



If you cannot say it with words, say it with flowers." A flower is accompanied by a quiet message that is understood by everyone. It is perhaps the most successful means of communication.

Flowers are fragile and temporal. Despite this, God made even the smallest blossom beautiful. Even the exquisitely dressed King Solomon could not match

the beauty of a flower (Mat. 6:29).

What sort of message do flowers carry? Flowers accompany a person from birth till death. They console in all situations. They are present during the various events that occur on

our life's journey: the birth of a child, marriage, personal achievement, greeting and departing, thanking, asking, showing appreciation... Flowers even accompany a person to the grave.

It is not surprising that Mother's Day is also celebrated with flowers. Flowers are a fitting gift for those who play such an important role in a child's life. In a sense, every individual is a child, no matter what their age may be. People's experiences with their mothers vary. There is no sense in pretending that all mothers were and are perfect. Many strive to be good mothers, but the results vary. This is apparent from what we see in the media and also from what is in people's hearts. We know from experience that only a mother who is devoted to God can fulfill the role given to her by Him. Such a mother is a messenger of God to more than just one generation. There is much that a flower and a mother have in common:

- they have a certain role on this earth
- their environment dramatically influences their existence
- they need the care of a Gardener
- after a period of growth they reveal their full beauty
- they fulfill their role
- they are present during many of life's events
- their personality speaks
- they are often the only means of communication
- their presence consoles
- they welcome and bid farewell
- they are fragile and easily wounded

Let us appreciate the worth and beauty of our mothers. They are like flowers in the wasteland of human relationships. They reflect love, God's gift to mankind. In their love they continuously struggle for their children in prayer. The love of these mothers descends on all children within society. In this rests the mystery of a mother's role. This makes a mother more valuable than a flower. Every sincere woman of prayer becomes a mother.

Editor-in-Chief *Natasha Legierski*

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Usuchá tráva, květ přší, ale slovo Boha
našeho zůstává na věky.

Izaiáš 40:8

Co nemůžeš říci slovy, pověz květinou.“ S květinou jde tiché poselství. Oslovuje každého člověka. Je to snad nejspěšnější komunikační prostředek.

Při pohledu na květ si uvědomujeme jeho křehkost a pomíjitelnost. Přesto Pán Bůh vložil krásu i do toho nejmenšího kvítečku. Svátečně oděný král Šalamoun se v celé své nádheře nevyrovnal ani polnímu květu. (Matouš 6,29)

V čem spočívá poselství květiny? Květina provází člověka od jeho narození až do smrti. Potěšuje v každé životní situaci. Je

☞ Pokračování na straně 51

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Back cover: Corel photo
Convention Photos: George Sommer and Vlastimil Pojman



From the General Secretary

Denton Lotz

An Open Invitation: You All Come Visit Us!



You are cordially invited to our home for dinner!" This is a formal invitation that, worldwide, cannot be easily misunderstood. Yet, in some parts of the world, inviting someone to your home is a kind of greeting. "You all come visit us some time!" is more like saying "Goodbye. It was nice meeting you!" Such cultural nuances can often lead to misunderstandings. An English professor was bid farewell with these words by an American couple. When one day the professor knocked on the door of his new friends from Kentucky, they were surprised to see their overseas friend who had taken seriously their invitation to come visit them!

Most invitations are serious attempts to establish relations with friends, acquaintances and strangers. In Luke 14, Jesus gave a very strong lesson on how we should act when invited and to whom we should give invitations.

For example, Jesus reminds us that when we are invited we should not take the best seat, but the lowest: "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." On the other hand, Jesus commands that when we have a dinner we should not invite just friends and neighbors, hoping they will then repay us with an invitation. On the contrary, Jesus gives a new dimension to invitations: "But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you."

So it is with the Church. Jesus invites all to be part of His family. We Baptists are bold at giving the "invitation" at the conclusion of our services for people to join the church, or make a confession of faith. What a tragedy that this invitation throughout history has often been exclusionary! The story is told of a very moving celebration of the Lord's Supper that occupied in Norway. The Germans were resented by the population as Nazis and foreign occupiers. One Sunday, in a little Baptist church while communion was being served, a German soldier walked in. Immediately his uniform reminded the congregation of their resentment and hate of this foreign army. But then the believers recognized that the invitation to the Lord's table was not their invitation but Christ's invitation. They accepted him as their brother in Christ. Let's invite the world with whom we at times might not be comfortable to be welcome and comfortable in God's house.

□



Attention, pozor, achtung to all delegates!

- All Canadian delegates who plans to attend 92nd annual convention in Philippi please note that all payments are in Canadian Dollars to offset unfavorable exchange rate between US and Canadian Dollars. You may send your personal check.
- Send the registration forms to Helen Pojman in Canada, not to Philippi in reply business envelope (US residents).
- The price for Wednesday picnic is the same as for Wednesday dinner— \$6.60 and half price \$3.30.

George Sommer, Annual Convention Coordinator

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Editorial ... pokračování ze strany 50

přítomna při nejrůznějších událostech na cestě životem: narození dítěte, svatba, osobní úspěchy, vítání, loučení, poděkování, prosba, vyjádření pozornosti.... Květina jde s člověkem i do hrobu.

Nepřekvapí nás tedy, že i svátek matek je ozdoben květinami. Je to pěkná pozornost těm, které hrají velice důležitou roli v životě dítěte. Každý jedinec, chodící po této zemi, je vlastně dítětem, bez ohledu na věk. Každý má také svou zkušenost s osobností matky. Zkušenosti mohou být různé. Nemá smysl si namlouvat, že všechny matky byly a jsou těmi nejlepšími matkami. Mnohé se o to snažily a snaží, výsledky ovšem byly a jsou různé. Svědčí o tom mnoho záznamu nejen ve sdělovacích prostředcích, ale i v srdcích lidí. Zkušenost nás naučila, že jen Pánu Bohu oddaná matka může vykonat poslání na této zemi, Bohem jí svěřené. Taková matka je Božím poslem pro více než jednu generaci.

Matka a květina mají mnoho společného:

- objevila se na zemi s určitým posláním
- životní prostředí dramaticky ovlivňuje její existenci
- potřebuje péči Zahradníka
- po období růstu se rozvine do plné krásy
- plní svůj úkol
- je přítomna při nejrůznějších životních událostech
- svou osobností promlouvá
- mnohdy je jediným komunikačním prostředkem
- svou přítomností potěšuje
- vítá i vyprovází
- je křehká a zranitelná....

Vnímejme vzácnost a krásu našich matek. V pustině lidských vztahů jsou ony květinami. Odráží se v nich láska, Boží dar člověku. Láska promítnutá do nikdy nekončícího se modlitebního zápasu za děti. Mateřská láska těchto matek se přenáší i na děti celé společnosti. V tom spočívá tajemství matčina poslání. To činí matku vzácnější než květinu. Každá upřímná modlitebnice se stává matkou.

□

Christ Calls to Act – Part 3

Thomas Cosmades

4. Hold Fast What You Have

And the Lord attaches to this admonition His anticipated advent (2:25; 3:11). A relevant commentary to this is our Lord's oft-repeated reminder: "Lo, I am coming like a thief! Blessed is he who is awake, keeping his garments that he may not go naked and be seen exposed!" (Revelation 16:15) Among the many necessary possessions to which we cling, clothes are to be mentioned. What pathetic exposure will be our lot if we don't hold on to our garments! People who undress at some beach to swim constantly fix their eyes on the spot they placed their clothes. If the clothes are stolen, the swimmers run the risk of walking naked. The garments to which the Lord is referring are obviously those of spiritual value; physical nakedness in the Old Testament is associated with deliberate lewdness (Ezekiel 23:10, 18).

Laodicea was renowned for the manufacture of the most in demand, seamless, single-piece garment of the time. Everyone sought this renowned tunic. It is likely that our Lord wore such an outer garment supplied by a well-to-do follower of His (John 19:23b, 24). These garments were produced in Laodicea, whose trade added to the affluent reputation of the city. The church in this place went along with the materialistic way of life, which was censured by the glorified Savior. "You are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked," He says, and admonishes the church to obtain from Him "white garments to clothe herself and to keep the shame of her nakedness from being seen" (3:17, 18). Woe to the church or person that will be seen naked at the manifestation of the great Judge: Naked of total commitment to Christ, naked regarding the teaching and the faith once delivered to the saints, naked of high ethical principles, naked of proper social espousals and probably of innumerable other worthy properties. Let all of us named by His Name examine our whole deportment, be merciless on ourselves, asking the Holy Spirit to make known the values which we have let slip. Let us ask the Lord to supply all those ingredients that make us yearn for His majestic return. Let us accept them gladly, holding fast to what we have so that our garments of righteousness may be kept spotless.

5. Use Your Ear

This admonition coming to each of the seven churches is a term copiously used in the Old and New Testaments. It is even mentioned in relation to prayers to YAHWEH (2 Kings 19:16), then YAHWEH calls the heavens and earth to hear (Isaiah 1:2). And there are abundant instances where those who have ears are called to employ them. To many, one of the most useful organs of the body is little or frivolously used. What is heard often goes in one ear and out the other. Alas, much cacophony is to the liking of many! Our



ears are daily tormented with destructive and detrimental noises, and we begin to get used to them. Train your ears for the reception of the sublime voice.

Lois Lowe, R.N., of InterVarsity offers us this remarkable piece of information in the publication *On Call*: "It is significant that the sense of balance and direction is found in the inner ear. Spiritually, too, a healthy "inner ear" will be tuned to the voice of God; that alone can give balance in spiritual living. The listener will also find God's direction for living day by day. A disturbance of the fluid in the inner ear may cause dizziness. Some of us are so caught up in the whirl of busy living that we aren't able to hear God's voice in our inner ear."

In human experience how much useful, constructive communication evaporates into thin air, as if it was never heard! Furthermore, what an ugly collection of vain, stinging, stinking material streams into the ear, finding its way into the mind and heart. Do you have ears? Are you capable of hearing? First, thank the Creator for granting you proper hearing. Then pray for those who are physically deaf, and pray that your ears may receive those virtues that will add advantage upon advantage to your inner world (2 Peter 1:4-8). Use your ears to receive those qualities of excellent esteem, ejecting all that runs contrary to the norm set forth by the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit who sanctifies the heart can certainly do the same with our ears, to condition them for the noblest perception (Phil. 4:8,9).

This biblical term has become antiquated in our time. It would serve us well to revive it. Certain divine usages should never become obsolete. This is one of those. The depravity of the human race forced on us by our foreparents has affected our whole physical makeup, the ear not excluded. The fall has brought down every healthy and sound faculty. The prober of hearts and minds to whom every secret is known stresses it throughout His Word. Let the churches of good standing, so to speak, and those deserving censure hear what the Spirit says. Listen as Mary did when she sat at the Lord's feet and listened intently to His teaching (Luke 11:39). Listen as little Samuel did who said, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears" (1 Samuel 3:9). Listen as John did on Patmos (Revelation 1:10), and was honored to hear and see the most amazing events that were to come.

To be continued

□

Kristus volá k akci – Část 3

Thomas Cosmades
přeložila Nataša Legierská

4. Držte se pevně toho, co máte

Toto napomenutí dává Pán do souvislosti s Jeho očekávaným druhým příchodem. (Zjevení 2:25, 3:11) V dalším verši nám Pán Bůh připomíná: „Hle, přicházím nečekaně jako zloděj v noci! Blaze tomu, kdo bdí a střeží svůj šat, aby nechodil nahý a nebylo vidět jeho nahotu!“ (Zjevení 16:15)

Oblečení je nepostradatelnou součástí našeho majetku. Jakému trapnému odhalení by došlo, kdybychom nenosili svůj oděv! Lidé na pláži nespustí oči s místa, kam si odložili oděv. V případě odcizení oděvu riskují, že budou nazí.

Oděv, o kterém hovoří Pán, se jasně týká duchovních hodnot. Ve Starém zákoně je tělesná nahota dávana do souvislosti s úmyslnou neřestí. (Ezechiel 23:10,18)

Tehdejší Laodicie byla známa výrobou jednoduchých bezešvých oděvů, v té době žádaným. Každý chtěl vlastnit populární tuniku. S největší pravděpodobností nosil i náš Pán tento druh oděvu, který mu darovali jeho zámožní následovníci. (Jan 19:23b,24)

Město Laodicie bylo proslaveno tímto výrobkem. Materialistický způsob života ovlivnil i místní sbor, proto je oslaveným Spasitelem kritizován: „...jsi ubohý, bědný a nuzný, slepý a nahý“. V dalším verši vyzývá: „...bílý šat, aby ses oblékla a nebylo vidět tvou nahotu“. (Zjevení 3:17,18)

Běda církvi nebo jedinci, jehož nahota bude odhalena při posledním soudu: povrchní zasvěcení se Kristu, prázdnota v učení a ve víře svěřené vyvoleným, nedostatek etických a morálních zásad, neschopnost rozsuzovat a posuzovat ve společenských oblastech a při vytváření si dalších hodnot. Nechtě každý, kdo je nositelem Jeho jména, důsledně zkoumá své způsoby a nechá se Duchem Svatým upozornit na to, v čem selhal. Proste Pána o vybavení všim potřebným v očekávání na Jeho vzácný příchod. Ochotně to přijměte a držte se toho, aby Vaše roucho spravedlnosti bylo beze skvrny.

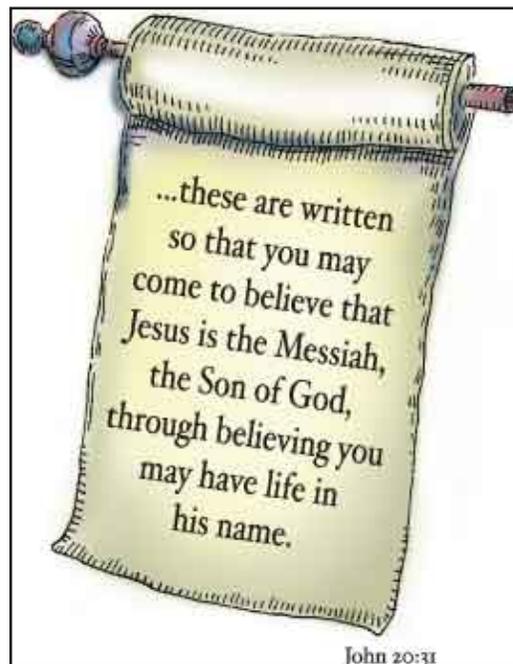
5. Poslouchej

Tato výzva se opakuje při oslovení všech sedmi sborů a je opakovaně používána ve Starém zákoně. Ozývá se v modlitbách k JAHVE (2. Královská 19:16) a zase při výzvě JAHVE, kdy oslovuje zemi a nebesa, aby naslouchaly (Izaiáš 1:2). Mnohokrát zazněla tato výzva k těm, co mají uši. Většinou považujeme ucho za jeden z nejdůležitějších orgánů těla, avšak lehkově zneužíván. Častokrát to, co vejde jedním uchem, vyjde druhým uchem ven. Běda těm, kdo se oddávají naslouchání pazvuků. Decibel je síla vysílaného signálu, který se rovná desetinásobku přirozeného logaritmu. Náš sluch je denně vystaven destruktivním a škodlivým zvukům, kterým postupně přivykneme. Trénujme si raději sluch ke vnímání jemnějšího hlasu. Lois Lowe (R.N.) ve své publikaci *Pohotovost* uvádí tuto pozoruhodnou myšlenku: „Je zajímavé, že centrum rovnováhy a orientace je uloženo ve vnitřní části ucha. V přeneseném významu, rovnováha v duchovním životě vychází ze schopnosti „vnitřního sluchu“ vnímat Boží hlas. Ti, kteří budou tomuto hlasu naslouchat, budou prožívat Boží vedení ze dne

na den. Porušení tekutiny ve středním uchu způsobuje závratě. Podobně shon života, ve kterém se mnozí nacházejí, vede k neschopnosti naslouchat Božímu hlasu“.

Jsme svědky toho, jak mnoho potřebných informací zmizí v prostoru, jako by nebylo nic řečeno. Na druhé straně to, co do našeho sluchu a srdce proniká, vytváří sbírku zbytečného, zranitelného a odporného materiálu. Máte uši? Slyšíte? Poděkujte nejprve Stvořiteli za zdravý sluch a proste za ty, kteří jsou hluchí. Proste, ať jsou vaše uši naladěny na zaslíbení, která obohatí váš vnitřní život. (2. Petr. 1:4-8) Používejte uši k přijímání kvalit, vzácných cností, odmítajíc to, co je v protikladu se zásadami Pána Ježíše Krista. Stejně, jako Duch Svatý posvěcuje naše srdce, může jistě posvětit i naše uši a dát jim potřebnou citlivost. (Filipenským 4:8,9)

V současné době je tento biblický výraz zastaralý. Měli bychom



si ho oživit. Patří mezi ty duchovní výrazy, které by neměly zastarat. Mravní úpadek lidského pokolení, zděděný po našich prarodičích, ovlivnil celého člověka, sluch nevyjímaje. S pádem člověka padlo i to, co bylo zdravé a hodnotné. Zpytatel srdcí i myslí, který zná každé tajemství, to zdůrazňuje ve svém Slově. Kéž sbory, které si stojí dobře i ty, které potřebují napomenutí, naslouchají tomu, co praví Duch. Naslouchejme pozorně u nohou Pána jako Marie (Lukáš 11:39). Poslouchejme jako malý Samuel, který říká: „Mluv, Hospodine, nebo slyší tvůj služebník.“ (I. Samuelova 3:9) Naslouchejme jako Jan na ostrově Patmos (Zjevení 1:10) a byl odměněn možností vidět a slyšet ty nejužasnější údálosti, které teprve mají přijít.

Pokračování

□

God in the Midst of All Things

Rev. Richard F. Mazanec

Jeremiah 14:8a, 9b

O Hope of Israel, our Savior in times of trouble, why are you as a stranger to us, as one passing through the land who is merely stopping for the night? Are you also baffled? Are you helpless to save us? O Lord, you are right here among us, and we carry your name; we are known as your people...O Lord, don't desert us now! (Jer. 14:8,9)

It was a desperate situation created by a terrible drought. Man and beast were being affected—masters, servants, farmers, and animals (14:3-4). The masters sent their servants to find water. But the cisterns, artificial reservoirs for collecting and storing water, were dry, so the servants returned to their masters in despair. The farmers looked at their dried lands and were dismayed because they were unable to work the soil and could not expect a harvest. Even the deer, known for its devotion to its young, deserted its newborn fawn and would leave it to die (14:5-6) because there was no grass. Wild donkeys, usually able to find some grass somewhere, could not find it anywhere. In vain they looked for ground to graze. These were the conditions that existed because of a prolonged drought that had stripped the land of food. Jeremiah, the prophet, though hated, ridiculed and mocked, nevertheless had a heart that ached for God's people, Judah.

Droughts were a frequent problem in the ancient Near East and brought about much suffering and death to those afflicted. Droughts often were interpreted to mean that God was displeased. Thus, Judah and Jerusalem viewed the drought as visible evidence of God's anger and judgment. However, though the people lamented, it was the attitude of the nation that was one of deep concern and alarm. Just as the land was barren and unfruitful, so were the lives of the people, because they had rejected the water of life. God was showing them that what was happening to the physical earth was also happening in a spiritual sense to their hearts. The issue here appears to be that of hypocrisy.

Notice that Jeremiah takes his place with his people as being one of the sinners. He's not boasting. He doesn't show any signs of a critical attitude toward the people. He simply says, "We have backslidden, and have sinned." It is so easy for God's people to be critical of others. They pray almost like the Pharisee whom our Lord Jesus told us about in Luke 18:11-12. "I thank You, Lord, that I am so good. I am a separated Christian and I do this and I don't do that. I am a nice, sweet Sunday school Christian. Now Mr. So-and-So over there is a dirty old man, and Mrs. So-and-So never does anything for You, and Miss So-and-So is a real gossip." That is not identifying oneself with the people of God! You



will notice that Jeremiah doesn't pray that kind of a prayer. He identifies himself with God's sinning people and says, "We have backslidden, and we have sinned." Folks, if you can take your place before God, confessing your own sins as well as the sins of your people, then you can speak to them about the judgment of God. But until you can do that, you shouldn't try to speak on God's behalf.

As we move on through this chapter, we see that the darkness has gathered, and the people are stumbling in the dark.

In 14:7-9, Jeremiah is involved in praying to God on behalf of the people of Judah. He offers what seems to be a penitential prayer consisting of a flowery confession of sin and asking God to act for His name's sake in the perilous disaster (v. 7). The prayer invokes God as the hope and savior of Judah in time of trouble. God is asked why He stands off from the disaster as a stranger with no particular concern or as a man confused or powerless to help. It's quite possible that these words are tinged with sarcasm (vv. 8-9a). The lament ends with an appeal to God, Who is in the midst of His people regardless of the circumstances and by Whose name the petitioners are asking not to be forsaken. (v. 9b).

The false prophets are predicting peace and prosperity—everything is going to be wonderful (14:13). But God reassures Jeremiah that the false prophets are lying and that He has not sent them (14:14). The message given to Jeremiah is God's message for the people. The message is breaking the heart of Jeremiah. He is weeping as he gives the message to the people. God wants the people to know that His own heart is breaking. Jeremiah is not only giving the message from God, but he is expressing the feelings of God as well.

We all need to realize that we are witnesses for God. If you are a child of God, you are a witness for God, and you are saying something by your life. We need to be very careful when we speak the Word of God that our lives conform to it.

In chapter 15 we see that Jeremiah is a broken-hearted man who wants to go to God to pray for the people. That is fine and good. However, God has something to say to him (15:1): The people have gone too far, they have shamelessly pursued other gods, and judgment has to come upon them. They have gone over the borderline where there is absolutely no possibility for reprieve. They will not escape captivity. The Lord tells Jeremiah that he shouldn't think that God is not hearing his prayers; there is nothing wrong in Jeremiah's prayers. In verses 5 and 6 we read: "Thou art gone backward." That's backsliding!

"I am weary with repenting." They have come to Him over

and over with their weeping and their promises to do better, but they continually go back into the same old sin. God has become tired of it all, and He says the time has come when He intends to judge them.

During this difficult time, Jeremiah turns to the Word of God. The Law of the Lord had been found in the Temple and was available to him.

“Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O Lord God of hosts” (15:16).

He finds his consolation in it. He eats it and he digests it and it becomes a part of him. Oh, how we need to get into the Word of God today. We don't need just a little surface learning of a few rules, or just a little guideline of a few steps to take. We need to digest it so that it becomes part of our being. It will bring joy and rejoicing to the heart just as it did for Jeremiah. Only the Word of God can do this. “... for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the Lord. And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible” (15:20,21).

God says, “You just stay on the firing line, and I will take care of you.” The application which comes to us from the prophet Jeremiah's life seems to be:

Repent, truly repent of your sins, study God's Word, and remain faithful to God. He will take care of you. God leads His children along! He'll continue to do so as He did yesterday, as He is doing today, and will do forever, even during the new millennium.

In the words of Charles Stanley: “One of the reasons we fall into sin so easily is that we forget God will discipline us when we step out of bounds.” But we also know that He disciplines His children because He truly loves them.

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TWR-Czech ... Continues from page 62

studios visit, we all left for a ceremonial banquet held in the restaurant where the Queen of England, Elizabeth II, recently dined during her visit to Brno. (This high-class restaurant, Besedni Dum, was given to TWR-CZ for use by the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra, free of charge). During the luncheon, greetings and gifts were accepted from many friends.

The ceremonial service and retrospective meeting were held in a new place, Slovo Zivota (Word of Life) Church, in Novobranska Street.

At the close of the festive day we all went to a concert prepared by several Christian groups. All the performers disclaimed their fees and the whole concert was dedicated by the artists to TWR-CZ and Trans World Radio ministry. Attendance at that concert was 400 people! All of them were given a small gift—a new CD, TWR 2000. There was a big cake prepared for all concert visitors in the shape of a REVOX, a huge professional tape recorder. By cutting the cake into tiny pieces, they just managed to portion it out to everybody. Great thanks are due to music groups El Trumpet, Terebint and Jiný Rytmus, to Jana Pertova, mime Petr Dlouhy, moderators Hana Pinknerova and Lubos Hlavsa, to all organizers and again to Mr. & Mrs. Tuma for their help with refreshments during the whole ceremonial day.

They prepared the anniversary CD called TWR-CZ 2000 and a special issue of the magazine Antenna, which describes the work of TWR in Czech language from 1970 to 2000. Both the CD and anniversary book were received very well. The Czechoslovak Baptist Convention of USA and Canada showed interest in publishing this special issue of Antenna in English some time in 2001.

Let's praise God for blessing the TWR work and pray for more blessing and His presence for another decade of their work for our Lord.

*George Sommer
Mila Markova*

□

The Lord's Faithfulness to Us ... Continues from page 59

of Minnie Louise Haskins. They are apropos at this significant Millennium Convention and in tune with the theme, Our Hope for Living in the New Millenium. “...I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown. And he replied: Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way.”

The Lord has been faithful to us. He has blessed this Convention. He has prospered and helped His people. Again and again He raises up servants and leaders to carry on His work for the next portion of the journey.

We don't know what lies ahead. There could be times of great trial. A strong fresh wind of the Spirit may bring joyous days of revival and renewal. Very likely there shall be some of both. Whatever the coming days reveal, God will remain faithful. This is His character, and because of that we may have hope. And with hope, whatever comes, we can wait.

This waiting is not a passive thing. Shackleton and his crew eventually made their way, after great trials, to Elephant Island, a cold desolate deserted place, but terra firma at least. After a

few days' rest, Shackleton took a small party with him in one of the remaining lifeboats. It was a desperate attempt to cross 800 miles of heaving ocean to reach civilization and mount a rescue expedition to return for the others.

Shackleton set off in April, with the twenty or so men who were left behind thinking he should be back by the end of May. They waited and watched. They carried on the necessary duties of attending to food and shelter and caring for their sick. The end of May passed, then the end of June, and July. Their hope flickered, but they continued every day to make the trek to the lookout to search the horizon for any sign of an approaching ship. Then one day in August, it came. Shackleton had kept his word and come back for his crew.

Our Captain, the Lord Jesus, said before He left that He was coming back for us. He won't let us down. His faithfulness is our hope for living vibrantly, courageously and humbly as Christians in this new millennium.

Amen.

□

The Lord's Faithfulness to Us

Rev. Stan Mantle

Lamentations 3: 21-24

What a wonderful theme we have for this year's convention: Our Hope for Living in the New Millennium. Hope, living, new, millennium: these are words to inspire and invigorate. A millennium is a long time in human endeavour, where the blink of an eye can suddenly reverse or cancel what went before it, where the landscape can abruptly shift and present an entirely different prospect. As far as human history is concerned, to be a part of an enterprise which can be measured in millenniums is a significant thing. This is an exciting time to be alive and a part of the Church of Jesus Christ.



At the same time, this new millennium is for us full of challenge and threat. In this, our circumstances are not unlike that of Jerusalem in the time of the prophet Jeremiah.

The supposed author of the book of Lamentations, from which comes this evening's text, is Jeremiah. It was his calling to live and speak for the Lord in the years and days before the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. The state of Judah was greatly diminished and degraded from the glory days of David's and Solomon's reigns, but the people, despite widespread spiritual and moral decline, believed that God would never allow His city to fall. In 587 B.C. it did fall, and the book of Lamentations is a mourning response to this tragic reality.

Listen to the sad reflection upon the fate of Jerusalem with which the book opens.

"How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave. Bitterly she weeps at night, tears are upon her cheeks. Among all her lovers there is none to comfort her. All her friends have betrayed her; and they have become her enemies. After affliction and harsh labor, Judah has gone into exile. She dwells among the nations; she finds no resting place. All who pursue her have overtaken her in the midst of her distress. The roads to Zion mourn, for no one comes to her appointed feasts. All her gateways are desolate, her priests groan, her maidens grieve, and she is in bitter anguish. Her foes have become her masters; her enemies are at ease. The Lord has brought her grief because of her many sins. Her children have gone into exile, captive before the foe (Lam. 1:1-5 NIV)."

The writer is very conscious that what has happened is not just a tragic series of events which have happened by chance. Nor is he miraculously spared from sharing the consequences of what has happened. On the contrary, this is how he expresses God's personal dealing with him:

"I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of his

wrath. He has driven me away and made me walk in darkness rather than light; indeed he has turned his hand against me again and again, all day long. He has made my skin and my flesh grow old and has broken my bones. He has besieged me and surrounded me with bitterness and hardship. He has made me dwell in darkness like those long dead. He has walled me in so I cannot escape; he has weighed me down with chains. Even when I call out or call for help, he shuts out my prayer. He has barred my way with blocks of stone; he has made my paths crooked. Like a bear lying in wait, like a lion in hiding, he dragged me from the path and mangled me

and left me without help. He drew his bow and made me the target for his arrows. He pierced my heart with arrows from his quiver. I became the laughingstock of all my people; they mock me in song all day long. He has filled me with bitter herbs and sated me with gall. He has broken my teeth with gravel; he has trampled me in the dust. I have been deprived of peace; I have forgotten what prosperity is. So I say, "My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped for from the Lord." I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I will remember them, and my soul is downcast within me (Lam. 3:1-20 NIV)."

Now this is a fine subject, you may be thinking, for Friday night at the Czechoslovak Baptist Convention, a place and time we associate with sweet encouragement and blessed fellowship. This is what we have driven across the country to hear: the moans and sorrows of a prophet whose God is the source of his troubles, or so he thinks. With a God like this, who needs enemies? Poor fellow, whatever happened to his faith?

But this is not some poor lost soul whose faith has failed him. This is Jeremiah, God's servant, who stood firm and spoke a contrary word, a negative word in a time of unjustified optimism. This is the man whom the priests and prophets and all the people seized, saying, "You must die!" and asking, "Why do you prophesy in the Lord's name that this house will be like Shiloh and this city will be desolate and deserted? (Jer. 26:9a NIV)

This is Jeremiah, whose scroll recording the Lord's judgment King Jehoiakim cut off and burned in the fire as it was read to him. We might not be so dramatic, but there is that in us which seeks to skip over the hard parts to get to the good parts, to grab hold of the affirmation of God's faithfulness without hearing and discerning the devastation out of which it comes. The solemn truth is that the good parts are only fully and faithfully appreciated in light of the hard parts. Taken out of context, ripped from their natural setting, they can create a

false impression and support a false gospel. The foundational hope of God's people for living in the new millennium is not that sorrow and suffering be averted, nor that trials and trouble be turned away. Neither is the faithfulness of God necessarily bound up in relenting from judgment. Fundamentally, it is a different consolation and another comfort which shall sustain us. This is not to say that we should not pray and work for renewal and a turning back to God in ourselves and our two nations. This was inherent in Jeremiah's ministry.

"Stand in the courtyard," the Lord told him, "and speak to all the people of the towns of Judah who come to worship... Tell them everything I command you; do not omit a word. Perhaps they will listen and each will turn from his evil way. Then I will relent and not bring on them the disaster I was planning because of the evil they have done (Jer. 26:2-3 NIV)."

May it be by God's mercy that such a time of personal and national repentance will change the climate and bring times of refreshing from the Lord instead of judgment. However, we need to know that the affirmation of the faithfulness of God in the passage before us arises not from a place where judgment has been averted but from one where it has fallen and continues in effect.

Where is there a pool of hope in a withering desert like this? The writer of Lamentations shows us the way.

Having reviewed his own situation in stark and blunt terms, admitting the worst, daring to perceive not blind fate behind his woes and harm but God, this thirsty pilgrim exercises a deliberate act of the will.

"Yet this I call to mind," he says. In the furnace of disappointment, in the throes of the realization of God's judgment dreadful and dark, an inner call is issued, a critical summons dispatched to memory. What is called to mind? What witnesses are summoned to appear? They are witnesses to the faithfulness of God. Strange land, this barren wilderness of failure, for such as their kind, but they stand and appear as they are called. The straightforward testimony of the first is, "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed (Lam. 3:22 NIV)."

Interestingly, there is no denying or rebuttal of the bitterness and brokenness the man has expressed. Amazingly, love is presented in explanation not for what has happened but for what hasn't happened. What is claimed is that whatever grievous cuts and wounding there have been, whatever sorrow and loss are present in sharp abiding pain, it could be worse. Indeed it would be worse except for the Lord's great love. Out of the heartbreak of the loss of their city, the destruction of their temple, the exile of their children arises this unyielding certainty that things could be worse. This is a strange comfort, we might think. What an outrageous balm with which to soothe the bruised and battered—but look what it does! Whereas we see the loss and damage, this perspective sees what is yet preserved, and understands that as an expression of the Lord's mercy.

In 1914 Earnest Shackleton and his crew set out in their ship the *Endurance* on an expedition seeking to accomplish the first crossing of the south polar continent, Antarctica. The exciting story is wonderfully told in a book by Alfred

Lansing entitled *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage*. Interestingly, it is not a success story in terms of the expedition's original intention, for fairly soon after setting out, the *Endurance* became ice-locked in the pack ice surrounding Antarctica. Eventually the pressure of the ice twisted and demolished the sturdy craft, which had to be abandoned, and the crew was forced to set up camp on the ice. The objective of the mission was changed, or at least drastically narrowed. Shackleton wrote in his diary, "I pray God I can manage to get the whole party safe to civilization." Lansing describes the change which abandoning ship and moving to camp on the ice made to the lives of the men:

"They had been on the ice exactly one week. In seven short days they had gone from a well-ordered, even pleasant existence on board the *Endurance* to one of primitive discomfort, of unending wet and inescapable cold. A little more than a week before, they had slept in their own warm bunks and eaten their meals in the cozy atmosphere around the mess table. Now they were cramped together in overcrowded tents, lying in woolen or reindeer sleeping bags on bare ice or, at best, on odd pieces of lumber. At mealtimes they sat in the snow, and each man ate out of an aluminum mug they called a pannican, into which everything was dumped at the same time. For utensils, each had a spoon, a knife - and his fingers. They were castaways in one of the most savage regions of the world, drifting they knew not where, without a hope of rescue, subsisting only as long as Providence sent them food to eat. And yet they had adjusted with surprisingly little trouble to their new life, and most of them were quite sincerely happy...."

Regarding the situation after a month on the ice, Lansing comments:

"...for all the trials and discomforts, these weeks of primitive living had been peculiarly enriching. The men had been forced to develop a degree of self-reliance greater than they had ever imagined possible. After spending four hours sewing an elaborate patch on the seat of his only pair of trousers, Macklin wrote one day, 'What an ingrate I have been for such jobs when done for me at home.' Greenstreet felt much the same way after he had devoted several days to scraping and curing a piece of sealskin to resole his boots. He paused in the midst of his task to write in his diary, 'One of the finest days we have ever had...a pleasure to be alive.'"

When they had set off, Queen Mother Alexandra of England had given Shackleton a Bible. Inscribed on the flyleaf were the words "May the Lord help you to do your duty and guide you through all the dangers by land and sea. May you see the works of the Lord and all His wonders in the deep." When they abandoned ship, Shackleton, in a dramatic gesture to emphasize the need for reducing the weight of what they took with them to the barest minimum, held before the men the Bible the Queen had given them. Opening it, he tore out the flyleaf and the page containing the 23rd Psalm. He also tore out the page from the book of Job where it says, "Out of whose womb came the ice? And the hoary frost of Heaven, who hast gendered it? The waters are hid as with a stone. And the face of the deep is frozen (Job 38:29-30 KJV)." Then, Shackleton laid the Bible in the snow and walked away.

For men suddenly thrust out of their ship—their home—and finding refuge on the ice pack, this passage from Job is significantly in concert with the insight of Lamentations.

Out of whose womb came the ice?

Who created the ice? Whose ice is it that has destroyed our boat? Why, it is God's ice after all. And who froze the face of the deep, providing a stone or platform on which the men could live? Why, God did. The menacing ice which destroyed their ship was also the supporting ice which kept them from perishing in the frigid water beneath. What a true and certain thought the sufferer calls to mind as he reflects:

“Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness (Lam. 3:22-23 NIV).”

The suffering prophet perceives that in the midst of trouble he and his people are not consumed because the Lord's compassions never fail. Now popular sentiment cannot understand this, for our modern culture has no use for suffering. Compassion in this view overrules and extinguishes suffering. Although God can and does do this at times, He is not limited to this response. Very often it is His way to work in and through trials and sorrows, gathering up fragments and tatters into something of blessing, retrieving an unseen jewel from the fire of affliction. Many people have experienced the truth of God's promises:

“When you pass through the waters I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze (Isaiah 43:2 NIV).” “A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice (Isaiah 42:3 NIV).” “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him... (Romans 8:28 NIV).”

His compassions never fail.

That means they have not failed now. They are operative even in this...whatever it is we might be facing. They are new every morning. That is to say the Lord's help, His mercy, His grace are ever coming in fresh, unforeseen ways.

In his book *Fresh Wind Fresh Fire* Jim Cymbala, the pastor of Brooklyn Tabernacle, tells of a Tuesday night prayer service when he had “talked from Acts 4 about the church boldly calling on God in the face of persecution.” During the prayer time an usher handed him a note from a spiritually sensitive woman in the congregation. She had written, “Pastor Cymbala, I feel impressed that we should stop the meeting and all pray for your daughter.”

It was true that their daughter was in great spiritual need. A model child growing up, she started to stray about the age of sixteen. Chrissy drew away from her mom and dad, and also from God. She left home and many times her parents had no idea where she was. Her boyfriend was everything they did not want for their child. This is the way Pastor Jim describes his personal reaction: “As the situation grew more serious, I tried everything. I begged, I pleaded, I scolded, I argued, I tried to control her with money. Looking back, I recognize the foolishness of my actions. Nothing worked; she just hardened more and more...the more I pressed, the worse Chrissy got.”

When Chrissy was 18, Jim got a call from a minister he had persuaded Chrissy to talk to. The minister told Jim, “I love you and your wife, but the truth of the matter is, Chrissy's going to do what Chrissy's going to do...You're going to have to accept whatever she decides.”

Something deep within him rejected the idea. “Never! I will never accept Chrissy being away from you, Lord!” his heart cried out. However God strongly impressed him “to stop crying, screaming, or talking to anyone else about Chrissy.” He recalls: “I knew I should have no further contact with Chrissy—until God acted! I was just to believe and obey what I had preached so often. ‘Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will answer you.’”

In the aftermath of that experience, he struggled to put this difficult divine counsel into practice. “I began to pray,” he writes, “with an intensity and grow-

ing faith as never before. Whatever bad news I would receive about Chrissy, I kept interceding and actually began praising God for what I knew he would do soon. I made no attempts to see her. Carol and I endured the Christmas season with real sadness. I was pathetic, sitting around trying to open presents with our other two children, without Chrissy.”

It was a cold Tuesday night in February when Pastor Jim received the note in the prayer service suggesting that they stop the meeting and all pray for his daughter. He was reluctant to change the flow of the service to focus on his personal need, but something in the note rang true. In a few minutes he picked up the microphone and told the congregation what had just happened. “The truth about the matter,” he shared with his people, “is that my daughter is very far from God these days. She thinks up is down, and down is up; dark is light, and light is dark. But I know God can break through to her, and so I am going to ask Pastor Boekstaff to lead us in praying for Chrissy. Let's all join hands across the sanctuary.”



Czechoslovak Baptist Convention 2000 - Philippi, West Virginia

There arose in the prayer time that followed a groaning, a sense of desperate determination, as if to say, “Satan, you will not have this girl. Take your hands off her—she’s coming back!”

Jim was overwhelmed. When he got home he shared with Carol what had happened in the prayer meeting. On Thursday morning, just thirty-two hours later, he was shaving when Carol suddenly burst through the door saying, “Go downstairs! Chrissy’s here.” Wiping off the shaving foam and heading downstairs, he found his daughter on the kitchen floor, rocking on her hands and knees, sobbing. When he cautiously spoke her name, she grabbed his pant leg and “began pouring out her anguish”:

“Daddy—Daddy—I’ve sinned against God. I sinned against myself. I’ve sinned against you and Mommy. Please forgive me—”

His eyes filling with tears, her dad pulled her up from the floor and held her close as they cried together.

She drew back suddenly and asked with a start, “Daddy, who was praying for me? Who was praying for me?” “What do you mean, Chrissy?” he inquired of her.

“On Tuesday night,” she continued, “who was praying for me? In the middle of the night, God woke me and showed me I was heading toward this abyss. There was no bottom to it—it scared me to death. I was so frightened. I realized how hard I’ve been, how wrong, how rebellious. But at the same time, it was like

God wrapped his arms around me and held me tight. He kept me from sliding any further as he said, ‘I still love you.’ Daddy, tell me the truth—who was praying for me Tuesday night?”

Pastor Cymbala concludes, “I looked into her bloodshot eyes, and once again I recognized the daughter we had raised. Chrissy’s return to the Lord became evident immediately. By that fall, God had opened a miraculous door for her to enroll at a Bible college, where she not only undertook studies but soon began directing music groups and a large choir, just like her mother. Today she is a pastor’s wife in the Midwest with three wonderful children.”

What a powerful example of God’s faithfulness. No wonder Carol Cymbala, who directs the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir, could write the beautiful song “He’s been faithful, faithful to me.”

But that’s not the order in which it happened. Carol didn’t write the song after their prayers were answered and Chrissy had come back to the Lord. She wrote the song in the midst of their trials when in addition to all they were going through with Chrissy, Carol had had a hysterectomy. As Carol was trying to adjust following the surgery, the devil took the opportunity of her weakness to threaten and taunt her, saying, “You might

have this big choir, and you’re making albums and doing outreaches at Radio City Music Hall and all the rest. Fine, you and your husband can go ahead to reach the world for Christ—but I’m going to have your children. I’ve already got the first one. I’m coming for the next two.”

Filled with anxiety, Carol informed Jim, “Listen, we need to leave New York. I’m serious. This atmosphere has already swallowed up our daughter. We can’t keep raising kids here. If you want to stay, you can—but I’m getting our other children out.”

Jim protested, “Carol, we just can’t do that. We can’t unilaterally take off without knowing what God wants us to do.”

Carol elected not to pack up and run after all. And it was at that low point (before their prayers were answered and their burden lifted) that she went to the piano one day, and God gave her the song that has touched more people than perhaps any other she has written. Here are the words:

“In my moments of fear/ Through every pain, every tear/
There’s a God who’s been faithful to me./ When my strength
was all gone/ When my heart had no song/ Still in love he’s

proved faithful to me./ Every word he’s promised is true/
What I thought was impossible, I see my God do./ He’s been faithful, faithful to me/
Looking back, his love and mercy I see./ Though in my heart I have questioned/
Even failed to believe/ Yet he’s been faithful, faithful to me./ My heart looked away/
The many times I could not pray/ Still my God, he was faithful to

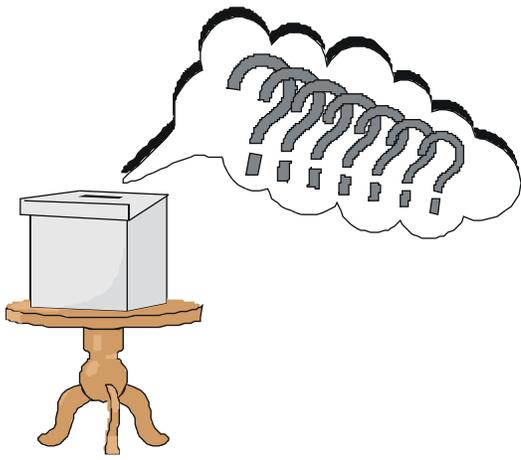
me./ The days I spent so selfishly/ Reaching out for what pleased me/ Even then God was faithful to me/ Every time I come back to him/
He is waiting with open arms/ And I see once again/ He’s been faithful, faithful to me....”

This is the consolation of Lamentations, of the place of trial and trouble—to perceive and grasp onto the solid and unchanging faithfulness of God. Because He is faithful, we have hope for the new millennium. And this hope is not dependant upon our being spared tribulations and sorrows, persecution and peril. Indeed, it is in periods of great challenge and testing that hope shines brightest. As Paul puts it, “Who hopes for what he already has? (Romans 8:24 NIV)

We have hope because He is faithful. Because we hope, we wait upon His presence, His power, His promises for the challenges and uncertainties of the way ahead. There is a steadiness and sturdiness in this which serves God’s people well. The stance of waiting, of watching is not the whole counsel of God nor the only posture for God’s pilgrim people, but it is one we cannot do without in this new millennium.

In his Christmas message on Dec. 25, 1939, with World War II begun and ominous clouds of conflict and casualty obscuring the horizon, King George VI included some words

The Lord has been faithful to us. He has blessed this Convention. He has prospered and helped His people. Again and again He raises up servants and leaders to carry on His work for the next portion of the journey.



Question Box

The Rev. John E. Karenko
1330 Normandy Dr., Godfrey,
IL 62035

What's the greatest Bible miracle?

The resurrection of Christ, because by it, multiplied millions will also rise. Christ said, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19).

How old was Jesus when He was baptized?

"About thirty" (Luke 3:23).

How old must a child be to be baptized?

Old enough to repent and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15). Jesus (John 3:22,26) and others (John 3:23; 4:1,2) baptized only such believers (Acts 2:38,41; 8:12,13,37,38,etc.)

What is a church?

A group of saved people (Acts 2:41).

What do "Deuteronomy" and "Ecclesiastes" mean?

These are Greek words which mean "second law" and "preacher," indicating the contents of these Bible books. Many others of the Old Testament books got their titles from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, called the Septuagint.

What does the word Bible mean?

It's the Greek word for "books" and is the first word of the text of Matthew 1:1.

How old should I be to get married?

For women, 22; and for men, 25. Early marriages often fail because of the immaturity of youth. I recommend finishing your education and saving some money before this life-long experience.

Did Mary have children after Jesus?

Yes. Matthew 13:55,56 lists the names of four brothers of Jesus and also mentions his sisters.

How can a person know he is saved?

"The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom. 8:16). "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (I John 5:13).



What's wrong with gambling?

Gambling is seeking to profit by someone else's loss, which is stealing. To call gambling "gaming" is deceit. This addictive vice can ruin you. Avoid it.

Does the Bible teach "eternal security"?

Yes, of the believer, but no, of anyone who by his life-style shows his faith is dead. See James 2:14ff and Matthew 7:16-23. Christians are known by their good works and good fruit. Examine yourself with these tests (2 Cor. 13:5).

Was Jonah kept alive in the whale's belly for three days and three nights?

Jesus used Jonah's experience to prefigure His own death and resurrection (Matt. 12:40). For the "sign" to be fully accurate, Jonah would have to die and be resurrected, as Jesus was. I think that's what happened. Resurrecting Jonah is a greater miracle than keeping him alive those three days and nights. The word "hell" in the KJV is "sheol," or place of the dead (Jon. 2:2), where Jonah prayed.

□

Where there is no struggle, there can be no victory and where there is no victory, there can be no reward for victory.

John Hus in "Prayer"

Kde není boje, tam není vítězství,
a když není vítězství,
není korunování z vítězství.

Mistr Jan Hus v „Modlitbě“



The Observation Tower

The Rev. John E. Karenko
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IL 62035

Showers Bring May Flowers and Weeds

Rev. John E. Karenko

Before spring arrived, I surveyed the planting potential for this year on the areas around my condo and found I had a problem...weeds. The early arrivals from last year's crop of multifarious and undesirable vegetation shocked me. These perennial plant pests had taken over as rivals of their delightful early counterparts that bring me annual pleasure.

What to do? I decided to discard these stowaways by digging them out by the roots, and after completing the arduous task, I awaited the arrival of my good tenants of the soil. But with the arrival of the delectable spring flowers came the enemy again...the progeny of the weeds that had met their demise a month earlier. These clever offspring appeared with my delightful early bloomers.

Now what? The good and bad are intertwined. They live or die together. A problem! Should the police shoot at a fleeing criminal who is running among innocent bystanders? Must evil be eradicated at the cost of the good? Does the Bible have a solution to this dilemma?

Why doesn't our "good" God get rid of the devil and evil of all kinds? The answer to that is that that's the way it was early on (Gen. 2) and shall be later on (Rev. 21-22).

Now, however, we live in this imperfect world of our own making and choosing, by our first parents (Adam and Eve: Gen. 3) and our own choices (Isa. 30:1), for we have followed their deliberate disobedience with its consequences. They knew (Gen. 2:17), and we know (Rom. 6:23) that "the wages of sin" are enormous...death.

God's answer to this present "messy mix" human beings have made is that good and evil share the earth until the harvest. Jesus told a story, called the parable of the wheat and tares, that explains this (Matt. 13:24-30, 36c-43). The wheat stands for good people, and the tares (weeds) for bad. At the end of the world people will be separated and judged according to their works (Rom.14:12). Some will be rewarded and others punished.

The people described as tares or weeds are also called various other names, such as wicked, sons of the devil,

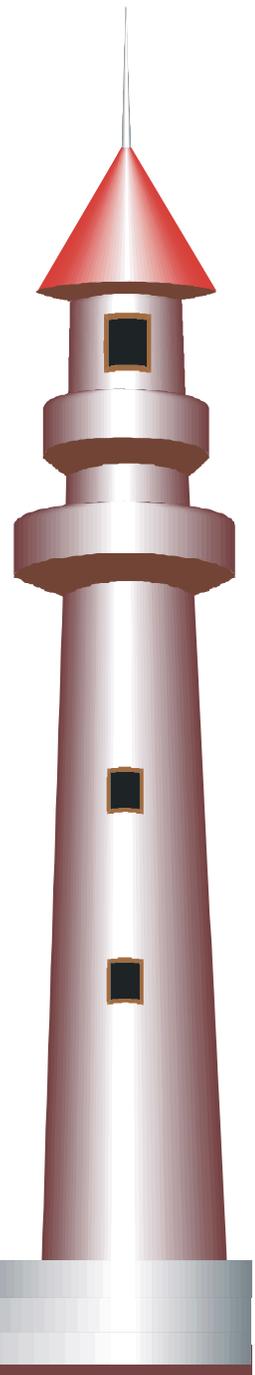
sons of darkness, unsaved, unbelievers, unrighteous, lost, and with descriptive words of evil behavior. On the other hand those called wheat are also known by such terms as righteous, Sons of God, Children of God, sons of light, saved, believers, etc.

The animal designations of sheep and goats are another descriptive way to differentiate the two classes of individuals mentioned in the parable. Although there are similarities, there are also radical and obvious distinguishing features that clearly show which is which, so to say. There are times when one is mistaken for the other, but the reality does surface at the final analysis when the angels go forth to reap at "harvest time" (Rev. 14:14-20). Then, there will be no mistaking of the one for the other.

Wheat is fruitful, while the weed or tare is not. God requires fruit, or a tree loses its right to exist (Lk. 13:6-9). The "fruit test" (Matt. 7:15-20) is one we ought to administer often to ourselves. "Examine yourselves" (2 Cor. 13:5), our God tells us, because if we don't, He will, as in the case of those who took communion "unworthily" (1 Cor. 11:29,30) and brought judgment upon themselves of weakness, sickness and even death.

Be aware, getting into heaven is a gift by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8), but what we will have in heaven will be according to our works (the fire test, I Cor.3:11-15). I think it's smart to live with eternity's values in view. In fact, planning way ahead may be the wisest thing we ever do. So let me ask you, "What are you doing for heaven's sake?"

□



Trans World Radio Czech Celebrates Ten Years of Operation in the Czech Republic

Editor's Note: At the convention this past year, Trans World Radio officials who were in attendance with us in Philippi invited President Robert Dvorak to visit Brno, Czech Republic, for the TWR tenth anniversary celebration of operations in the Czech Republic. It was a generous invitation and welcomed by our president. But since his fall schedule did not permit travel at that time of year, he asked our executive secretary, George Sommer, to represent the convention in Brno. A report of that visit is given below. We give thanks to God for the ongoing ministries of TWR-CZ in a land where we have such vital interests.

It is hard to believe that it has been more than eleven years since Czechoslovakia became a free country (free of the Communist regime). And it is hard to believe that it has been more than ten years since TWR was established in the Czech (and Slovak) Republics.

It was a great privilege to be invited by TWR-CZ officials to participate in their tenth anniversary celebration of the beginning of independent Christian broadcasting



George Sommer brings greetings from our convention

in the homeland of many of us.

But who or what is Trans World Radio? In the following we can learn more about this international organization.

Trans World Radio, along with Trans World Radio-Czech (TWR-CZ), is an interdenominational Christian organization. Its task is to help various denominations and individual local churches to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ through

radio broadcast.

International Trans World Radio established its existence in 1959 and it took its name from changing the name of the mission, The Voice of Tangier.

Today TWR is the largest Christian radio system in the entire world. The Czech broadcast had its beginning in the early '70s. In 1990 the Czech department came out from underground and in 1995 became a national partner in this society as TWR-CZ. Their task remains the same: to reveal sin and bring people the joyful message about God's love and mercy.

In 1998 they were able to broadcast through short wave (SW), medium wave (MW), FM, and satellite for about 140 minutes a day.

And now let's look at the 10th anniversary celebration of TWR-CZ in Brno, Czech Republic, on September 15, 2000.



Three of the founders of TWR-CZ from left, Petr Kolek, Jiri Dedecius, and Bohuslav Smutný

Looking Back at the 10th Anniversary of TWR-CZ (1990-2000)

September 15, 2000, was the "D" Day. About 80 official guests met in TWR-CZ headquarters, both from the Czech Republic and from abroad. Present also were the Vozehs, the Menzels, George Cooper, the secretary of the Czechoslovak Baptist Convention of USA and Canada, George Sommer, the Dedecius', Petr Kolek,



George Sommer chats with Ota and Renata Vozeh

Vaclav Kadlec, TWR-CZ Board members, members of various mission and Christian organizations in the Czech Republic, leaders of TWR National Partners from Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, and many other important guests. After an informal chat and recording

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Minitonas Czech Baptist Church and the Power to Change

In the past couple of months, the Czech Baptist Church in Minitonas has been involved in two major outreach mission projects. The first of these was their Power to Serve Missions Conference and the second was the Manitoba Power to Change campaign. Both events had a strong spiritual impact on the church and the community.

Power to Serve Conference

The Czech Baptist Church played host to an international event last month. From April 20 to 22 the Czech Baptist Church in Minitonas held their 2001 Power to Serve Missions Conference.

The Church brought in three missions from around Canada: Focus on the Family, North American Indian Mission (NAIM) and Mark Potma. The conference started Friday evening at 7 p.m. featuring words from Focus on the Family representatives Jim Sclator, of Vancouver, and Gerry Weber, of Calgary.

Focus on the Family deals with children, marriage and families and how God can be incorporated into those things. Leaders of the church and neighbouring churches started the second day with a soup and sandwich luncheon at 11:30 a.m. Sclator, Focus on the Family Coordinator of Church Relations, spoke during the morning. The rest of the afternoon was filled with workshops prepared by the mission groups and time for coffee and fellowship.

At 7 p.m., the Shannon Gospel Quartet, from Morris, shared new and old hymn favorites with the conference participants. Following the music was a presentation by the feature mission, NAIM. NAIM was represented by Jim and Becky Hamilton. A 50-year-old mission, NAIM works with North American Indians and provides camps and places of worship and solitude. The North American Indian Mission works out of Ladner, B.C.

The Shannon Gospel Quartet closed the evening with a few more songs. On the last day of the conference, each mission had a chance to speak and give more background information on their organizations. The Hamiltons spoke to the youth, while Focus on the Family spoke to the adults. The Shannon Gospel Quartet started off the regular service at 11 a.m., and was soon followed by a missionary from the Czech Republic, Mark Potma.

Potma represented TEAM, an international church-planting mission based in Prague. After the service, a potluck lunch was held, which allowed the missionaries to talk casually with the participants. Before leaving, each missionary acknowledged and appreciated the church's hospitality and generosity. Pastor Garth Priebe, of the Czech Baptist Church, was pleased with the results of the conference.

"The Power to Serve theme, going along with the recent Power to Change campaign, is a new level for us not only in the Swan River Valley or in Manitoba but even in the Czech Republic. We are trying to get out a message which can change lives," commented Pastor Garth Priebe as the conference was just coming to an end.

Power to Change Campaign

In the month of April, Manitoba experienced "Power to Change." People and groups such as Randy Carter, Paul Henderson and Kelita were brought into the Swan River Valley. Each event had an impact on people's lives. Many people's lives changed during this time and even today more are coming to Christ because of the outreaching the Swan River Valley and all of Manitoba has done. Of the entire province, 94 percent saw the Power to Change commercials on TV 18-20 times. This is what started people's curiosity in the whole campaign. Even though the commercials only lasted a minute, they were still enough to grab the attention of thousands of viewers. All together, 350 churches in Manitoba participated in Power to Change. These churches were the bases for prayer and support for all the people who were trained and for those people who came to Christ. There were approximately 5000 willing people who were trained to share their faith with others. They took time from their lives to focus on other, lost souls.

A total of 20,000 people attended region special events. Out of these 20,000, 18 percent accepted and responded to the message of love and forgiveness which was presented to them. During the time of the campaign, more than 69,000 homes were visited at least once. This showed to people how true the message of love is and how much people care about each other. It provided support emotionally and spiritually to those who had recently accepted Christ or had questions concerning what they had heard.

There was also a 1-800 number open to the people, and 1101 people took the opportunity to talk to someone and ask for the CD/booklet that was being given out. A total of 48 people called the number and accepted Christ right there on the phone. Along with the number was an internet site, www.powertochange.com, which 334 people logged on to. There they could read real-life testimonies and find the answers to hard questions.

Several hundred volunteers gave leadership to Power to Change across Manitoba and about 350 youth attended a special Youth Training event. So many people took time from their lives and learned how to outreach people in their community and show that they care. All together, \$427,586.00 in donations has been received for the Power to Change Campaign.

All these statistics prove that the people in Manitoba care about the people and want to make a difference in the world. Many great stories have been heard from people whose lives changed this April. The impact on Manitoba has been significant, and it is only hoped that this will continue and that the Czech Baptist Church, the Swan River Valley and Manitoba will keep on giving their time and keep on trying to change lives. We must keep on having the Power to Change.

□

FROM OUR READERS



Phillips, Wisconsin
March 13, 2001

Dear Natasha

I was recently given a copy of *Glorious Hope* magazine. In that issue I read with great interest an article with your byline, "Czechs, Slovaks and

the Bible, Part 7, The Period of Darkness."

My grandparents, George and Mary Balusik, immigrated to this country from Slovakia (Austria-Hungary Empire), coming first to West Virginia in the 1890's.

Where could I get the complete account (is this part of a book?) you have written, called *Czechs, Slovaks and the Bible*?

In the 1940's my family attended Bohemian [Czech] services in the Phillips area and I was baptized by the Rev. Henry F. Boubelik when I was about eight years old.

Sincerely yours, *Louis Angelo*

[Editors of *Glorious Hope* plan to publish *Czechs, Slovaks and the Bible* in English and Czech languages, hopefully by the end of 2001.]

Rev. Robert Dvorak
April 2001, Lisle, Ill.

Thank you for your letter from December 2000. Sorry for the delay in answering. My first visit to the Convention in Philippi was in 2000. I will remember it always, seeing my Christian friends of my youth. I went away truly blessed.

Lil Dushek

Dear President Dvorak,
Belleville, KS, April 14, 2001

I received your kind letter today, so I will answer at once... my Mother, Emma Kadavy, went to be with the Lord in 1974. She always appreciated knowing of your work [convention]. I am her eldest daughter, age 87.

Sincerely, *Karla Kadavy*

Dear Brother George,
Portland, May 14, 2001

It's hard to believe that my wife Cora and I spent four months in the Czech Republic and that tomorrow it will be two months since we returned to the USA.

The experience we had there were many. We were able to distribute many Gospel tracts (person to person, by placing them in mailboxes and by mailing them to prospects). Also, New Testament and some Bibles and Christian literature were provided. The testimonies and music provided by the Baptist Church in Brno were great blessing, too. Their interim pastor, Kristoslav Smilek, was a great help and brought some excellent messages. Brother Jan Pospisil will become their full time pastor the first of July.

Most of the meetings were held on particular Saturday evenings in the Youth Center (Dum mladeze). However, a concert of Christmas music and testimony was conducted in a beautifully renovated wine cellar (vinny sklep) which is

though to be 400 years old.

Our experiences with the students in the various schools, mainly through their English classes, provided some great opportunities for witnessing as well.



Richard and Cora Mazanec

Our weekly conversational English class at the local high school (gymnasium) is one example. A medical doctor come to our apartment usually once a week to converse in English. Then too, there was the couple just down the street that came to us each week to study English. Their son lives in Chicago,

and they plan to visit him in September.

We made numerous friends though it did take a while before some accepted us. They were quite curious as to why these Americans with a Czech name had come to their city, Mikulov, which borders the country of Austria (especially during the fall and winter). There is one young Baptist couple



Christmas with Jiri and Lida Dedecius

that lives there, Zuzana and Radek Podsednik who are in their early 20's. They need our prayers and encouragement.

We are grateful to God that on May 28 Anthony Vahla and his wife Janie will be arriving in Prague before they make their way to Mikulov. Tony and his American wife are both 23 years old. Tony was born in Czechoslovakia and has been a student in North Carolina for six years now. Presently he's studying at Southeastern Baptist Theological seminary where Dr. Josef Solc is professor of evangelism and missions. The Vahlas are planing to carry on in Mikulov this summer for two months.

We believe God used us to plant some seed. In time some other workers may be able to reap on abundant harvest

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Lenka Wetrowetz

Lenka Wetrowetz was born on May 2, 1911 in Yugoslavia. Her mother passed away when she was only one and a half years old. She was brought up by her uncle and aunt who were Christians. Not only did they raise their own three children and niece, but also brought up two foster children. God gifted her in the area of music, and therefore she studied piano at the conservatory in Budapest.

In 1936 she married Otto Vetrovec and they moved to Czechoslovakia. They lived in the city of Bratislava where their daughter Otilia was born. Lenka Wetrowetz became a member of the Baptist Church and became involved in the choir. In 1967, they moved to Germany where she was also a member of the local church. After the death of her husband in 1982 she moved again, this time to live with her daughter and their family in Canada. In her new home, she found a spiritual family in the brothers and sisters at the Czechoslovak Baptist Church in Toronto. Her great joy these days are her 7 great grandchildren. She spends much time babysitting them.

We are grateful to God that He gives her strength, and that she is such a great encouragement to our family, as well as an excellent example of prayer.



The Alac Family



Tetička Lenka Wětrovcová slaví devadesáté narozeniny

Den 6. května letošního roku jsme se sešli v Torontě, abychom oslavili devadesáté narozeniny naší milé tetičky Lenky Wětrovcové. Je to jistě Boží požehnání, že se tetička dožívá takového vysokého věku. Každý, kdo tetičku zná, zná její čilost a ochotu pomoci, kde jen může. Je to vždycky pro mě veliké povzbuzení. Cítím se zahanben když si uvědomím, že je téměř o třicet let starší ode mne, a má více síly a energie, kterou já často, při vykonávání různých úkolů postrádám. Věřím, že tetička je požehnáním a vzorem nejenom mně osobně, ale i mnohým v torontské sboru, a všem, kdo ji znají a kdo přijde k Aláčům na návštěvu. Je nám živým svědectvím svou pílí a pracovitostí.

Připojuji se k ostatním s přáním mnoha Božích požehnání a zdraví do dalších let jejího života.



George (Jiří) Sommer



Photos:

George Sommer
Miroslav Babel



Anne Esther Sabados Chovan

June 11, 1904 - February 3, 2001



Anne, born June 11, 1904, living 53 years in Garfield Heights and the last two years in Orange Township, Ohio, went to be with her Lord Jesus Christ on Saturday, February 3, 2001, at 96 years. She had served her Lord as His ambassador and teacher for over 71 years.

At the age of fourteen, Anne met her Lord Jesus Christ. As a fifteen-year-old teenager (1919), she was asked by the Rev. Knobloch to

teach a class of boys at the Scranton Road Czechoslovak Baptist Church of Cleveland, Ohio, of which her parents were charter members, and she attended her first Czechoslovak Baptist Convention in Chicago with Br. Michalko. After high school graduation and working several years at Cleveland City Hall, Anne received her call from the Lord to minister to her people - the Slovaks. While a student at BMTS, Baptist Missionary Training School, Chicago, Anne was a Sunday school and sewing teacher in three Czechoslovak churches and fulfilled her language requirement - tutored for a year in Slovak by the Rev. E. Catlos. Upon graduation (1926), she was sent by the Women's American Baptist Home Missions Society to minister through DVBS and visitation to the Czechoslovak Baptist Church which was without a pastor in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where she met John Chovan, whom she would marry 13 years later. Next, Anne was commissioned for His service at Bethel House in Campbell, Ohio, where many boys and girls came to know and receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. She also taught a high school class of girls at the First Slovak Baptist Church under the Rev. Hiben. She continued her ministry through child evangelism, home visitation and teaching Sunday schools - building up churches with Dr. Joza Novotny in New York City and Yonkers, New York, after which she sojourned briefly—one year—at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, to complete her undergraduate education and receive her B.A. in English in 1937. Then, she resumed her service to her Lord, first as Director of Child Evangelism at Tabernacle Baptist, Minneapolis, and then back to Scranton Road Baptist in Cleveland (1938), as a missionary and teacher under the Rev. C. Bohatec. After her marriage to John Chovan in May 1939, Anne spent one year in Minneapolis at Tabernacle Baptist, where she organized and presided over Mary and Martha Kruzok, taught a Sunday school class and pushed her daughter, Maryanne, in a baby buggy to and from the DVBS she directed. Church-sponsored and home-based DVBS sessions with her son, John, and daughter became her joy and labor through the following years in Cleveland and Garfield Heights, as well as teaching the Boys' Junior Sunday School class at Scranton Road Baptist.

With teaching credentials earned at Western Reserve

University and after her husband's death in 1957, Anne taught in the public school districts of Garfield Heights, Maple Heights, Solon and Cleveland, financing her children's college education. After earning her M.A. in Bible from Wheaton College, in Wheaton, Illinois, at the age of 61, Anne taught at the Cleveland Bible Institute and became a world traveler - the Holy Land and Czechoslovakia being her favorite places to visit. During her eighties,

Anne caught the vision to return to her beloved Slovakia to teach English for a year using the Bible as her chief text while witnessing for her Lord. When at home, she regularly visited nursing homes. At the age of 95, Anne Esther Chovan was honored as "Mother of the Year" by the Heritage Day Health Center - her "Club" - where she was known for her witness for Christ! Anne's love for His Word and passion for winning souls made her truly wise and led by God's power! Today, she shines as the brightness of the heavens and as the stars forever!

Anne is survived by daughter Maryanne (Robert) Hildebrand, of Orange Township (Lewis Center), Ohio, and son John S.P. (Doris) Chovan of La Verne, Calif.; five grandchildren, John Jr., Michael and Rachel Chovan, Karl (Betsy) Hildebrand, and Carissa Hildebrand (Brent) Bautista; great-grandchildren Faith Elizabeth Hildebrand, Brandon Mark and BethAnne Marie Bautista and sisters Elizabeth Sills and Pauline Dickey.

Maryanne Hildebrand

Maryanne Hildebrand's Tribute to Her Mother, Anne Esther Chovan

*Anne Esther Sabados Chovan had always been
A mama brave and strong,
Loving and caring for her family
All the day and night long!*

*She prayed for us as she trained us
In the way we should go...
Then came the glorious day
She introduced us to Jesus!*

*Sacrificially she gave of her time each day -
Every morning reminding us to walk with God and pray;
Every evening closing the day around God's Word -
For us, just the beginning of Peace on Earth!*

*Sandwiched between the morning and evening,
The Bible memory, terrific schooling and awesome camping,
Bible schools at church and home and the beautiful music
which filled our lives
Indelibly impressed upon our hearts snapshots of God's paradise!*



*She had been a mama ready and willing
To take God at His Word
Living and seeing the evidence
Of faith at work!*

*His Word to her was sweeter
Than honey and the honeycomb;
His Word was the Light to her path,
The Lamp to her feet!*

*And so she ran the race set before her sharing the Good News,
She fought the good fight,
She finished her course and won her race;
To her final breath she had kept the faith!*

*By the rise of sun
on February 3, 2001
our precious mama
had traveled beyond the sunset!*

*The Lord giveth,
The Lord God keepeth by His power,
The Lord taketh away.
Blessed be the name of the Lord!*

Wensel Hynek

March 09, 1927 - March 14, 2001



A man dearly loved

Wensel Hynek was born in Kolonia Velky Leg, presently Lehnice, 32 km east of Bratislava. After Joseph Hynek's wife died, leaving him to raise his daughter Albina, he married Bozena. Joseph and Bozena had five sons, Joseph, Walter, Stanley, Lloyd and Wensel (the youngest). When Wensel was 10 years old the situation in Europe was getting

bad, so his father sold the property and moved his family to Canada, except for Albina, who stayed behind with her husband and children. Wensel's father bought a farm close to the town of Dauphin, Manitoba, where his brother-in-law, Frank Pavlin, lived. Joseph Hynek's niece, Marie Voracek also had a farm there. Wensel's mother had two sisters living with their families close to Minitonas, Manitoba, so Wensel and the family did not feel so lonely in a foreign country.

Towards the end of the war the whole Hynek family moved to Toronto, where they attended the Czechoslovak Baptist Church served by Rev. Joseph Zajicek. During this time Wensel received the Lord as his Saviour and was baptized. In 1948 Wensel married Nellie Shiskoski of Thornhill, Manitoba. They were blessed with four children, James, Donald, Allen and Miriam, nine grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.

Wensel had a very quiet, gentle spirit. He had many friends. His children loved him dearly and his nieces and nephews were very fond of him. He always enjoyed a good game of volleyball with family and friends and liked watching sports on TV. Fair Havens, a Christian camp where our summers were spent, brings back many wonderful memories for the family. Wensel was a self-taught mechanic and loved to work on cars.

Employed at Massey-Ferguson as a spot-welder, Wensel was forced to retire after 32 years of service because of failing health. For the past 10 years, he suffered many illnesses where he required blood transfusions often but was never in real pain. During this time Nellie was always at his side and helped to keep him comfortable. He died peacefully in the hospital with Nellie and his family near him. We are thankful to the Lord for His sustaining love and power during the final days of Wensel's life and are assured that he has gone to be with his Lord. He just recently said "I know where I'm going." We will miss him dearly.

Nellie Hynek

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From Our Readers ... Continues from page 64

of souls.

We pray that soon a group of believers will gather for prayer and Bible study, and we trust that their fellowship will develop into a mission church.

We're praying for a great spiritual awakening, not only in Mikulov but in all of former Czechoslovakia and all of Europe as well.

Yours in Christ,
Richard F. Mazanec

P.S. Bro. Miloš Šolc and his wife Květa send their greetings to the convention and to you as well. We're planning to be present at the 92nd Czechoslovak Baptist Convention in July, the Lord willing.

□



Mystery

Honor your father and your mother (Exodus 20:12a)

Dear children, this command has come directly from God. We surely know what it means to respect our parents. We learn about this in Sunday school.

We do not choose our parents, they are a gift from God. In the same way children are God's gift to parents. Parents and children are a gift to each other. The bible teaches us that all we have comes from God. He is our heavenly Father. God even sent His Son Jesus Christ to this earth so that He could help us understand how much God loves us. Jesus is the rolemodel for our lives. We also learn about this in Sunday school.

We also know that God gave us the ability to think and make our own decisions. God gave us complete freedom in our personal matters. We can play sports, read various books, build models and do many other things. We all have hobbies and interests that we enjoy. However, our greatest freedom lies in being able to choose our future. An old saying tells us "Everyone is the creator of his own happiness".

We must make decisions often. Sometimes it is easy, sometimes it is very difficult. God does not automatically become the Father of every person. He only becomes our Father when we sincerely desire it. We automatically receive our earthly father, but we must decide for our heavenly Father.

In this lies the mystery of life.

Natasha Legierski

Tajemství

Cti otce svého i matku. (Exodus 20, 12a)

Milé děti, toto je pokyn přímo od Pána Boha. Jistě víme, co to znamená vážít si našich rodičů. Učíme se to i v nedělní škole.

Rodiče si nemůžeme vybrat podle naší představy, jsou darem od Pána Boha. Děti jsou zase darem (od Pána Boha) pro rodiče, také bez výběru. Rodiče a děti si jsou darem navzájem. Bible nás učí, že všechno, co máme, pochází od Boha, On je naším nebeským Otcem. Pán Bůh dokonce poslal svého Syna, Pána Ježíše na tuto zem, aby nám pomohl porozumět tomu, jak moc nás má Pán Bůh všechny rád. Pán Ježíš se nám stal příkladem pro náš život. To se také učíme v nedělní škole.

Víme také, že nám Pán Bůh dal schopnost samostatně myslet a rozhodovat se. Pán Bůh nám dal naprostou svobodu v našich osobních záležitostech. Můžeme sportovat, číst různé knihy nebo stavět modely aut, cokoliv. Jistě máme každý své záliby a zájmy a snažíme se prosadit. Největší svoboda člověka však spočívá ve volbě budoucnosti. Lidské přísloví říká: „Každý si je strůjcem svého štěstí“.

Rozhodování musíme dělat často. Někdy to je snadné, jindy velice těžké. Pán Bůh se nestává automaticky Otcem každého člověka. Stává se Otcem jedině tehdy, když to opravdu chceme. Pozemského otce přijímáme, pro nebeského Otce se rozhodujeme. V tom spočívá tajemství života.

Nataša Legierská

The Making of a Mother..

By Judy Prater

God grabbed a bucket full of patience..

Wrapped in tender loving care..

Added a bushel full of kindness..

That is always there to share..

A tender heart and listening ear..

Is what God mixed in, too..

So He can make a Mother..

One for me and you..

She'd read you bedtime stories..

And wipe your tears away..

Someone who creates the sunshine..

When all your clouds are gray..

No one could ever take her place..

Her hugs are like a treasure..

And when she looks into my eyes..

Her love is hard to measure..

And so I say, "Thank you, Mom..

For everything you do.."

And no matter how far from home I am..

My heart is there with you..



Mothers Day in the Czechoslovak Baptist Church in Toronto

Dad

by

Judy Prater

You gave me so much each day..

Words cannot explain..

You made me feel important..

And proud to wear your name..

You gave me so much discipline..

That at times I felt was tough..

And now that I am older..

It probably never was enough..

So many things I look at..

From my youth down through my teens..

The way you handled all my moods..

From mild and then extreme..

I wouldn't exchange a single moment..

That you and I would do....

Because the most important times of my life..

Were the times I spent with you

□

Keep in touch

Náš kontakt

A member of a certain church, who previously had been attending services regularly, stopped going. After a few weeks, the pastor decided to visit him. It was a chilly evening. The pastor found the man at home alone, sitting before a blazing fire. Guessing the reason for his pastor's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a comfortable chair near the fireplace and waited. The pastor made himself at home but said nothing. In the grave silence, he contemplated the dance of the flames around the burning logs. After some minutes, the pastor took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth all alone. Then he sat back in his chair, still silent. The host watched all this in quiet contemplation. As the one lone ember's flame flickered and diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and dead. Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting. The pastor glanced at his watch and

realized it was time to leave. He slowly stood up, picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Immediately it began to glow, once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it. As the pastor reached the door to leave, his host said, with a tear running down his cheek, "Thank you so much for your visit and especially for the fiery sermon. I shall be back in church next Sunday."

We live in a world today which tries to say too much with too little. Consequently, few listen. Sometimes the best sermons are the ones left unspoken. What silent message would God have you share with someone today?

"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:16

Reprinted with permission from Our Church—Spring 2001—Poplar Springs Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia.



Blessed is the man

Požehnaný ten muž

John E. Karenko

The following poem describes what walking in God's way is like.

"God's way is the best way, tho'l may not see.

Why sorrows and trials oft gather round me; He ever is seeking my gold to refine so humbly I trust Him, my Savior Divine. God's way is the best way, my path He has planned; I'll trust in Him always while holding His hand. In shadow or sunshine He ever is near, With

Him for my refuge. I never need fear.

God's way shall be my way, He knoweth the best; And leaning upon Him sweet, sweet is my rest; No harm can befall me; Safe, safe shell I be; I'll cling to Him ever, so precious is He. God's way is the best way; God's way is the right way.

I'll trust in Him always; He knoweth the best."
(L.S. Leech)



All convention gifts may be sent in the enclosed envelopes: US residents may use the **Business Reply envelope** or send their gifts to **Vera Dors, 6621 Elmdale Rd., Middleburg Hts, OH, 44130**, and Canadian residents may send their gifts to **Henry Pojman, 1516 Pembroke Dr., Oakville, ON, L6H 1V9, Canada**. Make checks payable to **Czechoslovak Baptist Convention**, and on the bottom write to what account you are sending your gift: **Convention, Glorious Hope, Trust Fund, or Scholarship Fund**.



MOVING ?

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Whenever I happen to be in southern California (as right now while I am writing), I make it a point on Sunday morning to attend services at a major large and historic church in the Los Angeles area. It is a congregation with an evangelical witness that has held firm through a number of generations now, since its founding. One enters the place of worship and senses immediately that here is a history of spiritual strength and reverence. The churchly architecture is classic; organ and choir are rich in the tones of sacred music; the pulpit is commanding as befits the Word of God. The service includes a beautiful blending of traditional and modern styles of singing. Everything works well. Going through a service of worship in this church, I am always moved and grateful for the experience of meeting the Spirit of God with the Lord's people there.

This particular Sunday I lingered longer than might be usual or correct for a visitor. I had shared a pew with an African-American gentlemen, and following the service we started talking. I discovered that he was retired from the U.S. postal service after a career in Philadelphia, PA, had recently moved to a seniors' residential community in Hollywood, and was discovering, too, the vigor of this particular congregation. I found out that he had served with the U.S. Navy during World War II. He offered some wonderful perspectives on what it meant for a minority citizen, like himself, and person of peaceable spirit to take up weapons for this great country, then return home afterward to a land full of prejudice against the color of his skin. I admired how generous was his outlook, since he had otherwise some pretty good cause for bitterness.

Well, I soon noticed that the two of us were about the only ones remaining. Postlude music had long since stopped. Custodians had lowered the lights (in order, I think, to conserve electricity in California's current power fatigue). The minister had come and gone to retrieve from the pulpit his sermon notes and bulletin papers. Clearly the time to go was upon us. Still, I had wanted to see the maze of facilities that crowded around a large courtyard area inside the fences of the church property. So I walked out there, noting, incidentally, with envy, how the rose gardens and numerous flower spaces bloomed with a luxury born of California's ever-so-temperate climate.

Then it really was time to be out of there. But a small



problem. Doors and gates in the usual places of exit had been closed off—I mean, really secured: chained, bolted, and safety locked. What was this? I felt no panic, since a few stragglers were still making their way across the church campus, but it did strike me: One could get locked in or out of the church!

Because of the particular neighborhood, this church and many like it across the land have to protect “the physical goods” these days. We all understand that. It would be irresponsible to ignore the threat. Nevertheless, I am wondering about the impact of it all on our spirits and on those outside the church—the need to fasten everything tightly down, a fortress mentality. Again I say, I know the need, but I do hate the negative symbol of locking the world out and the gospel in.

Brothers and sisters, let our hearts never succumb to any temptation to think, either consciously or subconsciously, that the good news of Jesus, or the practice of our faith, should be pegged for inside the church the brief time it is “open for business” each week. That notion will be the death of the vitality of Christian witness and discipleship and the end of spirituality that has any authenticity to it at all. It has already happened in some places and times.

Yet there may be one positive inference to be drawn from the picture of church locks. After the doors are shut following services, fastened immovable, then for sure we are out in the world to make it or break it with our calling to serve Christ. Can't get back into the safe place inside the church until the next time. Not many of our church's members are given keys for entry any old time they wish. We're on our own.

Well, not exactly “our own.” There is a Spirit who has promised never to leave us devoid of guidance, protection, power to “make it,” and unobstructed access to the Source of all life. That Spirit is the Holy One. Not entirely on our own out there, after all.

All of which could arguably mean... there are some things to be learned out in the world concerning who and what we are in Christ that could never get picked up inside the church. Might it be good that the church doors are sometimes locked?

The doors will be unlocked and the lights on in Philippi. See you there in early July, I hope. (I hope, I hope, I hope!)

Robert Dvorak



Ve službě ... Pokračování ze strany 71

Modlit se, to je činnost, která není limitována časem, prostředím nebo dovednostmi. Kdo zápasí na modlitbách za bližní, šíří Boží lásku.

...já jsem vás vyvolil a ustanovil jsem vás, abyste šli a nesli ovoce... To vám přikazuji, abyste jeden druhého milovali.“ (Jan 15, 16 a 17)

Díky Bohu za všechny, kdo tak činí!! *Nataša Legierská*



In His Service ... Continues from page 71

activity that is not limited by time, the environment or level of ability. Whoever struggles for others in prayer spreads God's love.

...I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit...

This is my command: Love each other.

(John 15:16-17)

Thank God for all those who abide by this!



Natasha Legierski

Ve službě

Vdětství jsem si myslela, že odchodem do důchodu život téměř končí. Jestliže nekončí život, pak tedy aktivity končí určitě. S přibývajícimi lety se měnil i můj názor. Postupně jsem si uvědomila, že odchodem do důchodu končí pouze civilní zaměstnání. Křesťan do důchodu neodchází. Jeho služba nekončí. Známe mnoho těch, kteří ve službě neustávají, i když procházejí nemocemi, těžkostmi a utrpením, které stáří s sebou přináší.

O jedné takové služebnici jsme se dočetli v kanadském týdeníku Maclean's. Baptistická misionářka z Britské Kolumbie má 91 let a stále slouží dětem a ženám v Indii. Neodradilo ji ani osobní neštěstí, kdy došlo k amputaci končetiny (nohy) následkem zranění a infekce. Úžasné svědectví o věrnosti ve službě!

Naše věrné modlitebnice jsou místními misionářkami. Přímluvná modlitba je služba, kterou může dělat každý. Pán Bůh nás obdarovává různými schopnostmi a povolává nás do služby.

☞ Pokračování na straně 70

In His Service

When I was a child I imagined that when a person retires their life is nearly over. As the years went by my stance began to change. I gradually realized that it is only a person's career that ends with retirement. The Christian does not retire. His service does not end. We know many people who remain in God's service even as they endure illness and other difficulties that arrive with age.

We were able to read about one such servant in the Canadian magazine Maclean's. She is a Baptist missionary from British Columbia and at 91 years of age is still serving women and children in India. Even the injury and eventual amputation of her leg did not discourage her. This is a great testimony of faithfulness in service!

Our faithful women of prayer are local missionaries. Prayer is a service in which everyone can be involved. God has given us various abilities and calls us to be servants. Prayer is an

☞ Continues on page 70

Tell us about you

Povězte nám o sobě

Senior center



Práci centra jsme zahájili v neděli 25. března, 2001. Jan (manžel) sloužil na text z Fil. 3, 7-14. Pěvecký sbor zpíval „Jeť Pán světlo mé“ a jiné písně, sestra Jarmila Dybová přednesla vlastní báseň a sólovou píseň. Zpíval také Adam Prymus, náš nejmladší sólista. Po bohoslužbě pokračovalo obecenství v malém sále s občerstvením. Byli pozvaní i všichni bývalí členové sboru, účast byla dobrá.

V okolí modlitebny jsem před další akcí rozdala 150 pozvánek a navázala kontakt s mladými lidmi ze sídliště, kteří by byli ochotní spolupracovat při práci s dětmi a mládeží. V neděli odpoledne 6. května, 2001 se uskutečnila přednáška bratra MUDr. Daniele Balabana na téma „Lidská osobnost—vůle k životu—vůle ke smyslu“. Při této příležitosti opět zpívala sestra J. Dybová (od B. Smetany: „Nekamenujte proroky“), bratr Lubomír Procházka—operní zpěvák Národního divadla (syn bývalého ředitele baptistického semináře v Praze) a také Adam Prymus. Bylo to milé obecenství, přítomní se cítili velmi dobře. Po přednášce probíhaly osobní rozhovory s bratrem Balabánem i se mnou.

Na 3. června, 2001 máme domluvenou přednášku ThDr. Tomáše Novotného o sektách.

Pro činnost „Senior centra“ jsem požádala město o prodej budovy bývalé školy, kousek od našeho sboru. Je to stále v řízení. Zatím sháním sponzory. Podrobnější zprávy o akcích Senior centra zašleme co nejdříve.

Moc vás všechny pozdravujeme.

☐ *Lydie Jariabková s rodinou*

The work of our center officially began on Sunday, March 23 2001. Jan (my husband) preached on the text in Phil. 3:7-14.

The choir sang several hymns, sister Jarmila Dybova recited a poem and sang a solo. We also heard a solo by Adam Prymus, our youngest soloist. After the service our fellowship continued over refreshments. Past members of the congregation were also invited, the turnout was good.

Before the next event I handed out 150 invitations in the neighborhood of the church. I also established contact with several young people who would be willing to work with children and youth. On Sunday, May 6, Dr. Daniel Balaban had a lecture on the subject of “The Human Character - The Will to Life - The Will to Purpose”. We also enjoyed the singing by sister J. Dybova, brother Lubomir Prochazka - an opera singer of the National Theater (the son of the former principal of the Baptist Seminar in Prague) as well as Adam Prymus. It was a pleasant gathering; all that were present enjoyed themselves. After the lecture they had personal discussions with brother Balaban and myself.

We are planning a lecture on sects by ThDr. Tomas Novotny for June 3, 2001. I have submitted a request to the city for the purchase of a former school building not far from the church, for the use of the Senior Center. The request is currently being processed. In the meantime we are looking for sponsors.

I will provide more news on the activities of the Senior Center in the near future.

With greetings to all of you,

☐ *Lydie Jariabkova and family*

**As one walks through a blooming field,
one also finds weeds that choke the flowers.
The same situation occurs among believers.**

Natasha Legierski

**Kráčíš-li po rozkvetlé louce,
najdeš i zhoubný plevel dusící květiny.
Stejná situace nastává i v obecnství.**

Nataša Legierská

