purpose Sports Forum, Mellon Pool, an aerobics and dance studio, running track, racquetball and weight rooms.

Take a virtual tour, view the campus map and get more info at our web site www.czskbc.org.



Easter is our day! It is the main moment in anyone's experience of Christian faith. Nothing is more pivotal or reaches higher in all our gospel belief than the announcement that Jesus returned from the dead.

Why?

- Because we needed a savior, one stronger than the greatest enemy that would do us in.
- Because death is a penalty for everything that has gone wrong with the human race and our individual participation in it. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus took it on for us—endured it to the fullest extent and then cast it aside, breaking the stranglehold it wished to hold over us.
- Because in the resurrection Christ delivered to us life larger than anything we had ever known before.

There is an old hymn, "Rise Up, O Men of God," (now frequently sung as "O Saints of God"), which carries this line: *Rise up, O saints of God! from vain ambitions turn./ Christ rose triumphant that your hearts with nobler zeal might burn.* Exactly! Christ's Easter breakout from the tomb meant not only that we would escape the worst that death could do to us, but that we could enter into the prospects of a fuller, richer, stronger life than we previously had any chance to know. According to that good hymn (by Norman Furness), our hearts "rise up" to noble things, full of commitment (zeal).

This is the main message of the church for all time and the rock on which the Czechoslovak Baptist Convention stands. We have banked on

it in our fellowship for well over a hundred years now. And we mean to remind ourselves of it and tell it abroad as long as we have some authorization for our existence from God. This message is not of our devising. We have seen and heard it in Jesus, read about it in the Bible for the ages, and received it from that Holy Spirit of God who drives all truth deep into the human heart.

Here is the focus for us. Death is a toothless lion! Life comes from the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world, but alive forevermore. Every one of us is welcomed to this life whose boundaries extend as far as Christ's resurrected life will take us.

The final verse of that hymn, "Rise Up, O Saints of God" goes this way: Commit your hearts to seek the paths which Christ has trod,/ And quickened by the Spirit's power, rise up, O saints of God!

Could it be we are in a kind of "uprising"? It is focused against all that would diminish our life and the life of the world. Its power arises from Christ, the resurrected One. Bring on Easter. Let us have good news above all the world's worst news.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Robert Dvorak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Robert Dvorak





Miloš Šolc, Sr.



Miloš Šolc, Jr.

Life of Milos Solc Sr.

(1911–2007)

Papa Solc and the Bible

I used to read the Bible every day. When my father and I were alone, I would try to read it aloud. When I tried to read the Bible in this way, my dad would fume. A person recalcitrant or rebellious toward God cannot receive the word of God. Finally I pleaded with him: “Dad, when I read aloud, it holds a threefold experience for me. I see what I read, and so have a visual experience; I hear what I read, and so have an aural experience; and lastly, God’s word, which he gave to his holy prophets, I get to speak with my own mouth, and so have direct participation. Why shouldn’t I have this tremendous experience reading the word of God?” In reality, I was most concerned about the third aspect of the threefold experience, that is, that my father would hear the word of God. For I already knew that faith in God came only by hearing the word of God. One who has not heard the word of God cannot have the faith in God necessary for salvation.

After a longer while, my father once again succumbed to heavy drinking. One day he was at work, inebriated, when he fell down. No one found him until the next day. Upon finding him, they discovered he had had a stroke and was paralysed down one side of his body. Only in this debilitated state, when he could no longer walk to the pub, did he finally find sobriety. What he didn’t do while in the prime of health he did in the midst of sickness: he received the Lord Jesus Christ into his heart and became a child of God. It was Jesus Christ who found him; overcome and in a sick body, father came to have a healthy faith.

From the book *What Life Is Like for Those Who Love God*
Translated by Elizabeth Jane Fields



Život Miloše Šolce

(1911–2007)

Tatínek Šolc a Bible

Denně jsem četl Bibli, a když jsem byl s tatínkem sám, tak jsem se snažil ji číst nahlas. Když jsem se však snažil číst Bibli nahlas, tatínek přímo zuřil. Člověk, který vzdoruje Pánu Bohu, nemůže slyšet Slovo Boží. Nakonec jsem ho uprosil: „Tatínku, když čtu nahlas, tak to pro mě má trojnásobný užitek. Vidím, co čtu, to je zážitek zrakový; slyším, co čtu, to mám zážitek sluchový; a konečně Slovo Boží, které Pán Bůh dal svým svatým prorokům, mohu i já vyslovovat svými ústy a tím mám na něm přímý podíl. Proč bych tedy neměl mít tento mohutný zážitek ze čtení Božího Slova? Ve skutečnosti mě však šlo právě o to třetí, totiž, aby Slovo Boží slyšel právě tatínek. Vždyť jsem už tehdy věděl, že víra v Pána Boha je jen ze slyšení Slova Božího. Kdo neslyší Slovo Boží, nemůže mít víru v Pána Boha, jakou On žádá ke spasení člověka.

Otec po delším čase zase podlehl nadměrnému pití. Jednou v opilosti upadl v dílně na zem, tam ho našli až příští den a zjistilo se, že je raněn mrtvicí na půl těla. Teprve v postiženém stavu, když nemohl chodit do hospody, konečně přišel k rozumu. Co neučinil v letech bujarého zdraví, to učinil v nemoci—přijal Pána Ježíše Krista do svého srdce a stal se Božím dítětem. Tedy nikoli on, ale Pán Ježíš Kristus ho našel, přemohl a otec v nemocném těle došel ke zdravé víře.

Úryvek z knihy *Jak život šel těm, kdo milují Boha*





Lent: A Journey Toward Becoming New

by Rev. Kathy S. Shereda



I have always gained meaning from the seasons of the church year. Baptists have made a gradual move toward the rich symbols of the church that were abandoned in the earlier days of our denomination. Before the Reformation, however, these symbols and traditions were firmly set in place. Lent is such a tradition, and one that Baptists are learning more about and utilizing in worship and daily devotion. There is much information on Lent, and I encourage you to do some research of your own. It involves many interesting avenues in church history, too lengthy to discuss in this article. There are also variations with regard to the Lenten schedule as well as other aspects of the season. We will, however, explore some of the basics.

The word “*Lent*” has its origins in forms of a word from Old English, “*lencen*,” “*lengten*,” or “*lenten*,” which was used to describe the period of time after winter but before summer. Even today, the Dutch word for spring is “*lente*.” During this season, the church observed a time of fasting, prayer, and penitence to prepare for the celebration of the Resurrection. Eventually, the seasonal word “*lent*” became the ecclesiastical word adopted to describe the 40 days of preparation before Easter. “*Spring*” became the new word used to denote the season following winter.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, which will be on February 22nd this year. On this day, a rite of the imposition of ashes takes place in a special worship service. Ashes from the previous year’s palms from Palm Sunday are burned and the remaining ash

is used. The clergy will dip a thumb into a small container of the ashes and “draw” a crucifix on the forehead of each worshiper as they come forward.

The season of Lent lasts for forty days and ends the day before Easter. The last day of Lent will be April 7th this year (2012). Sundays are not counted as a part of the forty days, as Sundays represent the Resurrection. There are seven Sundays in the Lenten season. Protestants end Lent the day before Easter, but the Roman Catholic Church ends Lent on Maundy Thursday (April 5th), with evening mass.

One of the symbols that help us relate to Lent is color. With regard to worship, purple is the color used to symbolize penitence as well as royalty. It is usually seen in the para-

The season of Lent lasts for forty days and ends the day before Easter. The last day of Lent will be April 7th this year (2012). Sundays are not counted as a part of the forty days, as Sundays represent the Resurrection. There are seven Sundays in the Lenten season. Protestants end Lent the day before Easter, but the Roman Catholic Church ends Lent on Maundy Thursday (April 5th), with evening mass.

ments, banners, and clergy robes or stoles. Many worshipers choose to wear clothing with purple on each of the seven Sundays.

Lent is a time of soul searching, repentance, fasting, and prayer. It is a time for serious reflection on one’s spiritual life. In the early days of the church, it was the time when new Christians were educated in faith to prepare for their baptism. It was early church tradition to baptize new Christians on Easter Sunday.

In most parts of the Christian world, the day before Lent was somewhat of an anx-



ious day. Christians knew that a period of fasting and abstinence from meat and rich foods was about to occur. It became a tradition in some parts of the world for there to be overindulgence in eating rich foods and celebrating with wild carnivals. Mardi Gras is one such example. The word “*Mardi*” is French for Tuesday, and the word “*Gras*” means fat. So, the carnival of Mardi Gras, or “Fat Tuesday” was originally a day when people would have one last opportunity to eat meat and celebrate. It is interesting that the word “carnival” is Latin for “the farewell to meat.”

Another tradition that serves as an interesting preparation for Lent is Shrove Tuesday. This day is often observed by the eating of pancakes. Shrove Tuesday started in ancient Christian tradition in Ireland and England and is the pre-Lenten tradition to this day. Shrove is the past tense of “shrive,” which means to be forgiven of one’s sins.

It was important for Christians to cleanse themselves and their homes of anything that would distract them from the forty days of fasting and prayer during Lent. To seek God’s forgiveness as well as God’s blessing on their lives prior to Lent was important to these European Christians. The cleansing of the home entailed using up stores of eggs, fat, flour, and sugar, which were not to be eaten during the fasting of Lent.

One way people did this was in the making of pancakes, which they freely shared with their families, neighbors, and friends. We often hear of Shrove Tuesday pancake suppers even today. Somehow I doubt if the reason for the making of pancakes is to empty the pantry anymore, but the name and the tradition are still hanging in there.

When I enter into the season of Lent, I do so with a solemn attitude. I don’t make any great claims about giving up things, I do not fast as some do, but I do spend time in scripture and I pray about how I can be a better Christian pastor. One year I led our church in “hearing” the New Testament by giving each person a CD from an organization called “Faith Comes by Hear-

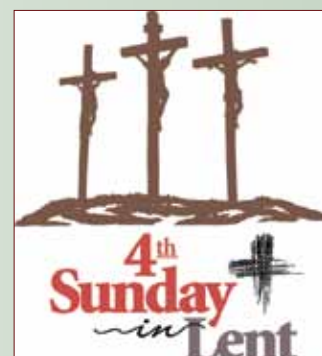
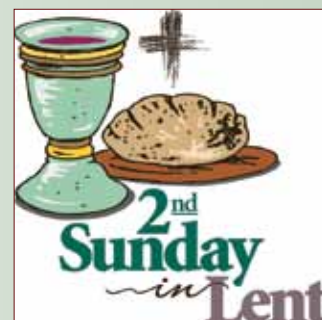
ing.” Each day, the listener was to hear and meditate on a certain number of chapters, so that by Easter they would have heard the entire New Testament. It was a good way to be intentional about preparing for Easter. This year I am leading a Lenten study on the parables of Jesus each Wednesday evening. I usually suggest a Lenten devotional or other daily reading for people to stay focused. Your local Christian bookstore will have many choices for your selection. I think in today’s age, each person needs to decide how best to utilize this historically religious season to better themselves in the service of Christ. It is a time of preparation for the greatest Christian celebration, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

I also like to think about what it means to be new. For me, Lent is a season or journey toward becoming new. But what does it mean to become new? Each of us has experienced what it is like to have something new. We all like to get new things. And when I think of new things, I think about getting back-to-school clothes, or birthday presents, or even Christmas presents. And the way we approach new things for another person can be comical sometimes. I love it when I hear about a man who gets his wife a new cordless drill for their anniversary or when the husband or dad receives a soap-on-a-rope and socks for Father’s Day. We know the routine.

But we need new things, especially when something we use a lot gets worn out. Shoes wear out, clothes wear out, tools break, rugs get threadbare. We have to replace things once in a while. Sometimes we have to get new things that don’t excite us very much: car batteries and tires, or even zip-lock bags. Sometimes we need to upgrade things that actually still work, like our cars or our computers, or our cell phones.

Having a new thing makes us feel good sometimes. Having the latest, greatest culturally relevant gizmo makes us feel current with the times. Parents have a job on their hands curbing the “I wants” from their children who constantly want something new.

New things can also be associated with new beginnings, new surroundings, new





friends, going somewhere new, trying a new activity, or starting a new job. For the Christian, a new thing is a new life. A new life is one lived for Jesus Christ, modeling after him a new way of living. By referring to lectionary readings for Lent, we can follow a pattern set by Jesus as he prepared himself for a rough and rugged road.

As we follow the lectionary this year, we enter the story on Ash Wednesday in Matthew 6:1–21, where Jesus teaches about prayer, fasting, and treasure in Heaven. We move quickly to Mark's gospel, as well as the book of Genesis for the first Sunday's readings. We find that the elation and holiness of Jesus' baptism was soon met with the dry and demonic emptiness of the wilderness. These scriptures remind us that Lent is about personal sacrifice, examining one's own life and making the necessary adjustments lest we become selfish and self-centered.

Mark the evangelist shows us how it all began. He is very terse in his narrative. He doesn't draw the story out into great detail. But Mark gets right to the point. Mark's brief description lists four things: Jesus was driven by the Spirit; he was tempted by Satan; he was with the wild beasts; and then the angels waited on him.

Mark tells us that Jesus was in the wilderness for forty days. This is Exodus language. It is exile language. It is the language of Job and Elijah and even Noah. As a whole, this scene portrays both the danger of the wilderness and the protection given to Jesus as God's own son.

Following this time of testing, Jesus emerged strengthened and fully prepared for the ministry he was destined to do. I love how his experience ended. The angels waited on him. Some versions say angels attended to him, others say angels strengthened him. After Jesus went through his wilderness experience, he was encouraged and lifted by the heavenly hosts. He could breathe a sigh of relief before he picked himself up to start a new thing.

After we have been through a difficult experience, there is a sigh, we breathe out and exhale in relief. We wonder how we got through what we have been through. On the other side of struggle and difficulty and adversity and temptation there lies newness, freshness. One can take new steps and make new beginnings, all the while utilizing and looking at the lessons learned from the challenge as though in a rear-view mirror. You can still see what you went through; it is behind you. But something new is out there in front of you.

The Genesis passage doesn't really deal with a dry situation at all...or does it? Genesis 9:8–17 illustrates that when God made his covenant with Noah, God promised never again to destroy the earth with floodwaters. This promise was made not only to humanity, but to all creation. The oath of God in this story was a pledge to creation by the Creator, a pledge of fidelity on God's part.

God's anger with humanity led to the floodwaters destroying the face of the earth. God's love for Noah led to him being set

apart as the remnant. Scripture tells us that at the end of the forty days, God gave Noah a sign, that God set a “bow” in the sky.

The original Hebrew text contains the word for bow, the meaning of which is that of a weapon, a bow with arrows. The essence of the meaning of the rainbow was that God had hung up his weapon, God no longer wanted to wage war on the earth. The rainbow became a symbol of God’s covenant and God’s peace toward creation. God wanted a new beginning and to start new things through Noah and his family.

When I reflect on the texts of covenant in Genesis, I have to wonder what it was like for Noah. He might have asked, “Will this rain and dark gray weather ever stop? Will I ever see fertile soil or green trees again? And why would God save me only to lock me up on a boat with all these hungry, noisy, smelly animals?” Noah’s forty days were difficult days, they were challenging days, they were days when he drew on every ounce of faith he had.

These are Lenten words for us. For those who are tired of bleakness and long for greener things, we are fasting. For those whose souls are parched from pain and emptiness, there will be water. For those who might wonder why God can’t hear them right now, there is hope.

Jesus spoke of a new covenant, a sacrifice given of himself, in his blood shed on the cross. The promise of Christ is one of new beginnings for us. It begins when we believe in him, but it doesn’t stop there. It continues into our baptism, our celebration of his remembrance supper, it continues into our worship and our lives of faith.

The new covenant is one we offer to others when we share the good news, the gospel of Jesus Christ. The new covenant continues as the promise Jesus made to all Christians, that one day, when the life we now live on this earth comes to an end, we go to spend eternity in Heaven with our Lord.

In my experience with people, I have known individuals who did not want to emerge from the wilderness of adversity, challenge, or tragedy. And whether we use the imagery of a flood or a desert, some folks don’t want to see a new thing ahead. Being in the midst of a testing experience is far too

dramatic and entertaining and attention- getting to give up.

After having faced the challenge, met the temptation, and been ready to move ahead, they slipped back into the cycle and completely missed the opportunity of the rainbow. It was more satisfying to imagine that God was at war with them, instead of seeing themselves as a new creation, with a new future and new opportunities.

These are Lenten words for us. For those who are tired of bleakness and long for greener things, we are fasting. For those whose souls are parched from pain and emptiness, there will be water. For those who might wonder why God can’t hear them right now, there is hope.

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If we live what we believe, we are conscious not to behave this way. Our challenges shape us. They help us put things into perspective. And if our hearts are truly open to what God wants to say to us, we experience a deeper spirituality than we have ever known. We come to know God in new ways and are willing to take new steps toward new things. The apostle Paul said, “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new.”

In this season of Lent as you find your way through whatever wilderness you might experience, great or small, know that God has a plan for you, will strengthen you, and will be showing you new things.

□



Similarities Between Christianity and Sports

from the book
Communicating on the Playing Field
by Dr. Josef Solc

Purpose is something that both Christianity and sports provide. True Christian life is far ahead of sports in this area. Speaking about purpose must include the reality of life beyond death so that the temporary issue of striving would have an ultimate meaning. The words of Jesus Christ speak clearly, "What will it benefit a man if he gains the whole world yet



loses his life? Or what will a man give in exchange for his life? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and

then he will reward each according to what he has done," (Matthew 16:26-27). Sports provide a definite purpose especially for young people. They can devote themselves fully to training and playing sports to become the best. They give it all they have with the help of their parents who want them to be successful. But what happens to those who do not make it? Or even worse, what happens to those who reach the top and get older? Their bodies no longer function as before, and they must retire in their 30s or a very few in their early 40s.

No superstar can prepare himself for the end of his career. John Elway expressed his thoughts, "My whole life I had a carrot to chase... for 16 years, winning the Super Bowl was my carrot. Everything revolved around that. All of a sudden there's no carrot anymore, and you start wondering what you're going to do with your life. You play golf or try business stuff, but it's not even close. You end up spinning yourself like a tornado." There is a vacuum in this passage that simply does not go away. It is over. There is no chance to regain the splendor of being the best in the world, whether it is Mohamed Ali or Pele. The search for an overarching purpose usually starts for professional athletes when their career is over. Some of them commit their lives to Jesus Christ and later testify about the importance of gaining purpose that is valid beyond this life.

The final similarity concerns the accusation of Karl Marx that Christianity distracts people



from the real issues and problems in life. He was raised in a Jewish-Christian family, but rejected Christianity and characterized it as the opiate of the masses. He completely overlooked the fact that Christians were not just heavenward-oriented. If he had studied the overall history of Christian missions, he would have to take his criticism back. Missionaries became educators, medical doctors, agricultural experts, translators of the Bible, humanitarians, and progressive thinkers in primitive cultures. The teachings of Christ benefited humanity for twenty centuries even though there were some aberrations of the application of his truths.

Surprisingly, this criticism is voiced against sports as well. Coakley claims that sports “can distract attention from important social, politi-

cal, and economic issues and thereby become an ‘opiate’ of the masses of people in society.” This valuation is partly true, but not quite legitimate. People gravitate towards sports because of their tendency to play and to compete. Holding it

against them would be making them less than human. There is an essential need to escape the routine things of life, and sports provide that escape which is, however, not quite complete. Since 95 percent of all people are involved to some extent in sports, if this criticism was correct, important social, political, and economic issues would not be sufficiently addressed. So the reason for the ills of humanity will have to be found somewhere else.

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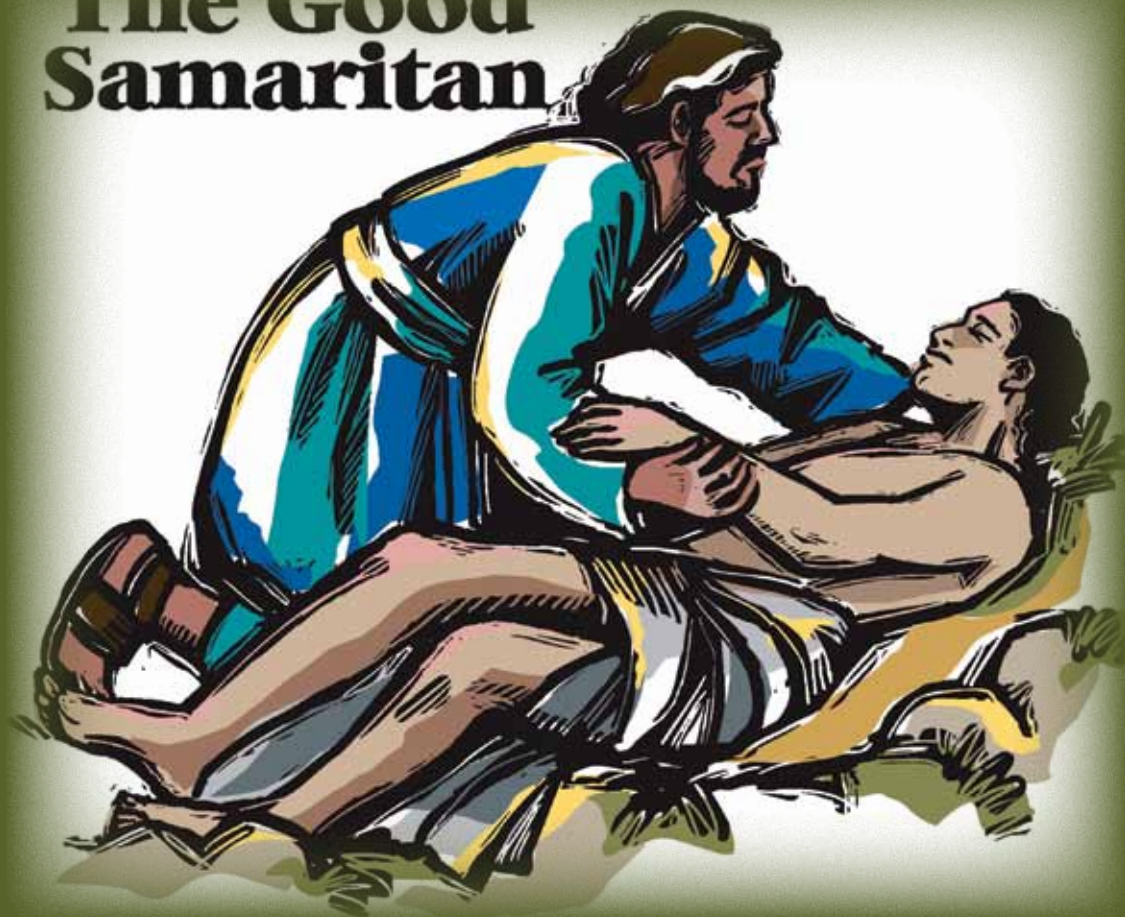


Debbie Mulder

We need to remember the Three R's of changing the world for Christ:

Realization
Reconciliation
Revival

The Good Samaritan



I am going to share from my heart today some of the lessons that the Lord taught me while my husband Nico was pastoring in a church not far from where we live. This past year has been a difficult one for us, spiritually and emotionally, but through it all God has shown us his faithfulness over and over, and He has held us safely in the palm of His hand, knowing that we'd come out of our struggles all right.

Recently I've been revisiting some life lessons that I gleaned from the story of the Good Samaritan. Such a familiar story; I'm sure that many of us remember hearing the story back in Sunday school. In my mind the message of the Good Samaritan was always easy for me to understand, and I tried my hardest to do what it taught me to do—to show kindness to those in need, just like the

Samaritan did. But now, after experiencing some very deep valley experiences in a place where “born again” was a foreign term and it was generally believed that “all good people go to heaven,” this parable has an even greater meaning for me. The place was a very old and lovely church with beautiful stained glass windows and hand-crafted oak pews, where often more emphasis was placed on which family dedicated which plant stand, rather than which family humbled themselves before the Lord and won souls for Jesus.

Beginning in Luke 10:30, Jesus paints a not-so-favorable picture of the religious and respectable. The priest was seemingly too busy to befriend the one in need, or simply did not consider the poor man lying by the side of the road worthy of his attention. They weren't of

the same social background. The Levite (a cleric in the church of that time, someone who commanded a great deal of authority and respect in the church) passed the hurting man too. Perhaps he felt he was too clean to get dirty in the messy business of grace and mercy. Helping the man in need would have made the Levite ceremonially unclean. He wanted to preserve his position and place.

But doesn't Romans 12:3 remind us that no one is more important than anyone else? From the New Living Translation: "Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us."

It just seems to me that too often we're like the priest and the Levite: we don't want to get dirty dealing with other people's junk. What I am talking about? Other people's baggage, their issues, their struggles, their hurts. And often it goes beyond simply getting to know someone through a coffee and a chat to actually giving a part of ourselves, to go the extra mile and actually do something.

Like the Samaritan—was it convenient? No. Did it fit into his plans? No. Was it clean and proper and orderly? No. Would he get back for doing what he was about to do? Probably not in a concrete way, no. Did he follow the strict rules of the day and follow the protocol of how it was always done? No! But because he was merciful and showed mercy, because he cared, because he was being neighbourly, he was the one that Christ wants us to be most like. He went to the extreme—he trusted the innkeeper, he gave of his own money, he gave sacri-

ficially. He didn't just do the minimum, he gave his best—and often that's what God calls us to do.

We need to remember the Three R's of changing the world for Christ:

Realization —We need to realize:

- Who we are in Christ
- We belong to each other.
- God is sovereign and he wants

to use us—we need to make the most of every opportunity.

- We have an incredible influence.
- Each of us is gifted and responsible for using those gifts.

• We are the hands and feet of Christ.

- Fully committed to God.
- Live a transformed life.

Reconciliation:

• Need to be reconciled to be used the way He wants to use us.

• Reconcile issues between us and other people.

• Need to be restored to right relationships.

• Humble ourselves, otherwise there will be walls.

Revival:

• The Spirit of God needs to sweep through each of us individually.

• It just takes one person.

• It'll be hard—it takes sacrifice.

But isn't our main desire to do our best for the Lord in whatever He asks of us?

Dear Lord, give us eyes to see those in need around us, and give us the courage to respond. Father, we want to be a part of life-changing actions by offering grace and mercy. You call us to love others as ourselves. Help us obey this all-consuming command. In Jesus' name, amen.

□

Decisions of Faith

by Rev. Kathy S. Shereda



Enoch's Believing, Noah's Building, Abraham's Going, Moses' Choosing

Our theme for last summer's convention was one we need to reflect on continually. Faith is at the very core of who we are as Christians; without it we cannot call ourselves Christians. The words used for each segment are important words: believing, building, going, and choosing. They involve not only the

Patriarchs, God's servants of scripture, but us as well. It is from scripture we are given examples of those who lived and learned a life of faith. Let's have our Bibles handy as we discuss faith. But what exactly is faith?

When I try to put this into words, I almost always go first to Hebrews 11:1, 2. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Indeed by faith our ancestors

The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see. The act of faith is what distinguished our ancestors, set them above the crowd.

received approval." (NRSV) We hope, and in our hope we don't just dream; we are absolutely sure in our hope. We don't have to see to believe; we are certain without having to see anything. Eugene Peterson's *The Message* puts it this way: "The fundamental fact of existence is that this trust in God, this faith, is the firm foundation under everything that makes life worth living. It's our handle on what we can't see. The act of faith is what distinguished our ancestors, set them above the crowd."

We don't know much about Enoch, but what we

do learn is that he believed God and was faithful to God. Turn to Genesis 5:18–24. We learn that he was a son, a father, a grandfather, and a great-grandfather. He became a father at age 65. He was the father of Methuselah and had other sons and daughters as well. If we follow the lineage, he was the great-grandfather of Noah. Enoch walked with God 300 years after the birth of his first son. "Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him."

This presents us with an interesting interpretation: did Enoch just die, or did God "take" him to the heavenly realms? Turn to Hebrews 11:5, 6. God took Enoch because he was pleased with him, but before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. When one "walks" with God, one is living to please God.

Turn to Genesis 5:28, 29 and 6:5–14. Noah believed God, listened to God, and obeyed God. He was instructed to build. In the midst of a corrupt world, Noah followed God's instructions and built the ark. Genesis 6:22 says, "Noah did everything just as God commanded him." Turn to Hebrews 11:7. God chose Noah and warned him, and Noah listened. Because of his belief and faith, he became righteous before God.

Turn to Ezekiel 14:12–14, 20. It is by righteousness that the Lord is pleased and the Lord saves. Noah built the ark, and he built a relationship with God by becoming righteous before Him. He was also the one God used to build a new world. He and his family were spared from destruction.

Daniel was righteous before God while he was in exile. He continued to worship God and refused to eat pagan food and bow to pagan gods. He was given wisdom and knowledge as well as the ability to interpret visions and dreams. His life was spared from the fiery furnace as well as from the lions' den.

Job was righteous before God because he refused to curse God and blame God for his misfortune. Everything valuable to Job was taken away or destroyed. Even his health was in decline. Yet Job would not listen to his wife or his friends when they

encouraged him to admit unrighteousness in order to atone for his condition. Job knew that he had done no wrong that would cause God to be angry with him. He also refused to blame God for his misfortune. He continued to accept his state of being and wait for God to respond. Many who read about the life of Job say that his story is a story of patience. How often we hear people say “the patience of Job.” But I think his is a story of faith, born of righteousness.

Turn to Genesis 12:1–9 15:1–7, 17:1–8. Here is where we learn about the beginning of the Promise. God spoke, Abram listened, he believed, and he went forth in obedience. Was it easy for him?

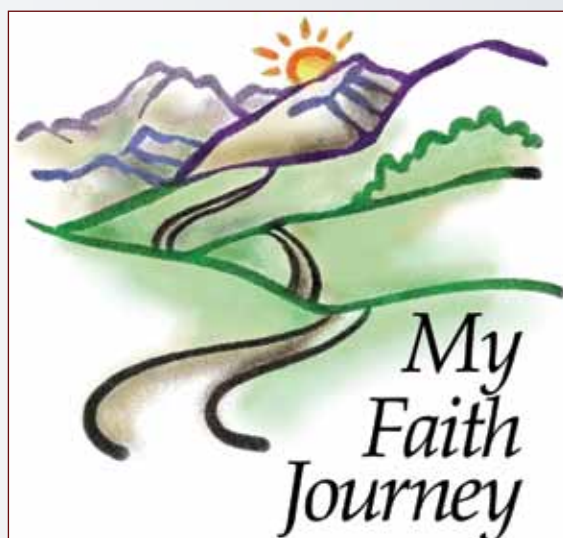
No. Did he question? Yes. Was God testing him and building him? Absolutely. He was not made righteous because of works, but by his faith. It was then that he could put his faith into action by his obedience. Turn to Hebrews 11:8–16. Even though Abram could not see what God had in store for him, he believed and he went forth. God continued testing him, building him, and using him. He was given a new name, Abraham, and became the father of a great nation.

Turn to Exodus 3:1–10. Here we learn of Moses’ first encounter with the living God. God chose Moses, and called him to obedience. Moses listened and began a journey of faith. Like Abraham, Moses had much to learn. He had questions, and he had to learn some things the hard way. God was revealed to the people of Israel through the life of Moses. God worked many miracles through him so the people could experience God’s glory, love, forgiveness, and blessing. Through Moses, the people themselves learned what it meant to have faith as well as to be faithless at times.

Exodus 15 and Revelation 15 both contain the song of Moses. The song is written in its entirety in Exodus, but a summary appears in Revelation. The declaration of Moses about God’s glory and greatness

is repeated in heaven as revealed by John. Because God chose Moses and Moses chose to obey God, a great nation of people were freed from slavery and set aside as a chosen race to worship God in the Promised Land.

In the case of each of the Patriarchs, they were believing, building, going, and being chosen as well as choosing to listen to God. Faith involves trust. When Noah was warned by God, though he had never seen a flood, he prepared the ark on dry land. Abraham left Chaldea not knowing where he was going. Trusting the unseen God is a vital component of true faith. Faith is an action word, and I like to think that faith is a verb.



We are called into faith and then we must act. James 2:26 says that faith without works is dead. Faith also discriminates; it chooses the spiritual over the material and the eternal over the temporal. It can also be said that faith is the opposite of doubt. When doubt creeps in, faith becomes weak. Abraham doubted because of his age, then doubted again when God wasn’t quick enough to respond. Moses doubted because of his inability

to speak eloquently. When doubt creeps in, we ask questions like “But what if?”

When doubt creeps in, we say, “I can’t do this.” We can’t...but God can. God can do anything through a person who believes and has faith. Abraham had a journey of belief and faith. God led him along. Moses had a journey of belief and faith. God led him along. We are prone to hesitate as well. Ours is a journey of faith, and God is leading us along.

Some questions to ponder:

- Name a time when God called you and you doubted. What happened next?
- Name a time you were immediately obedient to God’s call. What happened next?
- Choose from the following: Believing, building, going, or being chosen. In each of these instances, how has God spoken to you?

□



Barabáš

muž, místo kterého byl ukřižován Kristus

Matouš 27,11–26

„Všichni víme, jak tam ti tři viseli na kříži a kdo byli shromážděni kolem něho: jeho matka Maria, dále Maria z Magdaly, Veronika, Šimon Cyrenejský, který nesl kříž, a Josef z Arimatie, který ukřižovaného potom zavinul. Ale doleji na svahu, trochu stranou, stál jeden muž a ustavičně pozoroval toho, jenž visel na kříži a umíral, a sledoval jeho smrtelný zápas od počátku až do konce. Jmenoval se Barabáš.“

Tak začíná poměrně útlá knížka Para Lagerkvista, švédského spisovatele, za kterou byl v roce 1951 autor odměněn Nobelovou cenou za literaturu.

A knížka pokračuje: „Byl to muž asi třicetiletý, statný, s bledě žlutou pletí, rudými vousy a černými vlasy. Jeho obočí bylo také černé a oči posazeny příliš hluboko, jako by se jejich pohled chtěl skrývat. Pod jedním okem měl hlubokou jizvu, která mizela ve vousích. Teď stál muž na popravišti, díval se na toho, který visel na prostředním kříži, a nemohl od něho odtrhnout zrak. Vlastně nechtěl jít až sem nahoru,

protože tady bylo všechno nečisté, plné nákazy; a vstoupil-li přece někdo nepovolaný na toto neblahé a osudné místo, určité částička z něho na něm zůstala, a to ho dokázalo přinutit, aby se sem vrátil - navždycky. Všude ležely roztroušené lebky a kosti a poražené ztrouchnivělé kříže, kterých už nebylo možno použít, ale přesto je odtud nikdo neodstranil, protože se tu nikdo nechtěl ničeho dotknout. Proč zde ten muž stál? Vždyť ukřižovaného neznal, neměl s ním nic společného. Co pohledával na Golgotě, když přece byl osvobozen?“

A spisovatel dále popisuje Barabášovy pocity pod křížem, tak jak postupně probíhal známý děj podle evangelií. Barabáš se nemohl vzdát a vnímal stále intenzivněji zvláštnost ukřižovaného. A když pak byl dokonce svědkem sejmutí Páně z kříže a smuteční průvod ho minul, „zašeptala jedna z žen cosi matce ukřižovaného a potom ukazovala na Barabáše. Matka se zastavila a podívala se na něj pohledem plným bezmocnosti a výčitek, že na něj Barabáš nikdy nezapomene.“

Knížka se pak postupně věnuje životu tohoto člověka, místo kterého byl ukřižován Syn Boží. A jedna z Barabášových přítelkyň—vysoká tlustá hostinská—vysvětluje jeho zvláštní chování po Kristově ukřižování takto: „...vždyť vězeň odsouzený na smrt už je mrtev, a když dostane milost a je propuštěn, mrtvým zůstane, protože už vlastně byl mrtev, a teď jen vstal z mrtvých; a pak už není jen tak lehké žít a vůbec být takový jako ostatní lidé.“

Neosobní a přesto osobní prožití velikonočního poselství

Nikdo z nás samozřejmě nemohl stát při umírání Pána Ježíše na Golgotě. Chybí nám prožitek Barabáše. Přesto však Duch Boží může tak oživit onu historickou událost, podtrhnout Boží lásku, obvinít z hříchů, že člověk činí pokání, často ve velikém pohnutí a slzách. Vzápětí jej Duch Svatý ujišťuje o odpuštění hříchů a přijmutí za Boží dítě pro prolitou krev Božího Beránka. Pak mohou přicházet slzy vděčnosti a radosti.

Písmo svaté říká: „*Když jsme ještě byli bezbožní, v čas, který Bůh určil, zemřel Kristus za bezbožné. Sotva kdo je hotov podstoupit smrt za spravedlivého člověka, i když za takového by se snad někdo odvážil nasadit život. Bůh však prokazuje svou lásku k nám tím, že Kristus za nás zemřel, když jsme ještě byli hříšní.*“ (Ř 5,6–8)

Všichni musíme zaujmout postoj k „Ježíši zvanému Mesiáš“

I když se nikdo z nás nemůže vžít do situace Barabáše, Duch Boží nás může stejně jako Barabáše obvinít z hříchů. A právě tam pod křížem si tuto skutečnost můžeme a máme nejosobněji uvědomit. Tam si máme uvědomit svoji naprostou závislost na Boží milosti. Tam přestávají osobní nároky, pýcha, vzájemná nevráživost i vše ostatní, co je projevem naší tělesnosti. Právě tam také začíná předsevzetí Pána Ježíše milovat z celého srdce a jemu sloužit.

Připomeňme si apoštola Pavla, který ve 2. listu do Korintu v 11. kapitole popisuje nejrůznější skutečnosti svého života, kterými by se podle lidského soudu mohl chlubit. Ve 12. kapitole 5. verši však prohlašuje: „...*sám sebou se chlubit nebudu, leda svými slabostmi.*“

Knížka, kterou jsme úvahu začali, končí popisem toho, jak se Barabáš dostává nakonec do Říma, kde je jako zhář podpalující Řím za císaře Nera odsouzený k ukřižování, a to spolu s falešně obviněnými křesťany.

Připomeňme si na závěr čtyři krátké odstavečky zmíněné knížky: „A pak je vyvedli, aby je ukřižovali. Svázali je řetězy k sobě po dvou, a protože jich byl lichý počet, šel Barabáš v průvodu poslední a sám. Stalo se to náhodou. A také visel sám poslední v řadě křížů.“

Na popravišti se shromáždilo hodně lidí a trvalo dlouho, než byl všemu konec. Ale ukřižovaní si celou dobu navzájem dodávali útěchy a naděje. S Barabášem nemluvil nikdo.

Když padl soumrak, přihlízející odešli; byli již unaveni dlouhým stáním. A ostatně všichni ukřižovaní již zemřeli.

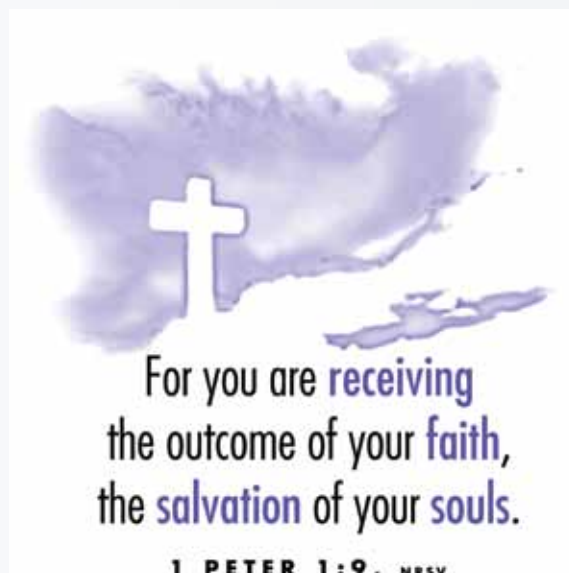
Jen Barabáš tam visel sám, jediný byl ještě naživu. Když cítil, že se blíží smrt—ta, jíž se vždycky tolik bál—, řekl do tmy, jako by k ní mluvil: „Tobě odevzdávám svou duši.“ A pak vydechl naposledy.“

„Když jsme ještě byli bezbožní, v čas, který Bůh určil, zemřel Kristus za bezbožné. Sotva kdo je hotov podstoupit smrt za spravedlivého člověka, i když za takového by se snad někdo odvážil nasadit život. Bůh však prokazuje svou lásku k nám tím, že Kristus za nás zemřel, když jsme ještě byli hříšní.“ (Ř 5,6–8)

Smrt Pána Ježíše za naše hříchy Hospodin předpovídal hned v ráji. Jedinečným způsobem ji pak představoval had na poušti. A Pán Ježíš říká v Janově evangeliu, 3. kapitole, *tak jako Mojžíš povýšil hada na poušti, tak musí být povýšen Syn člověka, aby každý, kdo v něho věří, nezahynul, ale měl život věčný. Tam pod křížem je místo každého z nás, protože právě za nás tam umíral Syn Boží!*

kazatel Miloš Šolc ml.

Z knihy 37 kázání aneb ohlédnutí za 37 lety služby na Božím díle



BWA-Youth at the United Nations



The Baptist World Alliance (BWA), recognizing that youth are integral to the stability of nations, is joining forces with the global community to help address problems faced by youth. Utilizing existing channels and its NGO status within the United Nations community, the BWA hopes to bring youth issues to the forefront.

Current statistics make such a move compelling.

It is estimated that, of the world population, more than one person in five are between the ages of 10 and 19 years old, numbering approximately 1.2 billion youth, and a total of 1.8 billion when those aged 20-24 are added.

The global median age is estimated at 28.4, with some 40 countries such as Nigeria, Guatemala and Afghanistan having a median age of less than 20 years old, Uganda being the lowest at 15 years old.

Much of the world's violence affects youth. Approximately 250,000 homicides occur among youth 10-29 years of age each year, 41 percent of the total number of homicides globally. "For every young person killed by violence, 20-40 more sustain injuries that require hospital treatment," a World Health Organization (WHO) report states. Such violence, the WHO claims, "contributes greatly to the global burden of premature death, injury and disability, but also has a serious, often lifelong, impact on a person's psychological and social functioning."

Several factors precipitate youth violence: low levels of social cohesion within a community; an absence of non-violent alternatives for resolving conflicts; high income inequality; rapid social and demographic changes; urbanization; and

the quality of a country's governance, such as law enforcement and the provision of educational opportunities, etc. All these are in addition to parental failure through poor supervision and harsh, lax or inconsistent parental disciplinary practices.

While access to education for youth has improved over the past several decades, youth unemployment remains a concern. According to the UN, youth employment and income have deteriorated in Latin America over the past 20 or so years. In Sub-Saharan Africa, "the percentage of youth living in poverty is extremely high." In the Middle East and North Africa, "unemployment is primarily a youth issue rather than a generalized population issue," the UN noted. "Young people represent only about one third of the total working-age population while they account for almost half of all unemployed people in the region." The same UN report said that "in Central and Eastern Europe, 33.6 percent of youth are not in school and not employed."

BWA programs for youth have traditionally been addressed via the BWA Youth Department and regional youth bodies. These remain integral to BWA youth ministry as a whole. However, the BWA will continue to explore additional opportunities through the global community to address youth-related issues. As a result of this commitment, the BWA sent two youth representatives to the 10th Annual Youth Assembly at the UN headquarters in New York City, held from January 18 to 20 of this year. The assembly focused on bringing social media and mobile technology solutions to achieving the eight Millennium Development Goals, which include eradicating extreme poverty, reducing child mortality rates, fighting disease epidemics such as AIDS, and developing a global partnership for development.

Melissa Gomes and Raphael Almeida represented the BWA at the Youth Assembly. "It was amazing to see so many young people who are enthusiastic and concerned with issues facing humanity gathered in one place," Gomes reported.

"Most presentations motivated those attending the conference to action in their own unique way," said Almeida. "Specifically as an organization that gathers churches and individuals, there are innumerable ways the Baptist World Alliance can be involved."

While only an initial step, the BWA expects to make its mark as a global organization, sensitizing young people to the theological, ethical, social and international issues that affect them, and working to help overcome these obstacles.

□

Re-engaging the Prophetic Imagination

By Neville Callam
General Secretary of BWA



During this year, people from diverse religious backgrounds may wish to mark the 400th anniversary of the appearance of a literary work that was the product of acute prophetic imagination. That essay provides us with a telling reminder of the cost we may have to pay for bearing faithful witness to the truth of the Gospel in an unfavorable environment.

It was in 1612 that Thomas Helwys produced *A Short Declaration on the Mystery of Iniquity*. What a vital contribution this early Baptist leader made through his essay dealing with the legitimacy of the state and the role of its agents!

At a time when it was risky to challenge the powers that be, this Baptist leader, recently returned from overseas, was willing to address a controversial book to a feared king questioning the ruler's position of unrivaled authority. What courage!

Affirming that the king "has no more power" over the consciences of those over whom he reigned, Helwys declared: "For our lord the king is but an earthly king, and he has no authority as a king but in earthly causes. And if the king's people be obedient and true subjects, obeying all human laws made by the king, our lord the king can require no more." He continued: "The king is a mortal man, and not God, therefore he has no power over the mortal soul of his subjects to make laws and ordinances for them and to set spiritual lords over them."

Helwys could have claimed for Christians alone the right to freedom of conscience. Yet, this Baptist leader looked beyond narrow partisanship and affirmed an understanding of human nature that needs to be affirmed anew today. Helwys stated: "*For men's religion to God is between God and themselves. The king shall not answer for it. Neither may the king be judge between God and man. Let them be heretics, Turks [Muslims], Jews, or whatsoever, it appertains not to the earthly power to punish them in the least measure. This is made evident to our lord the king by the scriptures.*"

Contrary to what some authors have said, Helwys was not the first person to issue a call for freedom of conscience to be respected by all. Therefore, we need not make exaggerated claims in order to show our appreciation of Helwys' outstanding contribution in the cause of religious liberty. What we may need to do, instead, is to ask ourselves if we have always maintained respect for the principle of religious liberty that Helwys promoted.

In this 400th year of the publication of *A Declaration on the Mystery of Iniquity*, we may wish to remember that, when the church and its members hear and respond to the promptings of the Spirit of God, we are able to affirm the value God places on human beings. This will lead us to affirm certain fundamental rights that fall due to each person, irrespective of ethnicity or religion, and keep the heritage of Helwys alive.

□

Spring is officially here

Spring is officially here! The birds are singing, the wild flowers are blooming, and winter has hidden itself for another three seasons. Waking up to sunlight streaming through the windows reminds me that summer is just around the corner, but I am perfectly happy to enjoy spring while we have it.

Like my mother, I love to garden. I love planting my flowers, watering them, and turning them so each little leaf gets just the right amount of sunlight. I even talk to my plants! I tell them fanciful stories of the funny things that have happened to me, or read to them from one of my books. Sometimes, I even have to plant them in a bigger pot and clean up a mess. I take very good care of them, and in return, they grow into beautiful, colorful flowers that make my apartment smell like a bed of roses.



What do you think would happen if I didn't take care of my plants? What if I forgot to water them for a few weeks? Do you think they would still be as healthy and beautiful? Or what if I closed my blinds and never let the sun shine on them? Could the flowers still bloom into their colorful petals? The fact is that for plants to grow up healthy and strong, they have to be nurtured. They need sunlight, water, and good soil.

Just like plants grow, so do you. Can you live on junk food like ice cream and soda pop? No! To grow up healthy and strong you have to eat the right foods, drink plenty of water, get lots of sleep, and be rooted in the right soil! What soil is that? Well, the soil of Jesus! The apostle Paul once wrote in the Bible about being rooted and grounded in love in his letter to the Ephesians (Chapter 3:17-19). God wants us to be rooted in Jesus. While eat-



ing the right foods, drinking water, and getting plenty of rest helps our physical body grow, being rooted in Jesus Christ helps our spiritual body grow.

Also, just as a plant needs certain things, so does our spiritual body. We need food that comes from reading the Bible (Matthew 4:4). Even for children it's important to read the Bible and start memorizing verses. The Bible equips us to serve God (2 Timothy 3:17; Ephesians 6:17). It even teaches us how we should live (Psalm 32:8). We need water that comes from mature Christians "pouring" into us. It's important for us to attend church on a regular basis so that we can continually learn about Jesus and how to live a righteous life. Church also gives us a great place to fellowship with other Christians. Through that fellowship we can help each other grow into stronger believers. Lastly, we need sunlight, the sunlight that comes from Jesus Christ. It's important to build a relationship with Jesus through prayer (Philippians 4:6-7). Prayer is one of the best ways for us to communicate with God and grow in our relationship with Him.

I have a challenge for you! After you finish reading today, sit down with your Bible and your parents, and look up these verses:

Ephesians 3:17-19

Matthew 4:4

John 15:5

1 Thessalonians 5: 12-22

When you finish reading, talk with your parents about what you need to grow up healthy and strong, both physically and spiritually. Then make a list of things you could do every day to help you grow - and start growing!

With much love in Christ, Miss Pickles ☺

□

Have you visited our Web Page lately?

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The Czechoslovak Baptist Convention of USA and Canada

103rd Annual Convention starts in: 112 Days, 09 Hrs, 30 Min, 05 Sec

Don't know this one? And all the people of today? It is the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you preached but whom you forgot from the world. But this man, whom before you preached, is there in no way else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." - Acts 4:12-14

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we are moving...

Allegheny College,
Meadville, Pennsylvania

will host the

103rd Czechoslovak Baptist Convention

of USA and Canada

July 5-8, 2012

Want more info, directions, maps, and check out area attractions?

Just click on our moving truck.

Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania



The town of Meadville (population 13,000) is located in beautiful southwestern Pennsylvania. Just 42 minutes north of Erie, 90 minutes north of Pittsburgh, two hours east of Cleveland and one hour southwest of Buffalo.

Founded in 1815, Allegheny College ranks among the oldest 175 of colleges and universities in the 32nd oldest college in the United States. Perhaps as many as 130 colleges were established and failed before the Civil War. Allegheny is one of the lucky survivors that testify daily to the determination and vision of those early pioneers of higher education in America.

Allegheny is a national liberal arts college with approximately 2100 students. There 75 area campus is located in the city of Meadville PA, and features 16 major buildings and 395 acres of campus.

Within walking distance to downtown Meadville, Allegheny boasts one of the country's most attractive campuses, set in a region that offers a range of activities and outdoor opportunities.

The region is ideal for hiking, canoeing, boating, swimming and fishing -- in fact, there are eight freshwater lakes within a 40-minute drive of campus.

[About Allegheny](#) [Directions \(Map or Text\)](#) [Online Campus Tour](#) [Video of Campus](#) [Area Attractions \(coming soon\)](#)

Ford Memorial Chapel


Built more than a century ago, Ford Memorial Chapel was a gift of John Baptist Ford in memory of his wife Mary and was dedicated in June 1902. With an exterior of Cleveland sandstone, the structure could seat 600 and featured a pipe organ and beautiful colored glass windows - yep, stained glass on the north and south, a rose window in the east, and smaller windows in the chancel area, facing west.

Various interior changes were made over the years, including a major renovation project of the woodwork throughout the building completed in 2008.

All evening services of our Annual Convention will be held at the Ford Chapel.











Ford Chapel Photos


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**Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song. Psalm 95: 1,2**

**Pojďte, zpívejme Hospodinu s radostí,
jásejme Skále naší záchrany!
Do jeho přítomnosti vstupme s vděčností,
hlasitými žalmy ho pojďme oslavit! Žalm 95; 1,2**

**Podťe, plesajme pred Hospodinom,
zvučne oslavujme Skalu našej spásy!
Predstúpme vďačne pred jeho tvár,
zvučne ho vebme žalmami! Žalm 95; 1,2**

**103rd CONVENTION
NEW LOCATION!**

**ALLEGHENY COLLEGE
MEADVILLE, PA**

**SAVE THE DATE
JULY 5-8, 2012**

