

# Glorious Hope Slavná naděje

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**Be still, and know that I am God**

Psalms 46:10

**Utíchnite a poznajte, že ja som Boh**

Žalm 46; 11

**Upokojte se, a vězte, žeť jsem já Bůh**

Žalm 46; 11



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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.

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Editor-in-Chief: Natasha Laurinc

email: natasha.laurinc@gmail.com

You may send articles to above address.

Desktop publishing and art: Vit Malek

Assistant Editors: Janice Cermak, Ondrej Laurinc, Ph.D.

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email: info@czskbc.org

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## Blessed Be the Tie that Binds

**T**he first spring flowers have bloomed beneath the balcony. A month early. The weather is mild. It seems as though nature didn't have a chance to fall into its winter slumber. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century there was a period when harvest time was in April.

I miss the Canadian winter with all its snow. We don't have snow this year, which is unusual for this region (at the foot of the Šumava Mountains in Southwestern Czech).

Yes, changes come and as the Bible points out, "there is nothing new under the sun." There are many things that to us seem new and unusual. It is actually the pulse of our being. With the passing of time we realize how important it is to likewise pay attention to the things that don't succumb to change.

A couple of months ago, a letter came to our editorial office: *"I was a little over three years old when my grandfather died, but I remember him well. I remember him holding*

*the prayer meetings and services in our old farmhouse living room with people kneeling by their chairs and couches in Massillon, when he lived, in Canton, Ohio."*

I have the same memories from my own childhood, when prayer meetings were held in our house back home in the former Czechoslovakia—kneeling down at the couches and chairs and endless praying. Sometimes we kids even fell asleep and afterwards felt so embarrassed when we woke up. Usually no one noticed anyway; we were just little kids. Looking back now I'm sure that was what really formed us. And praise God for that.

In today's world that kind of meeting is called a "small group". They are essentially prayer meetings, although they may look a little different than, say, fifty or a hundred years ago. What is important is that they still exist. It's during those meetings that strong bonds develop between people, bonds that last into the decades. It is this bond that is celebrated in the hymn *Blest Be the Tie that Binds*. The author, John Fawcett (1739–1817), a reverend in

Continues on page 20

## Bud' žehnán svazek ten

**P**od balkónem vykvetly první jarní květiny. O měsíc dříve než obvykle. Je mírné počasí. Zdá se, že příroda neměla šanci usnout zimním spánkem. V 15. století dokonce přišlo období, kdy již v dubnu byly žně. Chybí mi kanadská zima a hodně sněhu. Letos tu nemáme sněh, a to pro tento kraj není typické (okraj pohorí Šumava v jihozápadních Čechách).

Ano, změny přicházejí a nic není pod sluncem nového, jak nás upozorňuje Bible. Mnohé věci nám mohou připadat nové a neobvyklé. Je to vlastně puls našeho bytí. S odstupem času si však uvědomíme, jak je důležité vnímat i to, co změnám nepodléhá.

Před časem do naší redakce přišel dopis: *„Když zemřel můj dědeček, bylo mi něco přes tři roky, ale pamatuji si ho dobře. Pamatuji si na jeho modlitební chvíle a boboslužby v obývací na naší farmě a*

*lidi klečící kolem židlí a gaučů, když žil v Massillonu, u Cantonu, v Ohio."*

Mám stejné vzpomínky ze svého dětství, kdy se u nás doma (v bývalém Československu) konaly modlitební chvíle a klečeli jsme u gauče a u židlí. Vzpomínám na ty večery nekonečných modliteb, kdy jsme my, děti, dokonce usínaly, a když jsme se probudily, velice jsme se za to styděly. Obvykle si toho nikdo ani nevšiml (byly jsme jen malé děti). Při ohlédnutí zpět si jsem jistá, že to je to, co nás opravdu formovalo. Chvála Pánu Bohu za to.

V dnešní době se takovému setkávání říká skupinka. Opět to jsou modlitební chvíle, probíhající možná trochu jinak, než před padesáti nebo sto lety. Důležité však je, že stále existují. Tam totiž vznikají ty pevné svazky mezi lidmi, které přetrvávají desítky let. A právě tyto svazky daly podnět ke vzniku písně *Bud' žehnán svazek ten, jež v Kristu víže nás*.

Pokračuje na straně 20

# From the President



No one was expecting it—the resurrection that is. Well maybe the chief priests and the Pharisees, in a cynical way, who urged Pilate to post a guard on Jesus’ tomb for fear his disciples would come in the night and steal his body. Pilate in response issued the deliciously ironic command: **“Go and make the tomb as secure as you know how.”** Most tombs are pretty secure on their own. Funny how this one needed a little extra help.

It was to no avail though. The next morning, tomb open, grave clothes folded tellingly, body formidably absent, the great Guard Death and his human helpers were despairingly embarrassed. Their Prisoner had gotten away.

This wonderful scene never fails to thrill us with each Easter’s coming. Christ’s resurrection is the great climax and startling Sunday morning surprise at which we exuberantly sing and rejoice.

There is another feeling, another mood associated with rightly remembering the things which happened over Passover about two millennia ago. It balances and complements the joy and jubilation. It provides the proper background for deep and reverent appreciation. It is the mood and feeling of melancholy, and it beautifully pervades a poem by an Irishwoman, Katharine Tynan Hinkson. This year, Easter is at the end of March, but we will do well if the reflections of her poem: stimulate our meditations as the day approaches.

## **All in an April Evening**

*All in the April morning,  
April airs were abroad;  
The sheep with their little lambs  
Pass’d me by on the road.*

*The sheep with their little lambs  
Pass’d me by on the road;  
All in an April evening  
I thought on the Lamb of God.*

*The lambs were weary,  
and crying  
With a weak human cry,  
I thought on the Lamb of God  
Going meekly to die.*

*Up in the blue, blue mountains  
Dewy pastures are sweet:  
Rest for the little bodies,  
Rest for the little feet.*

*But for the Lamb of God  
Up on the hill-top green,  
Only a cross of shame  
Two stark crosses between.*

*All in the April evening,  
April airs were abroad;  
I saw the sheep with their lambs,  
And thought on the Lamb of God.*

*Katharine Tynan Hinkson (1861–1931)*

Thoughts—melancholic and joyous, gratefulness overflowing, be yours this Passiontide and Easter.

*Stan Mantle*

**N**ikdo to nečekal – to vzkříšení. Možná až na nejvyššího kněze a farizeje, kteří ve svém cynismu chtěli po Pilátovi, aby postavil k Ježíšovu hrobu strážce z obavy, že by jeho tělo učedníci chtěli ukrást. Pilát na to reagoval výstižně ironickým příkazem: **“Běžte a zabezpečte hrob, jak nejlépe umíte.”** Většina hrobů je docela dobře zabezpečená. Zajímavé, že tento potřeboval ještě něco navíc.

Nebylo to však nic platné. Časně zrána byl hrob otevřen, pohřební plátno ve tvaru těla impozantně bez těla, a mocní strážci smrti i se svými pomocníky zoufale zahanbeni. Jejich vězni se podařilo zmizet.

Každé Velikonoce nás tento obraz naplňuje úžasem. Kristovo vzkříšení je překvapivým vyvrcholením a v neděli ráno důvodem k radostnému zpěvu a oslavám.

Jedná se tu ještě o další pocit, jiný přístup ve spojitosti s připomínáním si událostí, které se odehrávaly při Hodech beránka před dvěma tisíci lety. Je to to, co doplňuje a vnáší rovnováhu mezi projev radosti a jásot. Vyúsťuje ve hluboké a uctivé porozumění. Je to rozpoložení a pocit melancholie, vyjádřené procítěně v básni Irky Katharine Tynan Hinkinsonové. Letos jsou Velikonoce koncem března, ale i tak nám tyto verše dobře poslouží při rozjímání a v nadcházejících dnech naše úvahy podnítí.

## **V ten dubnový večer**

*V to dubnové ráno,  
Nestálé, jak jen duben je;  
S malými svými jehňátky,  
Ovce prošly kolem mne.*

*S malými svými jehňátky,  
Ovce prošly kolem mne;  
V ten dubnový večer  
Na Božího Beránka jsem myslel.*

*Vyčerpaná jehňata, slabá,  
Jak lidským hlasem plačící;  
Na Božího myslel jsem Beránka,  
Pokorně On na smrt kráčící.*

*Tam, v modravé výši,  
Na sladkých, svěžích pastvinách,  
Tělíčka jim pookřejou,  
Nožky si odpočinou.*

*Beránka Božího odpočinek,  
Na tom zeleném vrchu,  
Kříž hanby jen a  
Dva drsné kříže po boku.*

*V ten dubnový večer,  
Nestálý, jak jen duben je;  
Ovce s jehňaty jsem viděl.  
A na Božího Beránka jsem myslel.*

*Katharine Tynan Hinkinsonová (1861 – 1931)*

Nechť vás v tomto postním období a i Velikonocemi provází myšlenky melancholické a radostné, vděčností přetékaající.

*Stan Mantle  
Přeložila Nataša Laurincová*





# Resurrected for Our Justification

Darko Kraljik

*Who was delivered for our offences,  
and was raised again for our justification.* Romans 4:25

**T**he Easter holiday reminds us of two inseparable truths: on Good Friday we remember the suffering and death of Jesus Christ for our sins, and on Easter Sunday we remember Christ's resurrection. The biblical text above shows how Christ's death and resurrection work together. Why wasn't it enough for Christ to simply die for our sins? Why did he have to be resurrected for our justification? Justification from what and before whom?

God's word says that before God we are all sinful (Romans 3:23); we broke his holy and just commandments, and in this way became unrighteous in his eyes. Romans 3:10 says that no one is righteous, not one. This is why the anger of God is revealed from heaven for every injustice and act of godlessness (Romans 1:18). God in his anger declared that the godless will not be justified (Exodus 23:7). His righteousness required a punishment for our sins, and the payment for sin is death (Romans 6:23). But God so loved the world that he sacrificed his own beloved son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross of Golgotha for our sins; he the righteous, we the unrighteous, so that we would be justified before God through him (John 3:16, 1 Peter 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:21). There, on the cross at Golgotha, Christ declared: *"It is finished."* for the sins of man; the work of salvation is done for us sinful people (John 19:30). If Christ's death completed our salvation, and if our debt was leveled by his sacrifice on the cross, and we are justified before God, why did Christ have to rise again

for our justification? What justification did Christ's resurrection bring?

It is important to realize that the question of sin and guilt has two dimensions. The word describes our guilt like debts before God. Jesus' words confirm this clearly: when he talks about forgiveness, he explains it with parables in which a king, like a creditor, gathers his debtors together to square all debts (Matt. 18:21–27). There are two things necessary in squaring a debt: payment of a sum to the creditor, as well as confirmation to the debtor that the debt has in fact been paid. For the creditor, the matter is settled when he has the repayment in hand—money; for the debtor it is settled when he has been handed confirmation that the debt has been repaid.

This image is the one each one of us has in our position before God. We are all debtors before God, we did not have the means of paying for our debts, and for our sins. And God did exactly what Jesus spoke of in that parable: *"When we had no way to pay, God had compassion on us in Christ and forgave us our sins."* (Matt. 18:27) He nailed the list of our debts on the cross with Christ and erased it completely with his blood (Colossians 2:14). The blood of Christ spilled on the cross at Golgotha is a witness before God that our debt has been paid. The creditor has been paid and conciliation has taken place.

But how can we be certain that our debts have been erased? Who will believe that our sins are forgiven and our debt repaid? What is confirmation that our debt has been paid and that God will no longer ask anything of

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# Vzkriesený pre naše ospravedlnenie

Darko Kraljik

*Kristus bol vydaný na smrť za naše hriechy  
a vzkriesený pre naše ospravedlnenie. Rimanom 4,25*

**V**eľkonočné sviatky nám pripomínajú dve skutočnosti, ktoré neoddeliteľne patria k sebe: na Veľký piatok si pripomíname utrpenie a smrť Ježiša Krista za naše hriechy a na Veľkonočnú nedeľu Kristovo zmŕtvychvstanie. Aj vyššie uvedené slová poukazujú na to, že Kristova smrť a jeho zmŕtvychvstanie patria neoddeliteľne k sebe. Pýtame sa, prečo nestačilo, aby Kristus iba zomrel za naše hriechy? Prečo musel vstať pre naše ospravedlnenie? Ospravedlnenie z čoho a pred kým?

Božie slovo hovorí, že my všetci sme zhrešili pred Bohom (Rim 3,23), porušili sme jeho sväté a spravodlivé prikázania, a stali sme sa tak pred Bohom nespravodlivými. Platí, že niet spravodlivého ani jedného. (Rim 3,10) Preto sa hnev Boží zjavuje z neba na každú nespravodlivosť a bezbožnosť. (Rim 1,18) Boh vo svojom hneve povedal, že neospravedlní bezbožného. (2M 23,7) Jeho spravodlivosť vyžadovala trest za naše hriechy a touto odplatou za hriech je smrť. (Rim 6,23a) No Boh tak miloval svet, že dal v obeť svojho milovaného Syna Ježiša Krista, aby zomrel na kríži Golgoty za naše hriechy, On, Spravodlivý, za nás nespravodlivých, aby my sme mohli byť pred Bohom ospravedlnení v ňom. (J 3,16; 1P 3,18; 2Kor 5,21) Tam, na kríži Golgoty, Kristus zvolal: „*Je zaplatené*“ za hriech človeka; je dokonané dielo spásy za nás hriešnych ľudí. (J 19,30) Keď Kristova smrť dokonala naše spasenie a keď náš dlh bol jeho obeťou na kríži vyrovnaný a my pred Bohom ospravedlnení, prečo musel Kristus vstať pre

naše ospravedlnenie? Aké ospravedlnenie nám prinieslo Kristovo zmŕtvychvstanie?

Je treba si uvedomiť, že otázka hriechu a viny má dva rozmery či dve roviny. Písmo opisuje naše viny, ako aj naše dlžoby pred Bohom. Jasne to potvrdzujú Ježišove slová: keď hovorí o odpustení, vysvetľuje to podobenstvom, v ktorom Kráľ ako veriteľ si zavolať k sebe dlžníkov, aby sa s nimi poráť. (Mt 18,21–27) Ide totiž o to, že na vyrovnanie dlhu sú potrebné dve veci: zaplatenie nejakej dlžnej sumy veriteľovi a potvrdenie pre dlžníka o tom, že dlh je splatený. Pre veriteľa je vec vysporiadaná vtedy, keď má v rukách vrátený dlh — peniaze; pre dlžníka vtedy, keď má v rukách potvrdenie o zaplatení dlhu.

Tento obraz je obrazom všetkých nás v našom postavení pred Bohom. My všetci sme dlžníkmi pred Bohom, nemali sme ako zaplatiť za naše dlhy, za naše hriechy. A Boh urobil presne to, čo hovoril Ježiš v podobenstve: „Keďže sme nemali ako zaplatiť, Boh sa nad nami v Kristu zmiloval a nám naše viny odpustil.“ (Mt 18,27) Pribil s Kristom na kríž listinu našich dlžôb a vymazal ju krvou Ježiša Krista. (Kol 2,14) Krv Kristova preliata na kríži Golgoty svedčí Bohu, že naša dlžoba je zaplatená. Veriteľovi je zaplatené a on je zmierený.

Ako však my vieme, ako môžeme mať istotu, že naše dlhy sú vymazané? Kto nám uverí, že naše hriechy sú odpustené a naša dlžoba splatená? Čo je potvrdením toho, že náš dlh je splatený a že Boh od nás už nič viac

nebude požadovať? Čo je našou „potvrdenkou“ pred nepriateľom našej duše, pred žalobníkom veriacich v Krista, ktorý chce toto dielo Kristovo na kríži v našom srdci spochybniť? Týmto potvrdením je práve Kristovo zmŕtvychvstanie. Toho, kto na svojom tele vyniesol naše viny a dlžoby na kríž Boh vzkriesil z mŕtvych, posadil ho po svojej pravici a korunoval slávou a ct'ou. (Žid 1,3b) Zmŕtvychvstaný Kristus, ktorý je večne živý a ktorý sedí po pravici svojho Otca a prihovára sa za nás, je zárukou nášho spasenia a ospravedlnenia pred Bohom. Preto platí: „*Kto bude žalovať na vyvolených Božích? Boh je, kto ospravedľňuje. Kde, kto odsúdi? Ježiš Kristus, ten, ktorý zomrel, ba ešte viac, ktorý aj vstal z mŕtvych, ktorý je po pravici Otca, ten sa prihovára za nás*“. (Rim 8,33–34) Preto je pre nás viera v Kristovo zmŕtvychvstanie kľúčová.

Veď Božie slovo hovorí, že ak vyznáme Pána Ježiša svojimi ústami a uveríme vo svojom srdci, že ho Boh vzkriesil z mŕtvych, budeme spasení. (Rim 10,9) Naše ospravedlnenie pred Bohom stojí na týchto dvoch pilieroch našej viery: na Kristovom utrpení na kríži Golgoty a na jeho zmŕtvychvstaní. Takže kedykoľvek prídu do nášho života pochybnosti a neistota o našom spasení, kedykoľvek žalobca bude žalovať na nás v našom svedomí, že túto istotu odpustenia hriechov, istotu spasenia a ospravedlnenia pred Bohom nemôžeme mať, potrebujeme urobiť to, k čomu nás pozýva Pavol v 2Tim 2,8: „*Pamätaj na Ježiša Krista, ktorý vstal z mŕtvych...*“ Vzkriesený Kristus je zárukou našej istoty. Nech mu je preto sláva.

□



# Dilema proroka Habakuka

Ana Lomen Franka



**P**rorok Habakuk patrí medzi takzvaných Dvsnástich malých prorokov. Títo prorokov nazývajú *malými* nie pre menej významný obsah ich proroctva, ale pre krátkosť ich obsahu. Napríklad proroka Izaiáša nazývajú *veľkým prorokom*, lebo jeho proroctvo

má až 66 kapitol, a proroka Habakuka nazývajú *malým prorokom*, pretože jeho proroctvo je obsiahnuté v troch kapitolách.

Habakuk prorokoval koncom 7. storočia pred Kristom za čias kráľovania Jojakima a Sedechiáša. Bol Jeremiášovým súčasníkom a ako prorok nastúpil po Nahumovi.

Podľa biblického konceptu *prorok je človek poslaný od Boha s Božou zvestou, Božiemu ľudu v dobe krízy*.

Habakukovo proroctvo sa vzťahuje na Judsko a Jeruzalem. Cez neho bolo poslané slovo Hospodinovo južnému izraelskému kráľovstvu—Judsku v čase veľkej krízy. Judsko sa nachádzalo práve v takej istej situácii ako Izrael pred stotridsiatimišiestimi rokmi. Vtedy na severnú izraelskú ríšu zaútočila Asýria, roku 722 zničila Samáriu a odvieďla desať pokolení do zajatia. Roku 712 padlo hlavné mesto Asýrie Ninive a na scénu dejín ako nový podmaniteľ nastúpila nová ríša — Babylon. Babylon podnikol dobyvateľské vojny a podmaňoval si vtedajší svet. Všetci vedeli, že Judsko nezostane výnimkou v dobyvateľnej stratégii Babylona. Keď sa kráľ Nabuchodonozor

rozhodol zaútočiť na Egypt, musel prejsť cez judskú zem, a tým Judsku hrozilo veľké nebezpečenstvo, ba až zničenie.

Habakuk bol spevákom v chráme a pravdepodobne levíta. Jeho meno je zvláštne a znamená *Hospodinov božek* alebo *Hospodinovo objatie*.

Témou jeho proroctva je Božia suverénosť. Hospodin má pod absolútnou kontrolou svet i celé univerzum, a preto mu človek môže dôverovať bez ohľadu na to, v akej situácii sa nachádza. Človek nepozná budúcnosť—pozná ju však Pán Boh.

Hlavná myšlienka, ktorá sa vinie celou knihou proroka Habakuka, je: *Spravodlivý bude žiť z viery*. Habakuk videl, že sa na Judsko blíži Boží súd. Vedel, že súd prichádza pre hriech. Nerozumel však, ako môže Boh tolerovať zlo. Nerozumel ani tomu, prečo Boh bude testovať Judsko cez bezbožný chaldejský národ. Prečo Chaldejci majú vykonať Boží súd nad Judskom—Božím ľudom? Tieto otázky ho trápi dňom a nocou, až kým sa neodovážil na ne spýtať samého Boha. A Boh mu odpovedal. Odhalil mu situáciu z iného uhla, ba odhalil mu samého seba. Tento nový pohľad dal Habakukovi odvahu prežiť najťažšie dni života.

Kniha proroka Habakuka patrí do didakticko-reflexívnej poézie. Upravená je pre hudobný prednes na strunovom nástroji. Oplýva bohatstvom štylistických básnických figúr, symbolikou, najmä však charakteristickým hebrejským paralelizmom.

Začína sa štýlom podobným Jóbovej knihe, knihe Kazateľ a knihe Žalmov. Prvú kapitolu môžeme nazvať *Dilema proroka Habakuka*. Je to dilemma podobná dileme Jóba, Šalamúna, Dávida, ba podobná je mojej a tvojej dileme.

Za čias Habakuka bola v národe hrozná situácia. Zničenie severného izraelského kráľovstva neprivedlo Júdu k rozmyšľaniu, k zastaveniu sa na zlých cestách a návratu k Bohu.



Vyvolený Boží ľud chodil za cudzími bohmi, hrešil a nedbal na to, že aj jemu sa môže stať to isté čo Izraelovi, ak zotrúva v hriechu. Hospodin neprestal vyzývať k návratu: *Vráťte sa, odpadlí synovia, lebo ja som vašim Pánom.* Na návrat k Bohu však ani len nepomysleli. Pán Boh ich musel nakoniec prísne potrestať. Hovorí: *Od severu privediem pobromu a veľkú skazu, aby som z vašej krajiny urobil púšť.* Preto, kým je ešte čas, *umi si srdce od zla, Jeruzalem, aby si sa zachránil. Dokedy budeš prechovávať v sebe svoje nešľachetné úmysly? Tvoje cesty a tvoje skutky ti spôsobili... zlo,* ktoré sa ti približuje. Jeremiáš písal o tom, ako nízko padol Júda: *Už ani stud necítia, ani hanbiť sa nevedia... Hriech Júdov je napísaný železným písadlom, vyritým diamantovým brotom na tabuľu ich srdca a na rohy ich oltárov. Bláznivý je tento národ a nepozná Boha. Múdry je len na to, aby robil zlé, ale dobre činiť nevedia.* Nepočúvali slovo prorokov Hospodinových, ale sa dopytovali veštcov, hádačov a čarodejníkov. Nie div, že Habakuk proste zúfalo volal na Hospodina: *Dokedy Hospodine?*

## Prvá kapitola Dilema proroka Habakuka

*„Dokedy budem volať o pomoc, Hospodine, a Ty nepočuješ?*

*Kričať na Teba: Násilie! a nepomáhaš?*

*Prečo mi dovoľíš hľadiť na krivdu a sám sa dívať na trápenie?*

*Zhuba a násilie predo mnou, vzniká spor a škriepka povstáva.*

*Preto je zákon neúčinný a právo sa nikdy nedostáva na povrch, lebo nešľachetník obkľučuje spravodlivého, preto sa zákon kriví.“*

Hab.1:2–4

Habakuk povedal Hospodinovi o svojom probléme. Veľmi ho trápilo, ako môže Boh tolerovať zlo, bezbožnosť, násilie, modlárstvo, hriech. Ako sám povedal, niesol ťažké bremeno na srdci pre situáciu, aká bola v Judsku: anarchia, násilie, zahorknutosť, morálna zvrátenosť. Zlí žili na úkor bezúhonných a nikto si to nevšimol. Spravodliví hľadali oporu v zákone, ale nikto sa zákona nepridržal. Pravda a spravodlivosť boli zmrzačené. Habakuk to videl, díval sa na to deň čo

☞ Pokračovanie na strane 22





# Blest Be the Tie That Binds

## The Missionary Who Came to America

The ministry work among the Slovak-speaking people of Campbell, Ohio, began in the year 1906. As time passed, increasing numbers of Slovaks began attending the mission meeting. Mr. John Kana was called to work as a missionary among the Slovak people in 1908. In 1909, Mr. Stephen Patrick and his family united with the church, and after Mr. Kana left, Mr. Patrick was chosen to continue the missionary work as lay pastor. He served faithfully for ten years.

Mr. Patrick was a good man and a faithful worker in the service of the Master. In the Report of the Board of Managers for 1910, we find the following statement. *"Our foreign workers: This work has begun three years ago when the Board employed a young man to work among the thousands of Slavs in the city of Youngstown. The Work has grown rapidly until now the Board is employing six men who are spending all their time in the work among the foreign people of the state. We are still employing a worker (Mr. Patrick) in Youngstown and he is doing splendid work among the large number of Slovaks in that city."*

Mr. Patrick continued as a missionary of the Convention until 1919, continuing from that date as a colporteur of the American Baptist Publication Society.

Mr. Patrick was the missionary who came to America.

### Life Story of Stephen Patrick

I was born Dec. 13, 1865, in Trenčín. My father was a Lutheran and my mother a Catholic. And as to my religious feelings, I don't believe I was either.



Stephen Patrick

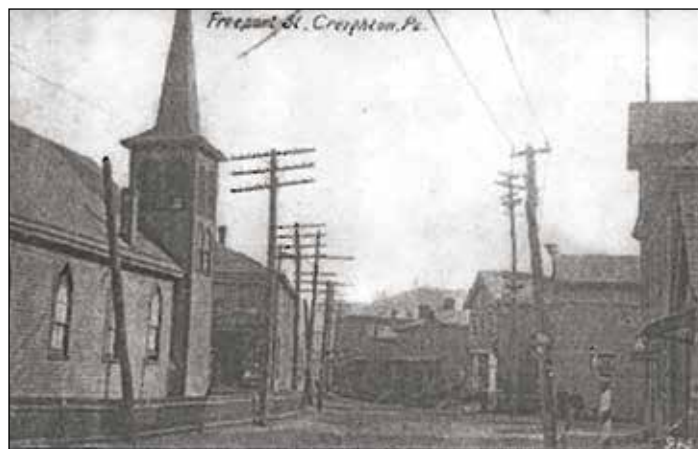
I can still picture in my mind the day Rev. Steucek, a Baptist missionary who was in our village, came to our home and



by his grandson Richard L. Patrick

talked with us about Christ in such a beautiful way that I was led to buy his Bible. He also gave me some tracts, which were a great blessing to find, for I read these words printed on them: *"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."* (Luke 14:33 KJV) I was deeply stirred by this scripture. I got to reading the new Bible. I read a little of it each spare minute I had. I also started to attend the services at the missionary's home, and before long I gave my heart to Christ and was baptized Aug. 29, 1899.

There were only a few Baptists in our village, so I had to live my new life almost alone. All my friends turned against







Slovak Pageantry Church in Campbell

me, even my wife and my parents. I remembered them daily in my prayers, and especially my wife, whom I ask God to direct into the path that I had taken. That wish God granted me, and my eight children all have been brought up in the Christ-like life.

In 1903 my wife and I came to America and settled down in Creighton, Pa., for there also my good friend Rev. Steucek the missionary had settled. I attended services at his church, became deacon, was Sunday school teacher for six years and superintendent for five years.

Here in America I knew I had more freedom. I traveled around at my own expense to spread the gospel to the people of my own tongue. Then I got in touch with the American Tract Society and purchased Bibles and religious books and began to do colporteur work. At this task I continued till 1908, when I took my leave for Youngstown, Ohio.

There were quite a few Slovak people in the eastern part of Youngstown, which now is called Campbell. Here I began a Sunday School class with three of my own children and two strangers. Our membership increased to a hundred and fifteen. In this mission I had eleven different nationalities.

It was a God-sent gift when the Youngstown Association built us a church. Our location was then but a mere farm district. It was a five-mile walk on the dirt road, no means of transportation. Well I remember how many times we walked on that dirt road in rain and mud ankle-deep to get to our mission. Later, building projects boomed and before long we had a nice town. From our own Slovak church the Italians started their own mission, and also the Hungarians, building their own churches. I was indeed overwhelmed with joy because of the increases of our Baptist denomination.

I worked among those people and was pastor of the Slovak church in Campbell from 1908 to 1919, when I resigned and took up my former position as colporteur missionary with the Home Mission Society, Ohio State Convention and the American Baptist Publications Society.

These last thirteen years that I have been doing colporteur work have really been a great pleasure and joy to me even though we had hard bumps in this world and also discouragements all around us. My territory covers Eastern Ohio and Western Pennsylvania. In these cities I find many who do not know Christ and many are anxious and eager to know Him and take Him as their personal Saviour.

In Akron, Ohio, with the help of two other brothers, Rev. Robert Hughes and Rev. G. E. Enterline, we organized a wonderful Slovak mission. It has been prospering splendidly. They too have built a church of their own.

My greatest joy is when I can be among my people, teaching them and conversing with them about the Lord. A lot of times things often seem to be against us, doors are shut in our faces, nasty things are said about our Saviour, and in oh so many ways, they try to get rid of us and God also. But, we remember them in our prayers and ask God to make us understand the people so that we really can help them.

How can I ever thank my Saviour enough for the many prayers He has answered for me. What a great teacher He has been to me and a comforter. When I was distressed, he



wife Anna Patrick and pastor Stephen Patrick  
with two youngest daughters

helped me see the brighter side of things, encouraged me and increased my faith immensely.

I am now sixty-seven years old and my only hope is that if it is God's wish He may spare me and that I may continue to work in this service for him and with many more souls into the Kingdom of God.

*Rev. Stephen Patrick died two years after writing this testimony, in 1934 at the age of 69 years. This paper was published in the year of his death. Perhaps he got to see the article before he died.*

□



# Jesus, the Blind Man and the Pharisees

Ruby Mikulencak

John chapter 9

**T**his story is familiar to us but I want to try and bring it to life for us this evening. Many times familiarity makes us miss what God might be saying to us, and this can make us miss the presence of God. So let's look at this story again with new eyes. The characters, remember, are Jesus, the blind man, the Pharisees, who are actually divided on what to do, and the blind man's parents.

John tells us in Chapter 9 that Jesus heals the blind man, and what happens? The man is brought before the Pharisees. Actually, he is caught in the middle of a debate about Jesus. The Pharisees are the theologians and spiritual leaders of the day. They should be rejoicing with this man for his good fortune, but notice that instead he gets grilled about how it all happened.

John 9:13-17 – *"They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see. Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?' And there was a division among them. So they said again to the blind man, 'What do you say about him, since he has opened your eyes?' He said, 'He is a prophet.'"*

The Pharisees think they have it all right. They think they have eyes to see God and what he wants. But here we see that all the Pharisees are concerned about are the man-made rules and guidelines of the Jewish religion concerning the Sabbath. Although some of the Pharisees are conflicted about the miracle and the Law, the emphasis is not on the joy the man is experiencing, but on the rule that one should not work on the Sabbath. The Pharisees miss the miracle of healing because they are judging Jesus on a law rather than realizing that God is not limited by man's thoughts or rules.

In the next verses the Pharisees don't like the man's answer of Jesus being a prophet, so they go and ask the man's parents.



They are not willing to believe that he was blind and has received his sight until they call his parents and ask them, *"Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"*

So they verify the fact that the man was really born blind by asking the parents. I am not sure what the Pharisees are hoping to prove here. Are they hoping that this story is all a hoax? That this is an angle that Jesus used to get attention? Was the man really blind? If we think about this, we could say, who are the blind people here? Come on, Pharisees, what's your problem? A man has been cured of blindness! But all the Pharisees are concerned about is to discredit Jesus, the One who healed the man. They have no concern whatsoever for the fact that the man can now see. They are trying to force the man and his parents

into their point of view, based on what they think is their superior knowledge base. They only want to prove and judge Jesus wrong in what he did.

Verse 20 verifies that the man was born blind. His parents answer, *"We know that this is our son and that he was born blind."*

Let us shift our focus from the motives of the Pharisees to the motives of the parents and their response to the Pharisees. Their son who was blind from birth is healed. If your son or daughter were healed of blindness, what would you do? Perhaps to us it seems so silly, but then we have the advantage of knowing the whole story. But you would think the father and mother would rejoice with their son and be glad about his ability to now see, thanks to Jesus.

Here is their chance to make a move towards believing in this Jesus, who has healed their son. By this time in Jesus' life, I am sure many people have heard about Jesus and His miracles. He isn't an unknown! But you see, the parents are also aware of the Law and what the Pharisees could do to them if they said that Jesus was the Messiah.

Verse 21 gives us their answer – *"So they said, 'But how he now sees we do not know, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask*



him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.” “Man, what a cop-out. They won’t get involved in this discussion about Jesus. All they are concerned about is being accepted and in favor with the Pharisees and staying in the synagogue. They refuse the revelation of God about his Son, Jesus, through a miraculous healing, and they miss out on getting to know Jesus better. We also can place Jesus in our limited box of knowledge and understanding, and we too can miss getting to know Jesus better.

The story gets more intriguing now, because the Pharisees do not give up easily. They are convinced that they have the knowledge of God and what He expects of humans. So they turn back to the man who has been cured of blindness.

John 9:26-39 – “They said to him, ‘What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?’ He answered them, ‘I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?’ Now, that was the wrong thing to say! Oh boy, talk about opening a can of worms! When he asks that question, he really hits the annoyance button of the Pharisees. Do you get the picture here? This man has been healed and the Pharisees are questioning him as if he is not speaking the



Ruby Mikulencak—the Friday evenings teaching during the convention 2014

truth. He must be totally frustrated with these spiritual leaders. Instead of being happy for him, they are accusing him of not speaking the truth!

When he asks them if they too want to be followers of Jesus, it is the last straw for the Pharisees, and look what they do: “And they reviled him, saying, ‘You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.’”

You would think the man would stop there, but he really puts his foot in his mouth and makes the Pharisees livid with anger. John 9:30–33 – “The man answered, ‘Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.’”

His reply is so typical of people who have had an encounter with Jesus. He is convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and he will not deny who Jesus is, no matter what. All he knows is that he was blind but now he sees. But his enthusiasm costs him isolation and rejection.

John 9:34 – “They answered him, ‘You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?’ And they cast him out.”

John 9:35-39 “Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, ‘Do you believe in the Son of Man?’ He answered, ‘And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?’ Jesus said to him, ‘You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you.’ He said, ‘Lord, I believe,’ and he worshiped him. Jesus said, ‘For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.’

I wish I could stop this message here, because it ends on such a happy note: Jesus and the man he



Ruby Mikulencak with Ljubica and Vlado Canji during the convention 2014



One day Jesus was walking with His disciples. They saw a man who had been born blind. The disciples asked if the man was blind because he had sinned or because his parents had sinned.

John 9:1-2



The Savior said that neither the parents nor the man had sinned. The man was blind so that Jesus could heal him and show people God's power.

John 9:3-5



Jesus made clay out of the dirt. He put it on the blind man's eyes. Jesus told the man to go wash his eyes.

John 9:6-7



As soon as the man washed the clay from his eyes, he could see!

John 9:7



When his neighbors saw him, they were not sure who he was. He told them that Jesus had healed him. The neighbors took the man to the Pharisees. The man told the Pharisees that Jesus had healed him.

John 9:8-11



Some of the Pharisees thought Jesus must be a righteous man. Others thought He was a sinner. When the man said Jesus was a righteous person, some of the Pharisees were angry and threw the man out.

John 9:13-16, 30-34



Some of the Pharisees thought Jesus must be a righteous man. Others thought He was a sinner. When the man said Jesus was a righteous person, some of the Pharisees were angry and threw the man out.

John 9:13-16, 30-34

has cured of blindness are in fellowship together, and the man's eyes are spiritually and physically open to understand who Jesus really is. If you leave out verse 39, it really is a lovely story isn't it? But Jesus does not stop the story at the man worshiping him, and we cannot stop either, because what follows is the main teaching Jesus has for his disciples.

John 9:39 – *“Jesus said, For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.”*

Jesus makes this statement based on a physical problem of not seeing, to illustrate spiritual blindness. The blind man does not see until Jesus comes and opens his eyes. The Pharisees think they can see, but in fact they are blind.

What causes the blindness of the Pharisees? This verse seems to say it is because of judgment. They have a problem judging themselves, but also judging others. They are the spiritual leaders of the nation of Israel. They govern people's lives by a set of rules they and their ancestors have interpreted as being part of the Law of God. If you follow their rules, you are considered to be a follower of God. It is their position, training and knowledge of God that makes them feel superior to others, especially common people like the man Jesus cured.

### 1. Their judgment of themselves is incorrect.

“You were born in utter sin, and you would teach us?” Think about what the Pharisees are saying here. Because of their arrogance and haughtiness, they do not realize that they are utterly full of sin, just like the blind man. Sometimes the reality of our own spiritual condition is hard to define.

Oswald Chambers writes, “We have to get rid of the notion that we understand ourselves, as there are tracts of ignorance and stubbornness that need to be revealed to us.” Our knowledge of God and what we think He wants, and our lack of knowledge of ourselves produce fuzzy notions about a lot of things, but especially about ourselves and what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

We know a lot about Scripture and have a lot of knowledge about God. But having knowledge about God is not enough, for it must be tempered with grace. The Pharisees are the theologians of the day. They should be the first ones to receive and accept Jesus. But they miss understanding who Jesus is because they think they already have the truth, and it makes them feel superior to others. When God appears in a way they do not expect, they refuse to believe in Him!

Are we similar to the Pharisees? Do we think Jesus is all about religion and that religion is all about rules? Our spiritual practices are almost an obligation we feel





we must do. We follow these rules and yet we seem so unlike Christ, especially when someone wants to point it out to us. Actually, we do not want to hear the truth about ourselves. It reminds me of this story from Africa that shows the importance of true humility.

In Africa, farming means your food supply for one year. Once there was a very severe drought, and the priest decided to call on all the religious leaders to join in a common day of prayer. The day arrived and everyone from the town came to join in the prayers for rain. A place of honor was set aside with soft chairs and a reading podium for those who would lead the prayers. First the priest went up front to pray. "I am nothing, I am nothing ..." he began as he prayed that rain might come. Then the pastor came forward. Not to be outdone, he also prayed beginning with the words, "I am nothing, I am nothing". When he finished, one of the poor farmers who had lost all his crop decided that he too would come forward and pray. "I am nothing, I am nothing," he began. Then the priest and the pastor turned to each other and said, "Who is this man to say he is nothing?"

In this story the priest and the pastor claim to be nothing before God. In fact they speak the truth. All of us are indeed nothing before God. Yet when they turn to each other and say, "Who is this man to say he is nothing?" they show that they

actually consider themselves more important than the others present. In this way their humility is seen to be false and insincere.

We should not be so quick to condemn them, however, but rather to condemn ourselves, for all of us cling to our own importance, even if it is small. Sometimes this makes us cling all the harder. We claim Jesus to be our King, but the thing that makes Jesus King is not that he clung to his own importance of being the Son of God in Heaven, but rather that he "assumed the condition of a servant, and became as men are, and being as all men are, he was even more humble yet, even to accepting death, death on a cross!" All of this was in obedience to his Father, that we might follow his example and live.

The greatest characteristic of a follower of Jesus is humility. The key is a humble and repentant spirit, and reliance on God to show us our failures so that His Spirit can make us more like His Son. If, however, we base our relationship to God on spiritual activities and performance, it could give us a feeling of superiority like the Pharisees. This superior attitude can cause us to miss the presence of God in our life.

**2. But there is another judging Jesus wanted us to consider from this verse in John 9:39.**

Jesus understood how detrimental judging another person

 Continues on page 21

# Charles Spurgeon's Devotion



Charles Haddon Spurgeon  
by Alexander Melville

## My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Psalm 22:1

In this verse we see the Savior in the depth of His sorrows. No other place shows us the grief of Christ as well as Calvary, and no other moment at Calvary is as full of agony as the moment Jesus' cry split the air — “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*” (Matt. 27:46). At that moment His physical weakness was combined with the severe mental torture of the shame and dishonor through which He had to pass. What was even worse, and what marked the culmination of His grief, was the spiritual agony beyond all description He suffered as a result of the departure of His Father's presence from Him. This was the darkest midnight of Jesus' horror and the point He descended into the very abyss of suffering.

No mere human can fully comprehend the meaning of His words, although at times we find ourselves wanting to cry out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” There are seasons in our lives when the brightness of our Father's smile is obscured by “clouds and thick darkness” (Ps. 97:2), but may we remember God never really forsakes us. In our experience it only feels as though He has forsaken us, but in Christ's case He was actually forsaken. We distress over what feels like a slight turning away of our Father's love from us, but God actually did turn His face away from His Son. Who could even estimate the tremendous agony that caused Him! In our case our pain is often caused by our own unbelief, but in His case it was the cry of a dreadful fact—God had actually turned away from Him for a time.

O poor distressed soul—you who once lived in the sunshine of God's face but now find yourself in darkness, remember He has not actually forsaken you. God, obscured by clouds, is just as much our God as when He is shining in the full brilliance of His grace.

Yet, because even the mere thought that He may have forsaken us brings us great agony, we can only imagine the intense suffering of the Savior when He exclaimed, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

□

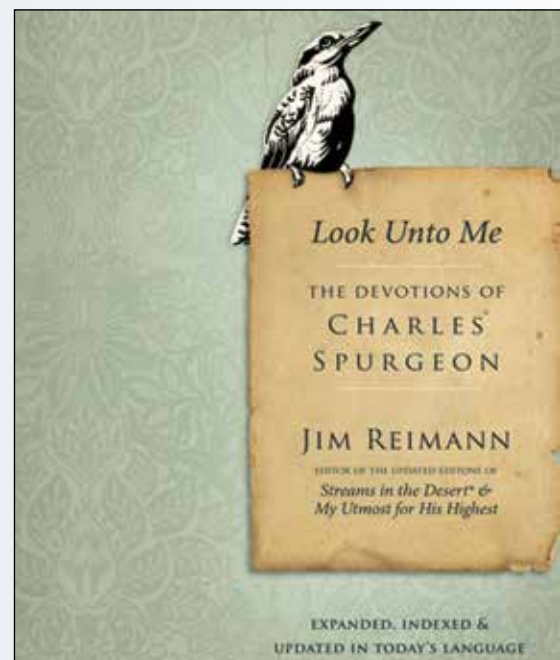
*Charles Haddon (C.H.) Spurgeon* (19 June 1834–31 January 1892) was a British Baptist preacher. Spurgeon remains highly influential among Christians of different denominations, among whom he is known as the “Prince of Preachers.” He was a strong figure in the Reformed Baptist tradition, defending the Church in agreement with the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith, and understanding and opposing the liberal and pragmatic theological tendencies in the Church of his day.

Spurgeon was pastor of the congregation of the New Park Street Chapel (later the Metropolitan Tabernacle) in London for 38 years. He was a prolific author of many types of works, including sermons, an autobiography, commentaries, books on prayer, devotionals, magazines, poetry, hymns and more. In his lifetime, Spurgeon preached to around 10,000,000 people.

*Look Unto Me* represents some of Spurgeon's most powerful devotions.

...Spurgeon preached to around 10,000,000 people.

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Taken from “*Look Unto Me*”

*The Devotions of Charles Spurgeon* by Jim Reimann

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# From Our Readers



Dear Natasha,

While reading the Vol. 41, No 1, 2015, issue of *Glorious Hope*, I came across the article on Creighton, Pennsylvania. It caught my attention because my grandfather,

Stephen Lawrence Patrick, Sr., settled there for a while after arriving in America. I am his grandson, Richard L. Patrick, born in September of 1931. I was a little over three years old when my grandfather died, but I remember him well. I remember him holding the prayer meetings and services in our old farmhouse living room with people kneeling by their chairs and couches in Massillon, when he lived, in Canton, Ohio.

Prior to those years, he ministered in Campbell, Ohio (East Youngstown, 1909–1918). Since that was before

my time, I was unaware of his ministry in Campbell. God called me into the ministry, and led me to start an independent Baptist church in Campbell, 40 years after my grandfather left the area. I resigned from Bible Baptist Temple on its 50th Anniversary, in 2007, and moved to Chattanooga, Tennessee, to be with my children. God has given me the privilege of walking on the same streets and footprints that my grandfather did 40 years before me, for 50 years. Paul Struharik became a close friend of mine, among other old-timers, and told me many stories of those days of old.

I attended the convention many times as a child, and have found my picture on some of the old group photos. I also attended some of the Phillippi meetings, especially the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

*Richard Patrick*



## 107<sup>th</sup> CZECHOSLOVAK BAPTIST CONVENTION July 7-10, 2016

### THEREFORE GO! (Matthew 28:19)

**Letting Go** (Genesis 12:1-9, Mark 10:28-30)

**Planting and Watering** (Psalm 126:6, I Corinthians 3:5-8)

**In The Form of A Servant** (Philippians 2:5-7a, Romans 13:12-14)

**Holding Out the Word of Life** (Philippians 2:14:16)



Milan & Iva Kern  
103<sup>rd</sup> Convention July 2012

#### SPECIAL GUESTS:

##### Milan and Iva Kern

Milan Kern is the president of the Czech Baptist Union

##### Mark & Gretchen Potma

The Potmas have served as church-planting missionaries in Prague since 1996



Mark & Gretchen Potma  
with their children:  
Luke, Elise, Ben & Noemi



*The gospel of Jesus Christ is good news for all the women of the world. For over a century, this conviction has brought women from many countries together across barriers of geography, culture, language, and war. They have prayed for each other, supported each other, delighted in each other, and learned from each other. They have addressed issues that concern women around the world, and offered dignity to those who do not know they are made in the image of God. Together, they radiate the light of Christ into the dark corners of women's experience.*

Baptist World Alliance Women's Department website

## BWA Women's Director retires



**P**atsy Davis, executive director of Baptist World Alliance Women's Department (BWA WD), retired on December 31, 2015, after working in that position for 17 years.

"She has initiated many projects and the global Baptist Women's Day of Prayer grew into a recognized ministry that connected Baptist women to

each other both in prayer and practical support," said Ksenija Magda, president of the BWA Women's Department. "She has been appreciated by many women on all continents and under her leadership, the Women's Department became an example of an effective global ministry within the Baptist World Alliance."

## 17 Years of Ministry

By Patsy Davis



**I** can only think of the many blessings that the Lord has given me as I reflect on 17 years of ministry in the Baptist World Alliance Women's Department. They have been years of change, joy, struggle, growth, airplanes, mission trips, continental union meetings and the most wonderful Baptist women from around the world.

I have worked with four of the most gifted and talented Baptist women presidents: Mercy Jeyaraja Rao from India, Audrey Morikawa from Canada, Dorothy Selebano from South Africa, and Raquel Contreras

from Chile. The secretary/treasurers completed the administrative team that worked hard to encourage, as well as celebrate, unity in Christ among Baptist women of the world and work toward peace, reconciliation, justice and development through prayer, witness and service.

During these 17 years there have been four Baptist Women's Leadership Conferences. The conferences have grown from being by invitation only to an open conference that all Baptist women may attend. Each conference was better than the one before, and the 2015 conference in South Africa was the best to date. Baptist women are still celebrating as they arise to shine for the Lord. Ksenija Magda from Croatia was elected president at the 2015 conference.

The heart of the Women's Department is the Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer. It has been exciting to see how it has grown among the different generations. The program is sent out to 150 different translators making it possible for all Baptist women to participate. In the last few years there has been a 24-hour Day of Pray Vigil led by T. J. Wheeler. This year (2015) it reached more than 26,000 people.

God called me many years ago to work with women, and he has blessed me these 17 years to be a part of the BWA Women's Department. I am retiring from the Women's Department, but not from the Lord's work. It is exciting to think about what He has in store for me next. Please pray for me as I start a new chapter in my life.

## News from Europe



**E**BWU (European Baptist Women's Union) Conference in Özdere, Turkey

Women from Europe and various parts of Asia had the privilege of coming together from November 12 to 15, 2015. The theme of the conference was arranged in the spirit of the 2015 Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer: "Arise, shine!"

*"Arise, Jerusalem! Let your light shine for all to see. For the glory of the LORD rises to shine on you."*

(Isaiah 60:1, New Living Translation)

The main speaker was the newly appointed President of the BWA Women's Department, Dr. Ksenija Magda, from Croatia.

Sister R. Maďarová and sister L. Sýkorová represented Slovak republic; sister H. Včeláková and sister J. Vimpelová represented Czech republic.

## Czech and Slovak sisters

**T**he Ladies' Conference of the Czech Baptist Union and Slovak Baptist Union will be held in Slovakia from May 6 to 8, 2016.

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## African Installed President of Global Baptist Body

**N**gwedla Paul Msiza of South Africa was installed as the second African to be president of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), the global organization for Baptist Christians. The ceremony took place on July 25 during

the Baptist World Congress in Durban, South Africa.

Msiza succeeds John Upton of the United States, and is the first African to hold the office since William Tolbert of Liberia served as president of the BWA from 1965-1970. Tolbert was later elected president of Liberia, in 1971, and remained president until he was overthrown and assassinated in a military coup in 1980.

Msiza was BWA vice president from 2010 to 2015. Since 2000, he has been actively involved in the BWA, serving on its governing bodies and several key committees and commissions.

Msiza was president of the All Africa Baptist Fellowship, one of six regional fellowships of the BWA, from 2006-2011, and general secretary of the Baptist Convention of South Africa (BCSA) from 2001-2010.

Msiza was trained at the Hebron Teacher Training College and worked bi-vocationally as a pastor and school teacher from 1988 until he became founding principal of the Baptist Convention College in 1995, from where he left to become BCSA general secretary.

He holds diplomas and degrees from the University of Witwatersrand, the University of South Africa, the Baptist Theological Seminary of Southern Africa and the Baptist Bible Institute.



New BWA President Paul Msiza of South Africa being congratulated by outgoing President John Upton and General Secretary Neville Callam

He has pastored Peniel-Salem Baptist Church in Pretoria since 2011.

He has been married to Sanna Mapula since 1986, and they have three sons.

*Today we testify that it is possible that Christ opens closed doors. This is the message of hope we will carry through until 2020. We need to continue to declare this message that Christ gave to the church in Philadelphia. "These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open" (Rev 3:7). Christ is indeed the door. (Paul Msiza, The Door is Wide Open.)*

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## Resurrected for Our Justification... Continues from page 7

us? What is our "affirmation" against the enemy of our soul, who accuses us believers in Christ and wants to sow doubt in our hearts regarding Christ's work on the cross? Christ's resurrection is this confirmation. He who bore our guilt and debt in his body on the cross, God raised from the dead and seated at his right hand and crowned with glory and honour (Heb. 1:3b). The resurrected Christ, who is eternally alive and who sits at the right hand of his father pleading our case, is our guarantee and assurance of our salvation and justification before God. Therefore it applies: *"Who will blame us [believers] before God? God is the one who justifies us. Then who will then condemn us? Jesus Christ, the one who died and, what's more, was raised from the dead, who is seated at the right hand of the father is the one who speaks on our behalf."* (Romans 8:33-34). That is why our belief in the

resurrection of Christ is crucial

God's word says that if we confess Jesus as Lord with our mouths and believe in our hearts that God raised him from the dead, we will be saved (Romans 10:9). Our justification before God stands on these two pillars of our faith: Christ's suffering on the cross at Golgotha and on his resurrection. Therefore any time doubts and uncertainty regarding our salvation creep into our lives, any time our conscience guilts us into thinking that we cannot be assured of forgiveness of sin, salvation and justification before God, we must do what Paul calls us to do in 2 Timothy 2:8: *"Remember Jesus Christ who was raised from the dead..."* The resurrected Christ is our guarantee and our assurance. Let us praise him for it.

Translated by Elizabeth Jane Fields

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## An Easier Burden

**T**he five years of my tenure have evaporated as quickly and quietly as the morning dew. I stand amazed at the swift passage of time. I find myself thinking through warm thoughts of worship, travels, visits, conversations, meetings, planning sessions, meeting with religious and government officials, experiences and a thousand other things. Then, after I think of all I have experienced during this time, I stand equally amazed that all those things happened in just five years. The mind is a wonderfully bewildering thing.

The gift that I treasure most in the BWA has been the gift of relationships, both within Baptist life around the world and within the broader Christian community. Being the body of Christ in the world and unifying that body have become important themes in my own mind and ministry. My convictions are different now and more rooted in diverse relationships.

What do these relationships ultimately mean? Are they just nice acquaintanceships, or do they mean something deeper? I guess if your life is easy and reasonable, contains no worries, if you do not struggle or have any concerns, or just don't care much about anything, then acquaintances would be enough. No, these relationships are for those who live with concerns, stresses, struggles, burdens. They are for people like us, who care deeply, who often find life threatening and difficult, and who sometimes get really, really tired of it all. These relationships are essential to people like us. Thank you for being there.

I have come to understand more clearly Jesus' invitation to "come to [him] all who are weary and carry heavy burdens" because he will give us rest. These are powerful and haunting words because they speak to the deep, deep sighing in us and to the weariness of our burdened hearts for the world.



We do bear burdens, don't we? We bear all kinds. We have heavy obligations, problems that are beyond us to solve. We have expectations we can't meet; burdens of regret; burdens of guilt; politics that wear us down; the burdens of other people's hurts; the burden of needing to do something we don't know how to do; the burden of longing, just longing for some sense of completion and fulfilment that seems too often to elude us. I like that Jesus doesn't name the burden or describe the weariness. He just says, "Come to me."

From *John Upton's* last editorial in *Baptist World Magazine*

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### Editorial... Continues from page 3

England, simply could not bring himself to leave the people that he served, despite the particular region being a poor one; even though he was offered a better position elsewhere, he remained with them for 54 years.

The words of the hymn clearly express the strength of unity in Christ. Thanks to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we can experience the blessing that this bond between us and Christ brings. That applies to our Czechoslovak Baptist Convention as well.

Blessed be the tie that binds us to Christ!

Editor-in-Chief *Natasha Laurinc*  
Translated by *Elizabeth Jane Fields*

□

### Editorial... Pokračování ze strany 3

Autor John Fawcett (1739–1817), kazatel v Anglii, se nedokázal rozloučit s lidmi, kterým v nesmírně chudém kraji sloužil, a i přes nabídku lepšího místa zůstal a působil mezi nimi 54 roků.

Slova písně jednoznačně vyjadřují sílu sjednocení v Kristu. Díky oběti Ježíše Krista smíme okoušet požehnání, které tato vazba mezi námi a Kristem přináší. Totéž se vztahuje i na naši Československou baptistickou konvenci.

Buď žehnán svazek ten, jenž v Kristu víže nás!

*Nataša Laurincová*, šéfredaktorka

□



## Jesus, the Blind Man and the Pharisees... Continues from page 15

can be. When we judge another, we refuse to understand the difficulties of a situation or the struggles a person may be facing. Often when we do not love a person, we withhold sympathetic understanding of that person. Critical thoughts about others and self-righteousness always cloud spiritual vision. Sympathy, grace and mercy towards sinners and fellow Christians are always more important to God than religious rituals. When we have a critical spirit, we are powerless to help others change.

Is it possible that some of us are like the Pharisees when it comes to judging people according to their actions? Are we like the Pharisees, judging people on the basis of the law or a set of beliefs that our denomination or Christian organization claims, instead of by grace? Evangelical Christians are some of the most critical, judgmental and opinionated people in the world. I include myself in this category. So often we have a Pharisaical and legalistic view of life, the world and people.

The Pharisees had the Law and their own set of principles and rules to govern their behavior. And these governed not only their behavior, but also their beliefs. They had a creedal belief. This is a belief that says, "if I follow the Law and the principles stated in my own mind or organization, God will credit me with a spiritual, holy, wonderful, uncomplicated life." Is this only true of the Pharisees, or is it also true of you? Do you do so-called Christian activities because you believe that if you do your life will be smooth and uncomplicated? Do you think, "Surely God has to bless me for what I do and believe?"

When this does not happen, we can get irritated and judgmental, and respond to the frustrations in our life by being difficult or by blaming other people or the situation in the world. We choose what we want or what we think God wants, without evaluating carefully what Jesus or God wants.

The Pharisees could see physically, but were actually blind to who they were in relationship to Jesus. How can you avoid being like the Pharisees? By looking at yourself and others and concentrating on the person God wants you to become. May He help us to be humble and to love each other and to be of one mind and heart with each other! May the Lord help us to also accept each other without any conditions! AMEN.

In closing, I want us to return to the end of the John 9 story. The man has just been cast out of the synagogue and probably is feeling lonely and helpless again, like the blind man he used to be. But Jesus comes to him and lovingly accepts him. The man has been blind, alone and helpless all his life. Then one day he is healed and can see. He thinks

everyone else will rejoice with him, only to find that he is now an outcast like before. But Jesus' presence changes all that, and he feels loved and accepted. John 9:38: *"He said, 'Lord, I believe,' and he worshiped him."*

Belief in Jesus should not be based on how I think I should believe, but on a personal encounter with Jesus. Our status with Jesus is not based on our knowledge of God. It is not based on our spiritual activity. For you see, when we build our Christian walk on pretense by only attending church and reading His Word, we obey God not out of a desire to please him but in order to receive what we want from God. I think many times we do this unconsciously. We know we should not be irritable or judgmental with the way God is orchestrating our life or world events. But we are, even if we do not admit it to ourselves.

May I remind you of Isaiah 55:8 – *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord.*" God is working in each of us, but most of the time it does not go according to the way we plan. We have difficulties and complications in our everyday life, and instead of accepting and surrendering to what God is doing in us, we tend to try to handle things on our own and in our own way.

Say we had a scale up here of from one to ten, where ten is total contentment, joy and confidence in your everyday experience of God, and one is where you are not happy with your circumstances and there is not much joy if any of your life. Where would you put yourself, between one and ten?

Are you content, full of joy and confident in your everyday life with God? We often sing, "

*All to Jesus I surrender  
All to Him I gladly bow  
Jesus fill me with your presence  
fill me Savior now."*

I am not talking about salvation here but our own struggles and failures of unbelief in God when we face difficult circumstances. We find it hard to trust that no matter what happens God is with us. We need to surrender all our life and circumstances, no matter how hard, to God so we will sense His presence and know that even though all around us things are falling apart, God will be our refuge and strength. I want us to take some time to talk to God. Consider where you are at on the scale of one to ten. Ask God to give you contentment, a life full of joy, and confidence in the God you are following. Remember: *"Life at its best is a life of faith"*. (Dr. Charles Stanley)

□

deň, trápilo ho, ako sa na to môže dívať Boh. Prorok plakal, volal, ba kričal: *Nevidíš? Nepočuješ? Nepomáhaš? Ako dlho Pane—ako dlho to potrvá? A tu mu Hopodin odpovedal: Vidím! Počujem! Pomáham! Zasiachnem!* Habakuk začal chápať: *Ak sa Hospodinove čisté oči musia dívať na bezbožnosť, a pritom byť zhovievavé, prečo sa na to nemôžem dívať ja, briešny človek?* Habakuk odhalil a pochopil dôležitý princíp, ale to ešte nie je úplným riešením jeho problému. Pán Boh ho vyzýva zdvihnúť hlavu: *Pozri sa na národy!* Habakuk pozri sa na národy, a uvidíš, že Ja, Hospodin, nie som nečinný Boh. Mýliš sa, ak si myslíš, že niečo zostalo nepovšimnuté. Zastaneš v údive, keď ti poviem, čo robím.

*„Hľadte na národy a vidíte, užasnite v údive,  
lebo za vašich dní vykonám skutok, o ktorom by ste neverili,  
keby vám ho rozpovedali.“*

Hab.1:5

Niečo podobné ako Habakuk prežívali veriaci v Juhoslávii na sklonku 20. storočia. Keby im niekto predpovedal vojnu a rozklad štátu, neverili by mu. Veď to predsa nebolo možné! V Európe, v civilizovanom svete — vojna, NATO, bombardovanie? Národy a národnosti žili pospolu v pokoji toľké roky. Juhoslávia mala dobré meno vo svete a pre nezúčastnenú politiku pokoj s celým svetom a všade otvorené dvere. Ako sa to len neuveriteľne rýchlo a hrôzostrašne zmenilo!

Aj Judsko žilo vtedy v pokoji. Malo relatívne dobré vzťahy so zahraničím. Vyhlo sa asýrskej nadvláde, čo sa nepodarilo severnému kráľovstvu Izraelu. Odstúpilo však od svojho Boha a šlo za cudzími bohmi. Nikto sa nepridržiaval zákona, morálka klesla, a ľud to chápal ako krok k prosperite. Proroci z času na čas prinášali Božie slovo s výzvou k návratu, ale ľud na to nedbal. Každý si žil podľa svojej chuti. Koncept pravdy a spravodlivosti zmizol z každodenného života. A pred kým alebo čím sa Judsko malo strachovať? Veď malo slávne meno a slávne dejiny. Jeruzalem, mesto pokoja so svojimi vysokými hradbami, pevne stálo ako svedok slávnej minulosti. Bol tu i nádherný chrám, predmet údivu okolitých národov, a pre Židov jediné náboženské stredisko. Chrám im bol pýchou i istotou. Prorocké slová však čoraz viac upozorňovali Judsko, že všetko, na čom si tak zakladá, a to, čo uctieva, rýchlo stratí. Slávu Hospodina, živého Boha, zamenili za slávu stavby chrámu. Vnútornú pobožnosť a úprimnú úctu k Bohu zamenili vonkajšou pobožnosťou, no srdcom od Boha odstúpili.

Hospodin oznámil Habakukovi, čo bude nasledovať: Posielam svoj bič na Judsko. *Hľa, vzbudím Chaldejcov, národ tu zúrivy a prudký, ktorý prejde šíravý zeme, aby zaujal obydľia, ktoré mu nepatria.* Ten národ je strašný a hrozný, sám sebe je právom i pýchou. Nikto mu nemôže odporovať. Ženie ho sebecká ambícia a pažravosť k dobývaniu toho, čo mu nepatrí. Uskutočňuje inváziu, teror, nepozná nijaký vojnový kódex, nepozná ani protivníka, lebo každého ľahko zašliape. Sebaláskou si vzbudzuje česť.

V opise Nabuchodonozorovej armády Habakuk zdôrazňuje, že jej kone boli rýchlejšie ako leopardy—teda veľmi

rýchlo sa pohybovali. Bola vraj krutejšia ako vlci večer, čo hovorí o nanásytnej chuti po dobývaní. Zbierala vraj zajatcov ako piesok—teda akoby nepoznala nijakú prekážku, dobýjala aj najopevnenejšie mestá. Akoby ju vietor prenášal z miesta na miesto, tak rýchlo si podmaňovala krajiny. Mala aj svojho boha, a tým bohom jej bola vlastná sila. A táto armáda—čo bolo pre Habakuka najstrašnejšie—sa približovala k Jeruzalemu. Túplo mu telo, keď si pomyslel na to, že zajtra či pozajtra táto armáda pošliape judskú zem.

Okrem Hospodinových prorokov boli v Judsku aj falošní proroci. Tí utešovali národ a ubezpečovali, že niet sa čoho báť, veď Babylon určite na Judsko nezaútočí. Falošní proroci odvádzali národ od pokánia, od návratu k Bohu. Habakuk však veľmi dobre poznal hriech svojho ľudu a pochopil, čo mieni Boh urobiť s Judskom. Hovorí: *Ty, Hospodine, si od večnosti, si zvrchovaný a svätý Boh. Ty si ustanovil Chaldeja vykonať súd nad Judskom. Časť zlosti, neposlušnosti, bezbožnosti, modlárstva sa pre Judsko naplnila. Dlhý si bol k nám zhovievavý, povolával k návratu, trpel, ale judský tvrdošijný národ sa k tebe, Bohu, nechcel vrátiť. Teraz nás neminie žižta—budeme jesť z plodov svojich ciest.*

Hospodin nezmenil svoj charakter ani dnes. Podnes je stále zhovievavý, jeho oči sa dívajú na nespravodlivosť, ktorá sa pácha pod slnkom, ale keď sa naplní časť ľudskej zloby, dá ľuďom ochutnať plody ich filozofie, etiky a práce—príde jeho súd. Boh súdi i dnes.

Prvú kapitolu končí Habakuk otázkou: *Kde je koniec ľudskej zloby? Má vôbec hranice ľudskej egoizmus? Je vôbec možné, aby sa uspokojil apetít človeka po dominácii, diktatúre, terore? Kde je koniec ľudskej zloby?* Habakuk mal tentoraz pred sebou Nabuchodonozora, vládcu Babylonskej ríše, ktorý si vybudoval kráľovstvo na troskách asýrskeho impéria. Zničil teror, diktatúru ukrutného asýrskeho kráľovstva, aby nastolil svoju diktatúru a ešte krutejší teror. Obsadil kráľovstvá a panstvá, značne rozšíril svoju ríšu, zbohatol a vysoko si postavil trón. Mal slávu najväčšieho pána sveta, aby potom jeho kráľovstvo pokorili a zničili v jednej noci Médi a Peržania. Habakuk o ňom hovorí:

*„Všetko chce vychytať udicu, vyloviť do svojej siete,  
pozberať svojim čereňom: preto raduje sa i jasá.  
Preto obetuje svojej sieti, kadidlo páli svojmu čereňu,  
lebo z nich má svoj tučný podiel a bohatý je na pokrm.  
Či smie preto vyprázdňovať svoju sieť  
a bez ľútosti stále vraždiť národy?“*

Hab.1:15–17

No ani Nabuchodonozorov teror netrval večne. Daniel, Habakukov mladší súčasník, sa ako 84-ročný starček dožil noci 16. októbra roku 539 pred Kristom, keď médijsko-perzský kráľ Kýros zabil babylonského kráľa Baltazára a podmanil si Babylon. Či nie je Hopodin verný svojim princípom, ktoré ustanovil v dedičných zákonoch vesmíru? Beda každému, kto pácha zlo—Hospodin ho bude súdiť.





## Prayer Update

*He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth."*

Psalm 46:10

**A**s we start 2016, we are thankful for your prayers for us, for the churches in Prague, and for the nations of the world. We also **PRAY** that God would bless you and that He would be exalted in you and in the earth.

Noemi will be traveling with her Grade 12 class from Maranatha Christian Academy on a missions trip to Nicaragua from March 8–17. Please **PRAY** for her and her class-



Nicaraguan countryside

mates this month as they raise funds and prepare for their trip, while at the same time finishing out a busy school semester. Noemi is applying to the University of Windsor but is still weighing her options for the next

school year.

The new church at Ládví closed out 2015 with a successful Christmas celebration visited by about 45 people, and they have started the new year with the Legoprojekt outreach for children. Our TEAM co-worker David wrote: "One special development this year is that we have fewer missionary helpers, and more Czech helpers.... So at the same time that we are reaching out to the community, we are seeing the believers grow." Please **PRAY** that the children and their families will come again to other outreach activities and Sunday services.

We're about halfway through our Home Ministry Assignment, and so we're beginning to search for housing in Prague in the area near the Ládví church, and continuing to consider various schooling options for Ben and Elise. Please **PRAY** for wisdom for us in those decisions and as we raise our two youngest.

TEAM is offering "Seven Ways to Pray" ([www.team.org](http://www.team.org)) for the refugee crisis in Europe. Please **PRAY** for TEAM missionaries and local believers who are reaching out to refugees and immigrants in Germany, Greece, Italy, Czech Republic, France, Austria, and other places in Europe. We will no doubt be returning to a different Europe than the one we left seven months ago. **PRAY** for wisdom and open doors, and for many more to join the mission of reaching the nations at our doorsteps.

We'll be spending two days this month at TEAM's Wheaton office for our Comprehensive Debrief. Some of

the topics covered include ministry effectiveness, missionary finance, medical clearance, communication and recruitment, marriage and parenting, member care, lifelong learning, and retirement planning. We'll also be reporting to TEAM staff on our past four-year term, and our goals and plans for the next four years. Please **PRAY** as we continue to travel over the next two months. We hope we can connect with you also!



- Feb 6: Preaching at The Vine Church, 6:30 pm (Windsor, ON)
- Feb 7: Sunday School missions presentation (Windsor, ON)
- Feb 15–17: TEAM Comprehensive Debrief (Wheaton, IL)
- Feb 21: Global Outreach Corner (Lakeshore, ON)
- Feb 27–28: Missions update and preaching (Windsor, ON)
- Mar 13: Speaking at church-planting event (Minneapolis, MN)
- Mar 14,17 : Speaking to college & seminary students (Minneapolis, MN)
- Mar 19,20: Meeting with friends of the Czech Republic (Lenexa, KS)

*Exalting God among the nations,  
Foreigners in this world, yet citizens of heaven,*

Mark & Gretchen Potma





## Blest Be the Tie That Binds

Blest be the tie that binds  
our hearts in Christian love;  
the fellowship of kindred minds  
is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne  
we pour our ardent prayers;  
our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,  
our comforts and our cares.

(John Fawcett, 1739 – 1817)

## Bud' žehnán svazek ten

Bud' žehnán svazek ten,  
jenž v Kristu víže nás,  
a kruh náš zůstaň sjednocen,  
jak v nebi bude zas!  
Spojených proseb hlas  
chcem před trůn Otcův vznést,  
vždyť jedna snaha vede nás  
a cíl náš jeden jest.

(Přel. Jan Hochman)

