



The Prague Christian Fellowship POST

Monthly Newsletter of the Sbor Křesťanské společnosti PCF

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Kelsie Millen, PCF Teaching Team

The Ministry of Shabbat, available to all!

I can easily say that I am in the midst of the busiest phase of my life. I am almost 40 with 3 small children, a husband, a church and House of Prayer, not to mention a ladies Bible study, Sunday school, special events which I help plan, and countless visitors and entertaining in our house. So, it is no coincidence that the Lord has chosen this season of my life to begin teaching me about Shabbat and all its benefits and challenges. It is all very new to me, but truly enlightening.

My first exposure to the concept of Shabbat came to me after graduating from college when some friends came back from living in Israel for 3 years. More recently, our good friends in Cyprus and Dallas have begun to actively practice the Friday night Shabbat meal and 24-hour Sabbath rest which follows with a Messianic flare. I agreed intellectually with why it sounded like a good idea, but it wasn't until I shared it with them in their homes that I began to see something extraordinary which I wanted for my family and my church. What did I see?

In short, I saw American teenagers who wouldn't trade being at home with their families on Friday nights for the world. I saw families at peace around the table, relating to one another in a very deep way, soaking up the Father's blessing. I saw teenage girls full of delight to spend the day in the kitchen preparing the meal and fighting over who gets to braid the challah (sweet bread). I saw Gentiles memorizing Hebrew blessings and fathers smiling with delight over their children. I felt the contemplative night of Shabbat, filled with candlelight and singing around

the table. I observed visitors accepted around the table.

So I decided to study more on the topic. Of course, with my evangelical Christian upbringing I knew about one of the 10 commandments concerning Sabbath, and had been taught that Sunday was the Sabbath. Going to church, not shopping and not going in to work sufficed for 'keeping the Sabbath' on Sunday. I also have been taught the importance of rest. But I am learning that the ministry of Shabbat is much deeper, **and is indeed holy**.

In observant Jewish homes, the Sabbath is anticipated all week. It requires intentional planning. The Sabbath technically begins at sundown on Friday night, when the woman of the house lights the candles. Then she probably sighs in relief for so much has been done leading up to this moment. The shopping is done, beds are clean, the family is bathed, the meal and bread are cooked, the table is set, computers and mobile phones are off, money and watches are tucked away out of sight, the TV is also off and the family approaches the table as one would approach an altar. Time seems irrelevant for the next 24 hours. A mother's work is never done, but in that moment, she acts as if it is all done. Her work for the week is complete.

One special Sabbath "mitzvah", or commandment, in the Torah which interests me is called hachnasat orchim, or the welcoming of guests. Our family has begun to invite guests over on (most) Friday nights, not just for a meal and nice chat, but as a ministry opportunity. As we an-

ticipate that Shabbat meal, and plan the menu, we also pray for those who are coming. We pray God will speak to them and minister to them. Maybe God wants us to speak an encouraging word to them. As I knead the dough for the bread every week, I pray for my children. I pray that God will minister to them in a special way and guide their lives. It has been precious watching them enjoy our Shabbat meal and our special times on Saturdays. Our favorite thing to do on Saturday mornings as a family is to snuggle in the bed and tell stories. Maybe mom and dad tell sto-

What's Inside?

- ◆ Member of the Month
– Teodora Paligorova
- ◆ Upcoming Events
- ◆ Women's Retreat Photos

ries about when they were little, or stories about the grandparents, or maybe the kids make up stories and use their imagination. Story-telling has become a lost art. These times are priceless.

When we take time to rest, we reconnect with God and one another. God ministers to us in a deep way. We minister to one another in a deep way. We relinquish control of the universe and get in touch with Yeshua, the Almighty, Our Creator.

I am coming to believe that the world is so hungry for the ministry of Shabbat.

(Continued on page 2)

John Millen, PCF Pastor

"Easter in March?"

It is true; this year Easter falls on March 27th. How did that happen?

The date is tied to ecclesiastical vernal equinox which is always March 21st. Easter falls on the first Sunday following the first ecclesiastical full moon that occurs on or after the day of the vernal equinox. Therefore, Easter is celebrated on a Sunday between the dates of March 22nd

and April 25th. However, the ecclesiastical "new moon" does not always equate to the astronomical full moon. This date was set in A.D. 325 by the Council of Nicaea. Before that date Easter was celebrated on different days of the week.

In the 2nd century Easter found its beginnings as a way to "convert" the pagans. The Christian tradition of the Festi-

val of Unleavened Bread (Luke 22:7) was combined with the pagan Saxon festival commemorating their goddess of offspring and of springtime (Eastre).

The original festival celebrated the goodness of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to provide for His people with

(Continued on page 3)

Member of the Month

Teodora Paligorova

My name is Teodora. I came to Prague from Bulgaria in 2001 to complete a master's degree in economics, but primarily to meet Jesus the Reformer. My inspiration to share about this topic comes from the video "Transformations" produced by the Sentinel Group that I recently watched at the PCF women's retreat. We were all impressed by how the Lord can transform the life of a whole community, even a whole nation. People that lived in total despair and bore the consequences of their sins were evidently changed by radical repentance and acceptance of the Lord's grace. After watching this, a sudden longing came into my heart that this can happen in our community. It is not necessary to experience the extremely destructive power of sin in order to know Jesus the Reformer. I started to seek the root of transformation and the Lord led me directly to reformation. Thus I do believe that transformation cannot happen if reformation does not first take place in each one of us.

What is reformation? The word reformation comes from Greek, *deorthosis*, and means "to put in order, to restore, to be honest to the order of things." For me, reformation is related with establishing a divine order in my life (Hebrew 9:10). Reformation goes beyond my religion and reaches the dimension of the Lord's reality. Furthermore, reformation exposes the false in me and allows the Lord's truth to take place. This is radical! Finally, reformation is located in the present, it is here and now.

Back in 2002, I remember my earlier season of reformation. After many years with the Lord, I had to face the choice to reorder my priorities. Up to that time the Lord was not in very first place for me, even though I thought that He was. In fact, when I accepted reformation to come I admitted that He had never been the most important person. Rather, I was using Him to complete my own goals and then I would attach the phrase, "How merciful Jesus is." Indeed He is merciful, even when I am religious, but a time came when He opened the page of reformation, the time to change, to put order in my life. I passed through a difficult season when I allowed Jesus to change my "inner forms", to remove the unnecessary and to put in the necessary and sufficient layers. It

really was like a surgery! I had to give up arranging my life and let Him do it. I had to dethrone myself and to allow Him to be the King. From that time on, the "new forms" really are incomparably better not only for Jesus and His kingdom, but also for me personally.

Why should we not ignore reformation? There are two contrasting features of the Lord that are important to discover. The first is that He is never changing; the second is that He is changing all the



time. To my understanding, the first relates to who God is and the second relates to what He does. Reformation captures exactly what God does in a specific time and place and also demonstrates our never-changing Lord who makes things in a new way (Heb 8:8). Therefore if we miss the time for reformation, it may turn out that we neglect what the Lord is doing right now and miss entering our destiny. This was the case of the Pharisees and Sadducees that "rejected the Lord's purposes for themselves" (Luke 7:30). That is why embracing our opportunity for reformation ensures that we keep pace with what Jesus is doing right now.

I can boldly testify that knowing Jesus the Reformer radically transformed my life and mindset; it also opened doors of opportunity both in the natural and supernatural whose existence I would otherwise never have known. I am a blessed and encouraged from it and I do believe that my reformation is still ahead.

(Continued from page 1 "The Ministry of...")

Our churches are filled with busy, lonely people. Many are on the fringes, unable to find a way to slow down and connect with God and others. I am beginning to realize why God said "For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a holy day, a Sabbath of complete rest to the Lord..." (Ex. 35: 2: 3 NAS). Genesis 2:2, 3 says "By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made." God rested from creating. I believe when we rest from creating and doing, we become more creative and productive.

I have just begun to learn about how God sees Shabbat, and I am not recommending a strict adherence to a list of rules. But it would benefit us all to take some small steps towards a day of rest. *Where to start?* Instead of going to a movie or meeting at a pub, why not have friends over for a meal Friday night, light some candles, relax and bless one another? Discuss something from your favorite author. Start some new family habits and rituals. Be intentional about rest, because it does not come naturally. Approach the day with a sense of awe and openness, being ready for what God may say.

I found the following prayer on a Jewish website. It comes from the Siddur, or prayer book:

"Grant me the privilege of the liberating joy of Shabbat, the privilege of truly tasting the delight of Shabbat. May I be undisturbed by sadness, by sorrow, or by sighing during the holy hours of Shabbat. Fill Your servant's heart with joy, for to You, O Lord, I offer my entire being. Let me hear joy and jubilation. Help me to expand the dimensions of all Shabbat delights. Help me to extend the joy of Shabbat to the other days of the week, until I attain the goal of deep joy always. Show me the path of life, the full joy of Your Presence, the bliss of being close to You forever. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to You, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer."

I'll close with a quote from Rabbi Noah Weinber at aish.com,

"Finally, here's an exercise that can really get you in the mood. At sundown this Friday, take a minute and do the following: Clench your fists tight for 60 seconds. Then let go.

That, my friends, is Shabbat."

This article is dedicated to the White and the Dunn families. Thank you for welcoming me to your Shabbat table. :)

(Continued from page 1 "Easter in March")

three feasts, Passover (Lev. 23:5), Unleavened Bread (Lev. 23:6) and First Fruits (Lev. 23:10-14). The Feast of First Fruits celebrated the goodness of the Lord to provide a bountiful harvest. The Jews "gave back" an offering to the Lord on this day. It was a gift of faith believing in the future harvest yet to come (in the fall). The feast became "Christian" when Jesus rose from the dead on the day of this feast. He was the first fruit of many who would rise from the grave to spend eternity with the Father.

Everyone dies because all of us are related to Adam, the first man. But all who are related to Christ, the other man, will be given new life. But there is an order to this resurrection: Christ was raised first; then when Christ comes back, all his people will be raised. (1 Cor 15:22-23)

Interestingly, with the decision of the Council of Nicea to create an "ecclesiastical date" instead of the original lunar date, Easter and the Festival of Unleavened Bread are no longer celebrated together. (The Council also put an end to celebrating the rest of the Jewish festivals and feasts.)

This year Passover is celebrated on April 23rd (Jesus was crucified on the date of Passover) and 3 days later is the Feast of First Fruits (the day Jesus rose from the grave). When Jesus asked us to re-enact the last supper, He was referring to the Passover meal (Luke 22:19-20). Zola Levitt (a Jewish believer) wrote: "I watch the Jews celebrate Passover without realizing it's really communion, and I watch the Christians celebrate communion without realizing it's really Passover."

This year as we celebrate Easter, let's not get caught up in the pagan traditions of eggs, bunnies, candy and nice outfits. Easter is resurrection and the promise of more (1 Thes. 4:16-17). It exists because the Lamb of God (the Passover sacrifice) took the sins of the world on a cross, was buried (on the Feast of Unleavened Bread), and rose from the grave (as a first fruit) to give us hope.

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED....

The best way to keep up with your giving for TAX records or to simply to "keep up" is via bank transfer.

Please consider this option, it will be easier for you and you'll make the church accountant happy.

PCF Bank Info:

**Sbor Křesťanské společnosti
PCF, ČSOB a.s., Kamenická 26,
Prague 7
Account No. 81730394/0300
Variable symbol: 10261**

Info

COMMUNITY NIGHT

Wednesday, March 2 – 6-8 PM Join us for fellowship and food! Bring whatever you like to eat, plus something to share. We will be meeting at the KSP Facility near the Palmovka bus station, Na Žertvách 23, Prague 8.

P5 HOME GROUP STUDY

Wednesdays, beginning March 9 – The Prague 5 Home Group will be doing a six week study, beginning March 9, on John Ortburg's The Life You Always Wanted. See Kelly Kuest if you are interested!

PRaise & WORSHIP CONFERENCE

Friday – Saturday, March 4-5 – from 5-8 PM Friday evening and **9:30 AM to 8 PM** Saturday. Worship and workshops with Noel Richards and his band, Sue Rinaldi from the UK and Vzdy@Vsade, a worship team from Slovakia. The conference will be held in the conference hall SOU Spojovací 1, Prague 9. Sign up for the conference in advance! (There is limited space for participants due to the size of the hall.) Give your name, any accommodation needs and your email address to KMS – Christian Mission Organization, the co-organizer of the event. Phone 284-841-922 or email info@kmspraha.cz.

LEADER'S MEETING

Sunday, March 6, 1-3 PM We will be meeting at the Methodist church (Sunday School room)

IHOOP

WORSHIPPING & PRAYER

Tuesday, March 8 & 22 – from 6-8 PM – International House of Prayer Prague in English at the YMCA (Motýlek school), Bouřilova, Prague 9. Worship with us and corporately seek God's will for this city and this nation. **Getting there:** Go to metro Rajská Zahrada – yellow line. Get off and walk across the street, downhill Bouřilova street on the right side – 5 min walk.

LECTURE SERIES

Monday through Wednesday, March 14-16 – from 6:30-9:30 PM Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Evening sessions with Scott Caulley. This is a biblical study series based on the book of 1 Peter. Each night has a different focus: "Individual and Corporate Call of God: The Basis of Christian Identity" (Monday); "Social Dimensions of God's Call: How are We to Behave in Society?" (Tuesday); "Suffering and Triumph: Implications for Christian Living" (Wednesday). Registration is required as space is limited to 20 participants per

session. If you are interested in participating, contact Prague Christian Library. Phone 222-724-856 or email christianlibrary@quick.cz.

CHURCH RETREAT!!!

Friday and Saturday, March 18-19 Details TBA. We hope to be meeting together somewhere in the mountains. It will be a time to get to know one another and strengthen our fellowship. For more information contact Tomáš Landovsky. Email tomas@landovsky.cz / phone 777-329-166.

"GOAL: THE MOON"

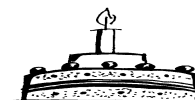
Tuesday, March 22 – from 7 PM, Dr. Charles Duke will speak about reaching goals in life and business. He will share his experiences as an astronaut and as a successful businessman. The event is sponsored by Primenet, ministry of Nový život, o.p.s. It will be located at Hotel Anděl (Stroupežnického 21, Prague 5) and admission is free. More info @ 602255832.

MINISTRY TO THE REFUGEES

Saturday, March 26 – Meeting at 10:45 AM, place will be specified. Back in Prague around 5 PM. We serve tea and coffee and fellowship with the refugees, play sports, do crafts with children. If you are interested in joining us or want to donate clothes, toys or Christian books (preferably in Czech) contact Katka by email: katka.kounovska@praguefellowship.cz.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Our church office, located at Eliášova 15, Prague 6, now has office hours! Please call ahead and arrange your visit (224-315-613). Mon. 3-5:00, Tues. 3-5:00, Wed. 11-5:00, Thurs. 11-1:00 and 3-5:00, Fri. 3-5:00.



Upcoming Birthdays

The following PCF members past and present will be having birthdays in the next few weeks.

Tracy Coles	March 1
Amanda Overwater	March 2
Joyce Lindstrom	March 5
Jo Rust	March 5
Joseph Custalow Kupidlovský	March 5
Roger Harsh	March 6
Annabella Nickle	March 7
Dana Hamplová	March 11
Darren Haig	March 12
David Overwater	March 12
Benjamin Eqbal	March 16
Richard Emercoha	March 18
Tom Blenkarn	March 19
Pavla Křížová	March 20
Dan Drapal	March 23
Cindy Ogundo	March 25
Allison Crawley	March 27
Jalen Kropf	March 28
Erik Maršoun	March 28
Eugenie du Preez	March 31



Women's Retreat



PRAYER ITEMS

- 1) **PCF outreaches – Refugee camp ministry**, that Katka will find a partner in this ministry and for more open doors to minister at the camp.
- 2) **The church in the Czech Republic, “The Czech Bride of Christ”** - for revival, reconciliation, protection, unity and love among Czech churches under spiritual attack.
- 3) **Church Finances** (generous, joyful givers). **Birthing of “Marketplace Ministry” in Prague** to shift finances into Kingdom of God.
- 4) **Home groups**; for hosts and leaders as well as a commitment in the Body to fellowship together weekly.
- 5) **International House of Prayer Prague** (www.ihopp.org) - For more leaders and finances.
- 6) For **PCF and former members involved with full-time ministry** such as Michael Stadler, Sam Ewell, Kelly Kuest, Steve Gower, Artie Sposaro, Roger & Robin Harsh and David & Linda Snell for God’s total provision and protection in their lives. **“Always keep on praying for all the saints.”** (Eph. 16:18)
- 7) For the **Peace of Jerusalem** (Ps. 122:6)
- 8) **Richard’s health and ministry** in prison – he is requesting Czech Bibles to hand out in prison.
- 9) **More laborers in the harvest field of Prague and at PCF** (Matt 9:37,38), and more salvations in the Czech Republic
- 10) **Christian International School of Prague** (www.cisprague.org) for more students and approval of legal status.

*Theme – “The winter is past;
the rains are over and gone.
Flowers appear on the earth;
the season of singing has come.”*
Song of Songs 3:11-12

The PCF Women’s Retreat took place February 11-12 and was a blessed time for all involved. The retreat focused on God’s intimate love for us. Our activities included: worship, small group discussions, watching “Transformations”, prayer stations, sharing meals, sharing personal stories, foot washing, and enjoying fellowship.



Should you have a testimony to share please email us. The deadline is March 16, 2005