



The Prague Christian Fellowship POST

Monthly Newsletter of the Sbor Křesťanské společnosti PCF

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John Mullen, PCF Pastor

Why Home-Based Ministry?

At PCF we emphasize home groups and informal home gatherings because Kelsie and I believe that the essence of a community of faith is not a Sunday service, but rather shared lives. This month we are starting several new groups with the hope that people will plug into some small group and experience the deeper relationships that come along with sharing our lives together.

Many Christian communities emphasize a facility/building as the focus of their ministry. However, the New Testament model was "breaking bread" in various homes.

Acts 2:46 & 47 – *"They worshiped together regularly at the Temple each day, met in small groups in homes for Communion, and shared their meals with great*

joy and thankfulness, praising God."

Of course, I am not saying (and either is scripture) there is no place for Sunday services. It is just the temple was a place of worship and the homes where a place to gather (I guess that is where we get the word "together").

The third aspect of this passage is about meals. The early church shared their meals together with great joy and thankfulness. At PCF we are encouraging the leaders of the church to open up their homes and invite people to dinner. Kelsie and I practice our modified version of a Shabbat meal (the traditional Jewish Sabbath begins with a meal at sundown on Friday night). It is a time when we can turn off the phone and the PC and sit down and enjoy the company of old friends or make friends with new acquaintances.

tances.

I shared this week in an email to our community that in the busy culture today we are so busy achieving that we have little time left over for connecting with people. These meals and home groups require us to MAKE time in our schedule, but they are well worth

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David Loula, KS pastor in Zdar nad Sazavou

Czech Wells Series – Well of Diligence

Editor's note: This is the 6th of 13 articles from a paper by David Loula. We will continue as soon as the last 6 articles are translated into English.

"Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor." (Proverbs 12:24).

"The sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied." (Proverbs 13:4).

"For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you." (II Thessalonians 3:7-8).

The Czech Brethren were well known for being diligent and progressive. The idea of spreading God's kingdom on earth and living to please God the heavenly father was a strong motivation for their meaningful work. It is possible to say that the Czech reformation was influenced by the belief in the soon return of Jesus. Like the early church, they believed that they didn't have much time. This belief required actions and precision of one's values. Unimportant things were abandoned. Milíč of Kroměříž, Matěj of Janov, Huss, the Czech Brethren and the

Moravians were sure that the Lord would come soon – and they felt they were likely to live to see his return. Expecting the Lord every day was an accompanying aspect of every awakening and that is why I am of the opinion that it is God's will for us nowadays to experience it continually. Compared to certain Christians in Thessalonica who in expectation of God's return stopped working, Czech Brethren waited for the Lord while working diligently. They were able to combine spiritual and manual work. In their business activities they served God with prayer, praise and testimony, whereas in their spiritual service they were practical and helped one another selflessly. Not only were they diligent, but also progressive. Progressiveness is the courage to put forward an idea or vision and acquire new experiences, whereas diligence is hard, steady activity leading towards a goal. Czech reformists didn't lack ideas from God, the courage to put them forward nor the diligence to bring the matters to a successful end.

A great example of progressiveness and diligence is in the life of Milíč of Kroměříž who though he was penniless, participated in building 'New Jerusalem' in Prague. It was a chapel and a sort of hostel providing accommodation for students and converted prostitutes. Beside building, he also man-

aged to preach, pray several hours a day, secure funds, hear confessions and visit the sick and poor. When some objected that he wouldn't be able to get enough funding, he challenged them and encouraged them not to despair of God's mercy. Despite having many enemies, two years before he died he finished the work of building New Jerusalem, a small community of those committed to living according to the example of the church in Jerusalem and sharing everything. Master John Huss was also transformed into a diligent man. After his conversion he regretted having spent so much time playing chess and hanging out in pubs. He was angry with himself *'that the goose (translator's note: surname 'Huss' is related to the word 'husa' meaning 'goose') ate a lot at the feasts and fed itself with the labor of the poor'*. After his conversion Huss became a diligent and ardent preacher as well as a politician fighting for the truth and freedom of the Lord. The 15 years of his service transformed Prague. One tenth of its inhabitants attended his sermons and was affected in their thinking and lives. In fact, Huss only preached in Prague for ten years – from the year 1402 to the year 1412 when the interdict was declared and king Wenceslas became his opponent. Huss then left Prague. During the ten years, anointed by the Holy Spirit, he sowed the love and truth of God deep into the hearts of the

Family Profile

Joe Beamer



Hi, my name is Joe. I am an American, originally born and raised in the state of Indiana. Up to this point in my life, the main hobbies I have are travelling and hiking, and having a relationship with God. I have to say they are all very addictive. Once it gets into your blood, you just want to do it more and more. I feel lucky having lived in places like North America and Europe where there are so many great opportunities for doing all of these things.

I first came to Prague rather unexpectedly about five years ago. I had spent the previous year living in southern Germany, and was travelling during the summer and decided to visit some friends I knew in Prague. I ended up liking it very much, found a job, and decided to live here. During my stay I began looking for outreach and mission opportunities. So, I decided to stop by PCF and ask about such things. I quite liked the service and already knew a few members from work, so I decided to stay. I have to say, I did not come from a 'charismatic' background, but I began to warm up and have continually been warming up to such a tradition. It was comforting to find one of the overriding themes again and again to be that "God loves you".

I would like to share a few things about being a Christian that I find to be noteworthy. First we need to love God with all of our hearts, and our neighbors as ourselves. There are many ways to love God, through prayer, through praise, through worship. Another way we can love God is by simply loving his children in the way he loves us. Galatians 5:22 says "but the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith and self control." What a great joy and also challenge it is to know that we can love others and be loved by Christians in this way. And what encouragement it is to non-believers that they may also receive this kind of love.

Another important aspect about being a Christian to me is the idea of emptiness. By emptying ourselves, we make ourselves available to God. This is one of the ways we are called to discipleship. Often times, or usually, if not always, we are too easily getting caught up with work, details, and the things of this world that really eat up our time, mind, money and energy. Learning to let go of our distractions, releasing the cares of this world and setting aside time to spend with our father requires discipline. This is my constant battle to continually let go of my cares and to 'empty' myself so that I may receive more and be filled with more of him.

The theologian Henry Nouwen once wrote, "When we enter into solitude to be with God alone, we quickly discover how dependent we are. Without the many distractions of our daily lives, we feel anxious and tense. When nobody speaks to us, calls on us, or needs our help, we start feeling like nobodies. Then we begin wondering whether we are useful, valuable, and significant. Our tendency is to leave this fearful solitude quickly and get busy again to reassure ourselves that we are "somebodies." But that is a temptation, because what makes us somebodies

is not other people's responses to us but God's eternal love for us. To claim the truth of ourselves we have to cling to our God in solitude as to the One who makes us who we are."

Last but not least, one other thought occurred to me just the other night. I was at home group and we had a lesson starting with the beheading of Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist. Upon hearing about this, Jesus continued with his ministry, healing the sick and feeding the poor, without much time to grieve over his cousin. Often times ministers are called in the same way to neglect their own feelings and needs in order to attend to those of others. But this is not always a healthy way. We all are called to be givers as well as receivers. Sometimes we think it is more important or noble to be givers, or that we do not need what others have to offer; or sometimes we feel that we have nothing to offer to others. But this too is an unhealthy perspective. Instead God calls us to a two way street. We need to receive as well as give as a reminder of our dependence on God rather than any notion of self-sufficiency; we also need to know that all of us have something we can offer to God. We have this two way street with God as well. We receive many things from God, but he also likes to be praised and worshipped, to be communed with and not neglected.

Another passage occurred to me along this thought line of giving and receiving – one about Jesus healing others. Of course the lame received a lot from Jesus, but what is it that the poor and sick, the cast down, what is it that they could possibly offer to Jesus, the Son of God? And again, later, the words of Henry Nouwen remind me, "The poor have a treasure to offer precisely because they cannot return our favours. By not paying us for what we have done for them, they call us to inner freedom, selflessness, generosity, and true care. Jesus says, "When you have a party, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind; then you will be blessed, for they have no means to repay you and so you will be repaid when the upright rise again" (Luke 14:13-14). The repayment Jesus speaks about is spiritual. It is the joy, peace, and love of God that we so much desire. This is what the poor give us, not only in the afterlife but already here and now."

I returned to the states after a year in Prague. I still spent some time travelling around America, and then returned to Indiana University to finish my studies in the area of mathematics and physics. A main interest of mine is the area of environmental science- alternative energy, climate change, etc. Before returning to Prague I was working at the university as a math instructor and research assistant in Atmospheric Science. I had several offers to work towards a Ph.D., but I wasn't sure what it was that God wanted for me. In early May I decided to return to Europe, rather unexpectedly, as my brother invited me to come with him for a vacation to Germany. I stayed for the summer and then in August, I returned to Prague; and for some reason, I felt called to be here .. so I decided to stay. ■



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the investment.

One of the rewards for our investments is rest. All work and no relaxation is not good for our health (physical, mental or spiritual). The same is true for worship. Those who try to get "a little" more done at the expense of corporate worship (our modern temple) are cheating themselves. Scripture says, "Let us not neglect our church meetings, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near" (Heb 10:25).

Another reward for our investment is friends. I just preached a message about the need for friendships. Prague is a fun place. However, Prague can be a spiritually hazardous place. I have seen a lot of people "lose their way" here (spiritually). Last week I used the analogy of a strong current that sucks people out to sea. If you want to remain spiritually vibrant in Prague, you HAVE to have Christian friends around you to support and encourage you. I am from Dallas and we have a church on almost every corner. About 90% of the people refer to themselves as believers. Here less than 1% of the population refers to themselves as "born-again." The spiritual climate reflects the demographics. It is a tough place!

There are actually many "rewards" for investing in small groups and meeting with believers in homes. Maybe, though, the greatest reward is your life imprint on the people around you. Maybe, you are the best bonus of all. Most people underestimate the value of their presence for others.... your smile, your encouraging words, your prayers, your insight, your comfort, your help, etc...

My hope is that we will take hold of the invitation of Christ, "For where two or three gather together because they are mine, I am there among them" (Matt 18:20).

Maybe we underestimate the value of us gathering together. However, scripture clearly says that *Jesus' death would be...for the gathering together of all the children of God scattered around the world* (John 11:52). Jesus died that we might come together. And his promise is that He *will gather together the remnant of [his] flock from wherever [he has] driven them. [He] will bring them back into their own fold, and they will be fruitful and increase in number* (Jer 23:3).

When the early church gathered in Acts *the whole city was favorable to them, and each day God added to them all who were being saved* (Acts 2:47).

Let's gather together and see what God does in our lives and around us. ☺ ■

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Czech people. Similarly, Milíč managed within ten years (1364-1374) of diligent activity to convert hundreds of souls to Christ. Since its foundation, diligence was one of the major pillars of the Union of Brethren. It was a reaction to the corrupt priests and monks who were at that time driven by the principle of 'maximum money for minimum work'. The Brethren gathered in the town of Kunvald living diligent and hard-working lives in true godliness, solitude and modesty. Brother Rehoř Krajčí (Gregorius Tailor), the founder of the Union, trained as a tailor to earn his living as he was not a paid preacher. It was a long-standing tradition that the Union preachers were trained as craftsmen so as not to have to depend on income from people. This allowed them to be able to maintain contacts with ordinary people. The preachers were almost always in the history of the Union encouraged not to marry so that their earnings didn't need to be high.

The Brethren also had joint businesses smithies, dye houses, weaving mills, cobbling houses and other workshops. Their hearts and minds were united. They lived together as one family and as children of one heavenly Father. The united community is beautifully described by Jan Ámos Komenský in 'The Eden of the Heart'. "But Christian acts differently as he turns his heart in God and freedom to the needs of others. As I have witnessed, there is no man more dedicated to God than the one who serves, or even slaves. He is happy to serve where the others, preoccupied with their reputation, would be ashamed to. When he sees that he can help others, he doesn't wait, doesn't think of himself, doesn't exaggerate his help and keeps serving. Even when he receives no gratitude, he still serves in peace and joy. As far as property was concerned, on the whole they were poor in what the world calls 'goods'. Owning only a little, they took good care of it. Everybody owned something, but didn't hide it from others (as happens elsewhere) but held it for the benefit of the community and was ready to make it available and lend it others when needed."

It is no wonder that the Union had so many influential patrons and followers among the nobility. Indeed, the noblemen benefited from the Brethren materially and they also realized the moral and spiritual benefits of their relationship. Knowing they could trust the Brethren as they were truthful, diligent, honest people of good character, they didn't hesitate to defend them against Catholic and Utraquist clergy and also against the king himself. This relationship between the Union and the nobleman became more evident when King Vladislav issued the Saint Jacob Mandate in the year 1508 which outlawed the Union of Brethren. The mandate wasn't implemented thanks to the noblemen who

wouldn't allow the persecution of the Union in their dominions.

Much could be written about the diligence and hardworking spirit of the Union as amongst its members were many especially capable, talented even ingenious people who used their gifts generously for the benefit of others. Let's take a walk now to the Well of Diligence in Herrnhut so that we can see the ways of those who drank from this blessed source.

It's hard to determine why Herrnhut was a financially sustainable and prosperous community when most other Czech emigrant communities struggled for mere existence. The emigrants didn't bring anything with them but their hands and experiences, and therefore had to work hard to make their living. Herrnhut was a fine example of this diligent lifestyle. The generosity of the Earl helped, notwithstanding, the Brethren learned to be generous and share with others. And the Lord multiplied what they had as he promised 'give and it shall be given to you', thanks to their hardworking spirit and modest lifestyle. The Moravian emigrants were for the most part craftsmen – weavers, shoe-makers, carpenters, smiths, linen-draper, potters and farmers, amongst other professions. Martin Dober, an ordinary Moravian craftsman describes the harmony of the spiritual life and manual work, "He led worship at 5 in the morning in the chapel at the orphan house. It was attended by many men of worth and wisdom. After 9 all his visitors, be it an earl, a nobleman or a professor, found him bare foot in his workshop. It was completely natural that they would sit down at the potter's wheel and listen to his words. It was the work of the Holy spirit present in old Herrnhut."

Frederik (Bedřich) Martin, another Moravian emigrant who was imprisoned in Moravia because of his beliefs (yet managed, thanks to God's mercy, to flee to Herrnhut), was sent as a missionary to the Island of St. Thomas in the West Indies. The Earl of Zinzendorf regarded it as essential for the missionaries to earn their own living and thus teach the natives the virtue of work. And so Martin received no monies from Herrnhut and had to find a way to support himself. He was inspired by the Lord to find a source of living while at the same time to pursue an independent mission – to buy a plantation with slaves. It would not be possible otherwise as slaves were thought to be an integral part of the plantation. Martin borrowed money from a neighboring plantation owner and carried out his plan. He deemed it best to pursue his aims as: 1) he could build a church on the plot of land, 2) he didn't have to earn his living all the days by the sweat of his brow but could devote himself fully to his spiritual work 3) he could be near the converted and serve them,

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PCF Bank Info:
Sbor Křesťanské společnosti PCF,
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Account No. 181730394/0300
Variable symbol: 10261
Contact Tomáš Landovsky for assistance
+420606787121




PRAYER REQUESTS

- 1) **Church Finances** – Please pray for provision to cover our expenses and wisdom in spending and giving.
- 2) **More laborers in the harvest /PCF** - Please pray for more leaders at PCF (Mullens are celebrating 10 years of ministry in Czech Republic in October) and IHOPP.
- 3) **Former PCF members involved with full-time ministry** such as David & Linda Snell, Sam & Rosalee Ewell, Steve & Emma Gower, and Roger & Robin Harsh for God's total provision and protection in their lives. "Always keep on praying for all the saints." (Eph. 16:18)



Upcoming Birthdays
The following PCF members past and present will be having birthdays this summer.

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| Isaac Bediako | October 1 |
| Marianne Bolton | October 3 |
| Honza Knappek | October 4 |
| Hana Dětková | October 5 |
| HongXia Hu | October 6 |
| Phillip Old | October 7 |
| Courtney Mangina | October 8 |
| Anna Budin | October 8 |
| Sam Ewell | October 12 |
| Brian Young | October 13 |
| Kamila Šuterová | October 15 |
| Jennifer Mog | October 16 |
| James Mehaffy | October 17 |
| Mari Kouklicková | October 17 |
| Teresa Arellano | October 19 |
| Ian Crowther | October 20 |
| Blessing Egho | October 20 |
| Amir Taher Zadeh | October 20 |
| Michelle Clark | October 22 |
| Eric Zanger | October 23 |
| Mitchell Mullen | October 23 |
| Gaye Emmerton | October 23 |
| T.J. Caldwell | October 24 |
| Markéta Sedlačková | October 27 |
| Lydia Burda | October 29 |
| Robert Harris | October 29 |



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4) he could lead the other plantation owners by example and show them that they didn't have to be tyrannical.

He was of course preoccupied with the question of whether he should free the slaves. This would result in his being expelled from the island, and he also suspected that even if he managed to liberate the converted Black men, many would want to become Christians only to be freed. However, he gained 700 souls for Christ in the course of his life. All missionaries, be it those who approached American Indians, Black people in Africa and the Indies or Eskimos in Greenland, were driven by the goal of spreading the Gospel for salvation. However, they also stressed the importance of getting to know the natives and offering practical help. Therefore they engaged in: 1) Education - the Bible into mother tongues and many drafted grammars of the native languages. they taught reading and writing skills, translated 2) Crafts - They taught knitting of hats and sweaters, sewing shoes, cooking, effective cultivation of the land and animal husbandry. 3) Culture - manners and social behavior, teamwork, creative work, games and interests in order to strengthen their mutual relationships and their relationship to God. These relationships extended into the showing of mercy to the sick, elderly and needy, living good married lives and having respectable modes of dress. On the other hand, the missionaries learned from the natives many practical skills and how to fit in with their culture.

What is the state of this source in our country now? Of course, it is not completely stopped up with dust and stones as the 'golden Czech hands' are still well known in the world. The Czechs are inventive and can improvise even under difficult conditions. They are resourceful and have an entrepreneurial spirit, though so far only for their own benefit and immediate profit. Diligence, commitment as well as honesty and integrity are not 'in'. If the Czechs lack sufficient motivation to meaningful work, they become lazy and indolent.

The lack of motivation is a rock in the Well of Diligence. May the Lord open the eyes of Czech Christians so that they can clearly see the work that God prepared for them and the heavenly and worldly rewards for the diligent. For it is written that "**Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth**" (Proverbs 10:4). Note also, "**Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.**" (Matthew

25:21). On the contrary, "**A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man**" (Proverbs 6:10-11). The lazy will be impoverished through work, the diligent will through work gain wealth. Misery and poverty will come to the lazy and will rule over them. Those who refuse to serve God will lose their spiritual wealth. Laziness is the second stone in the Well of Diligence, and laziness ends in slave labor (Proverbs 12:24) and sin will rule and possess the lazy. King David, a man according to God's heart, couldn't resist temptation at the time of war because he lazed away in his palace leading to the act of sleeping with the wife of his knight Uriah. (II Samuel 11:1-4). On the contrary, the Lord shall entrust the diligent with authority, power and governance over sin, the earth, nations and the spiritual world (Proverbs 12: 24). We fear and to observe that the Moravian Brethren gained this power through their diligent and committed service.

The third stone in the Well is fear of failure, loss and one's own mistakes. Most big godly men and women fought this fear. Moses, Jeremiah and others struggled with the feeling of not being competent enough. Let's listen to Moses arguing against God's calling and imagine how he felt. "**But Moses said to God, 'Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?'**" (Exodus 3:11) God promised He would be with him, urged him not to old him His name. "Moses answered, 'What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say the Lord did not appear to you?'" (Exodus 4:1) God revealed to Moses His mighty nature by transforming Moses' staff into a snake and by making his hand leprous and healing him again. But Moses still argued. "**Moses said to the LORD, 'O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue.'**" (Exodus 4:10). That is how Moses tried to oppose his task that seemed so difficult. "**The sluggard says, 'There is a lion outside or I will be murdered in the streets!'**" (Proverbs 22:13). Satan, the lion, keeps threatening Christians in the same way. He tries to persuade them that when they step out of themselves and enter the centre of God's will (the streets), he will eat them. He shows them loads of obstacles, armies and walls and Goliaths that are not able to be overcome by using natural power. He has a point there. "**Not by might nor by power but by God's spirit the Lord reveals**" (Zachariah 4: 6). "**As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is flawless. He is a shield for all who**

take refuge in him," (Psalms 18:30) sings David.

We indeed make mistakes and make a mess of things. But the Lord knows this in His sovereignty. Our mistakes don't worry Him, as we are creatures of dust. He knows how to help us out when we need it. If we don't give up the battle, the Lord promises to finish the fight for us. Those anointed by God in the Bible, in the history of the church as well as today, have made mistakes and have failed on many occasions, including the 'biggest' ones. Still God rejoices that they ventured onto the streets of God's will and weren't threatened by the fear of failure. As the saying goes, "He who does nothing, makes no mistakes." It is true along with the fact that this person doesn't achieve anything in life as well.

The fourth stone in the Well is lack of commitment. It is one thing to accept the vision and the calling and to start something and another thing to finish the work. The second step is often more difficult than the first one. "**The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; he will not even bring it back to his mouth!**" (Proverbs 19:24; 26:15). Even a sluggard is able to start something for his own benefit and profit but to finish the work is an honor reserved to the diligent. "**So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised**" (Hebrews 10: 35-36).

Let us Czechs go to the Well of Diligence and let us drink plentifully. It will surely refresh us as it refreshed Christ the Lord who gave a drink to the woman at the well.. As an old Czech proverb goes, "He who works, eats the pie". ■

| PCF Finances | | |
|----------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| July / August | | 2006 |
| +29324 | +33452 | Total Income |
| 3576 | 6320 | Internet & Comm. |
| 5,000 | 9,636 | Office Rent & Elec. |
| 8,500 | 8,500 | Church Rent |
| 900 | 1143 | Supplies & Equip. |
| 0 | 1105 | Copying & Publishing |
| 23179 | 23179 | Salaries/Employ Tax |
| 0 | 4625 | Evangelism & Teach |
| 0 | 0 | Church Giving |
| 1738 | 394 | Fees & Advertising |
| 0 | 0 | Miscellaneous |
| -42893 | -54901 | Total Expenses |
| -13569 | -21450 | Net Income |
| 23594 | 21600 | Current Liabilities |

All amounts shown are in Czech Crowns.

Should you have a testimony to share please email us. The deadline is October 20, 2006.