

ICP NEWS

International Church of Prague

February 2011

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STOP THE TRAFFIK.
PEOPLE SHOULDN'T BE BOUGHT & SOLD

www.stopthetraffik.org

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Human Trafficking

Hugh Davies

Towards the end of last year John Waldrop issued a call to anyone with an interest in joining a team focusing on the people trafficking problem – a real area of tragic suffering in the Czech Republic and particularly in Prague.

It is an issue that is complicated by the number of definitions that exist. In essence it relates to people (particularly, but not exclusively, women) who have been sold or tricked into prostitution, domestic servitude or slave working.

A group of about 10 people associated with ICP have met twice now to discuss this issue and to begin to formulate a plan of action that we hope will have some impact on this problem. We have also heard from Charlie Lamento, a US attorney living and teaching in Prague who has made the area of anti-trafficking his life's work, who came to our meeting in January.

These early discussions led to us becoming aware of a charity called The Magdala Project, which operates under the umbrella of the Czech Catholic charity Caritas. The

project provides safe houses in Prague in which women who have been trafficked into prostitution can seek refuge and are offered support to recover and rebuild their lives. John Waldrop and Hugh Davies met with representatives from this project on 18th January and have gained some insight into their operations and their needs. The whole church will be able to hear more when two representatives from Magdala will visit and speak to us during our service on 6th March.

It seems likely that if we at ICP are going to fulfill our goal of both supporting the work of others in this important area (which could be a project requiring a lot of money) and also providing opportunities for people to get personally involved, we are going to need to find more than



one partner organisation we can work with.

Please do come along to the service on 6th March and hear from our friends at the Magdala project as the team continues to develop a comprehensive plan to bring to the church in the next few months.

TRAFFICKING IS...

to be deceived or taken against your will, bought, sold and transported into slavery for sexual exploitation, sweat shops, circuses, sacrificial worship, forced begging, sale of human organs, farm labour, domestic servitude, or to be child brides.

TRAFFICKING IS...

where family members and friends deceive parents to release their children or sell them for as little as \$20 each, selling them on to local gangmasters or organised, international trafficking rings.

TRAFFICKING IS...

growing. 2–4 MILLION men, women and children are trafficked across borders and within their own country every year. More than one person is trafficked across borders EVERY MINUTE, which is equivalent to five jumbo jets every day – a trade that earns twice as much revenue worldwide as Coca Cola.

TRAFFICKING IS...

where victims usually suffer fear, repeated physical abuse, torture and threats to families in order to break their spirits and turn them into saleable commodities. A person can be sold and trafficked many times.

People trafficking is the fastest growing means by which people are enslaved, the fastest growing international crime, and one of the largest sources of income for organised crime.

The UN Office on Drugs and Crime

Wihini and Sunni – India

Wihini, aged 9, and her brother Sunni, aged 7, lived on Thane railway station in Mumbai, India, with their parents who were both alcoholics. Wihini and Sunni regularly attended the Asha Deep Day Centre, run by Oasis India, where they learnt to read and write and were given the opportunity to play. After attending daily for three months they disappeared. The project staff went to

look for them. Wihini and Sunni's father told how a man had come and offered money for them and that he had sold them for the equivalent of \$30. That was the last the father and the staff of Asha Deep Day Centre heard of them. In that area of Mumbai every 2-3 months children disappear, are kidnapped, or sold into prostitution, forced labour, adoption or even child sacrifice.

The story of Wihini and Sunni, along with the definitions of trafficking are taken from the website www.stopthetraffik.org. This site contains a wealth of information about human trafficking, and suggestions as to what we can do to stop it. One simple, painless way to act is to make sure we buy only fairly traded chocolate. More information on this is available in the leaflet in the foyer.

Angel Alert!

Deanne Davies

What happens when you mix 20 excited children, four enthusiastic adults, white sheets and tinsel? The answer at ICP was 'Angel Alert' – a charming musical where the entire children's choir is made up of angels

In fact, they are all waiting to be told when to go to earth and make the momentous announcement (although a couple got sidetracked sky surfing!). As they wait for the call, they review God's faithfulness through His promises and some of the prophecies about the Saviour's birth. The musical is full of worship and plenty of celebration, since the angels understand the love God has for His people in sending His Son to earth.

Kathleen Weyers, musical director, said: "I did think the children really excelled themselves."

They had to stretch and warm up their wings and fix their halos to be ready for the task at hand. Some angels had concerns about proclaiming the news to mere shepherds – and not kings and political leaders – but they sang their hearts out with infectious enthusiasm, capturing the joy and excitement of the angelic host on that first Christmas.

Trevor Marshall managed not to be entirely upstaged during his sermon when he reminded us that the arrival of the Christ child had changed everything. He drew on Ephesians 2:

14 – 16 and encouraged us to remember that in Jesus we see the unity of true God and true man. He reminded us that this unity makes everything different – it is the basis of our faith. Accepting this truth demands a response from each of us – it has to impact our daily lives.

The morning ended with a dramatic presentation from the Kids Devotional Team (KDT) who, assisted by a somewhat older supporting cast, delivered an alternative version of the Christmas story (complete with talking donkey, innkeeper and grumpy wife!). It metamorphosed into reflections from Mary and Joseph on what that first Christmas had been like for them as parents of the Christ child. It offered

insight into the joy and inexperience of new parents but also the understanding that this birth was not a normal family experience, and Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. Joseph,

like many fathers, looked to the future and worried about the likelihood that their son might expect to be treated badly if he was a messenger from God because historically, biblical prophets had not been well received by their own people.



It was fantastic to see so many visitors on this special Sunday. This service had something for everyone and offered a challenge to focus on what Christmas is really all about.



Concert Old Town Square

Kristine Corpus

What could possibly compel a family to brave the -10 degree Celsius weather to stand in Old Town Square for the evening? The promise of hearing the gospel proclaimed through song and words on a stage in the heart of the city!

It was a Thursday evening that we joined our friends and family from ICP and Youth Praha to hear the choir perform for the public. The setting was perfect: the stage was next to an amazing Christmas tree decked with lights and ornaments; there was also a beautiful nativity scene carved from wood. "Carol of the Bells" was the song the Advent Choir opened with, and it was followed by several mixes of Christmas classics – all led by Mike Yurkovich. Though the temperature was indeed low, our hearts were warmed by the proclamation of our Saviour's birth. Immediately following the choral performance, *The Witness* took to the stage. The youth band played some rockin' Christmas songs and had young and old(er) jumping and singing along. The band also played a traditional Czech song, inviting the audience to join in the singing. We couldn't help but notice the Czech audience members perk up their ears to hear Nate Brown share the gospel in their native tongue in between songs. What a wonderful way to celebrate the coming of the Messiah! We can't imagine a better way to share the good news that is for all people - including Czechs. May the Lord open their ears to hear and soften their hearts to receive.

Parent Praha



Everyone has heard of Youth Praha, but have you heard of Parent Praha?

We met for the first time on December 3rd, and it provided a fantastic opportunity to have a parent-youth pastor meeting. It was a lot of fun as the parents got involved in the games and singing as we worshipped God. For about forty-five minutes following the close of Youth Praha, Jimmy Houck and the parents discussed some of the goals that had been set and accomplished throughout the autumn as well as their vision for the future. It was a great time of fellowship and a time to



hear Jimmy's heart and ask him questions about his work with the youth. Jimmy plans on having one such meeting at the end of every school semester.



The Book of Revelation

For our next Sunday sermon series, John Waldrop will be preaching through the book of Revelation. This promises to be an exciting series in a thrilling part of God's Word. Ian Paul describes it in this way, "As literature, it is perhaps the most complex and sophisticated piece of writing the world has ever seen. As theology, it has been the inspiration of a wide range of ideologies... Through it all, it has been a source of strength for millions of believers as an assurance that 'the Almighty reigns!'"

The series will start on February 27th with something a little different: a dramatic reading of the whole book. Our service will, therefore, probably be slightly longer than usual.

Cookie Girls

Kim Townley

A Christmas fish? Yes! We decorated nearly 100 cookies at a pre-Christmas gathering of ICP women. With an assortment of coloured icing and sprinkles, everyone had a blast.

We quickly discovered that the cookie decorating talent among these women is quite impressive. We had bells, Christmas trees, snowmen, angels, and even a Christmas fish! Some fortunate folks might even have had the delicious opportunity to taste these creations at tea/coffee time after the church service.

While decorating, many women were able to talk with close friends as well as meet new people from ICP. This was a great opportunity to get to know someone you wouldn't normally have a chance to talk to at church. In addition to the cookies we decorated, many women brought their own cookies to swap with others in the group. Many went home at the end of the night with a box full of delicious Christmas cookies to share with others. Gathering a group of women like this together is always encouraging and this night was no exception.



Daughters' Retreat

Mikaela Eriksson

The 2011 Women's Retreat was very appropriately renamed "Daughters' Retreat" this year. The day and night (for some of us) we spent together were truly blessed. We had the wonderful opportunity to spend time with sisters in Christ from different backgrounds, ages and nationalities. It was really a blessing to get to spend time with women in a way that simply having coffee or tea after church does not allow you to.



The penzion was in a beautiful location just outside Prague in a little hamlet called Spálený Mlýn run by a pleasant Czech couple called Romana and Jiří.

Hearing Grace teach on the Psalms was a privilege. Such an inspiring woman. But the best was to spend time with the guest of honour: our Father.

Her talks were on Psalms of Orientation, Psalms of Disorientation, and Psalms of Reorientation. I think we all find that some days a certain Psalm really just doesn't "do it for us". Perhaps it's too cheerful; perhaps it's too gloomy; perhaps it's simply not what we are experiencing. Grace helped me to appreciate and explore the Psalms no matter which point in life I am at. In her last talk, Grace encouraged us to write down one thing that we would take away from this weekend, since trying to apply everything we've learned to our lives in one go usually doesn't work out all that well. I wrote down,

"It's okay to yell at God." Psalms are ways to express ourselves to God and sometimes we need to yell before we are able to praise.

One of the peak moments of the retreat was the prayer mosaic led by Maria Eriksson and the final question-answer time before the retreat was over, which called for lots of very loud laughter.

In conclusion, 2011's daughter's retreat was a success, just like last year's. Somehow, they always manage to be a success. I hear that some quality father-daughter time tends to have that effect.



Prayer as Rebellion

John Waldrop



In light of the terrible evil of human trafficking (featured in Hugh Davies' article on page 2), the epidemic of persecution of Christians globally, and countless other injustices in our world – some of which touch us personally – we wonder: What can I do? How should we as a community of Christians respond?

Jesus gives us a clear answer: *Rebel*. Yes, rebel – against the fallenness of a world that is not the way it's supposed to be, and with the certain hope that God can and will set things right.

The primary way we express this rebellion is through prayer. David Wells puts it this way: *Petitionary prayer . . . is, in essence, rebellion – rebellion against the world in its fallenness, the absolute and undying refusal to accept as normal what is abnormal.*

This is illustrated in Jesus' parable of the Persistent Widow, in Luke 18:1-8. It's about a woman who saw that something was wrong, and believed if she petitioned the appropriate person, the wrong would be righted. And it was.

That's why the theme of this year's Winter Prayer Retreat on March 5th is "Prayer as Rebellion." We will cry out to God for many concerns, including the issue of human trafficking, with Charlie Lamento of *Global Hope Network International*, sharing. Will you join the rebellion – by praying?



ICP Study Centre

Simon Marshall

The vision for the ICP Study Centre is for it to be active in three areas: Seminars, Courses and Residential. So far, we have set up and run various courses and by the end of this academic year, we plan to have written and run each course at least once. These will then run on a four-year rotating basis. This year, we also plan to hold three leadership seminars and to work on improving other areas where seminars will be beneficial, such as family and parenting.

This leaves us with the third, and important, part of our vision: the Residential Course, whose aims are to provide:

- Solid theological training and equipping;
- Missions and church-planting orientation;
- Community;
- Spiritual edification.

This can be summarised as creating

a Christian community that aims to encourage Christlike character, a heart for mission and a deeper knowledge of the faith. It is, thus, part of ICP's vision to be a "radiating centre for the gospel."

One of the important principles which will lie at the heart of the course is flexibility; perhaps most importantly, in the type of people we can accept onto the course:

- Students who come for the full academic year's study
- Students who follow part of a year
- ICP, and other church, members who wish to follow courses part-time
- Potential church-planters and/or pastors who are looking to plant international churches.

The course would include a weekly placement with a mission in Prague – or nearby – as well as a two-week mission trip in February.

The year would be planned so students who may not be able to gain a full visa could follow a 90-day, short programme.

The week would be timetabled to allow part-time, non-residential, students to also follow the courses. Please pray for us as we continue our planning for the course and our search for a property.

Upcoming Events

10th February

Navigating Uncertain Times
Study Centre Seminar

12th February

Men's Breakfast
Fighting Human Trafficking
Speaker: Charlie Lamento

20th February

Spiritual Gifts Seminar

27th February

Revelation – a Dramatic Reading

5th March

Prayer Retreat

6th March

Anti-Trafficking Sunday
With the Magdala Project

19th-21st April

Holiday Bible Club

24th April

Easter Sunday

6th-8th May

Youth Praha Retreat

International Church of Prague

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