

Total Surrender

BRISTO BAPTIST
MAGAZINE

MARCH / APRIL 2008



CHRIST IS RISEN!

A HAPPY EASTER TO EVERYONE



**STATIONS OF THE CROSS, PETRIN GARDENS,
PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC.**

Photos Robert Mill 2008

Service Times

Sunday

Morning Celebration (including Junior Church) 11.00 a.m.
Evening Celebration (including Encounter for 14-18s) 6.30 p.m.

Tuesday / Wednesday / Thursday

Cell Groups(contact hosts/leaders) 7.30 p.m.

Monday

Prayer Meeting 10.00 a.m.
Badminton Club 6.30 p.m. - 9.30 p.m.

Tuesday

Home from Home 1.00 p.m.

Friday

IT Youth Club 7.45 p.m.

Saturday

Morning of Prayer 9.30 a.m.

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Sunday 27 April

for publication on

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Theme:

'Pentecost's Power

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FROM THE EDITOR

Andrea and I spent a long weekend in Prague in early February this year. On the Sunday morning we took a funicular railway up to the Petrin Gardens at the top of a hill close to Prague Castle. In one of the gardens, called the Lookout Tower Garden, there are three churches and a network of paths around which are scattered the fourteen 'Stations of the Cross', with images of Christ's last journey delicately painted on white stones. Two of these are shown on the front cover. I found the depictions of Christ's suffering extremely moving.



Jesus surrendered Himself totally to His Father's will when He prayed in the garden, "Abba, Father, everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will." On the Cross and on His journey to it He endured total suffering. No one before or since gave, or ever will give, so much for so many. As we celebrate the joy of His resurrection this Easter may we reflect on a life given to total surrender to His Father's will, both during His ministry and at His Passion. Hallelujah! Christ is risen indeed!

Robert Mill

FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

There is a deep paradox in the theme of this issue of the Bristo Magazine: *Total Surrender*. The paradox is vital. If we don't discover it, we're in real problems. Because people who think that their lives are in total surrender to God, or that if they make a big effort can be, are deluded! We are coming up to Easter. The account of Jesus Christ's death by crucifixion and His Resurrection is celebrated by millions upon millions around the world. Easter is about humankind's failure. And also about God's victory in expressing His love and acceptance of us, in the midst of our failure.

And this is the paradox. None of us



Rev. J. Purves

can surrender ourselves to God completely. Many have tried and failed. So God sent His Son, to become like us. He did it for us. He gave His whole life in surrender to God. And God used Him to bring His love to all mankind.

If you and I really want to know more of God in our lives, the first thing you and I need to face up to is our failure. You and I fail just like other people. We fail to do what is right. And we fail to achieve what we want to.

**None of us can
surrender
ourselves to God
completely.**

FROM THE PASTOR

But something else is also true for us. We have heard of God's love. His forgiveness and acceptance. The power of what Jesus Christ has done for us. And we have stepped forward to receive. Or have we?

The trouble is, we can make the mistake of thinking that it's all about trying. Or just persuading ourselves. But that doesn't do the job. We really need to receive something from God. We need to receive the Living Waters of the Holy Spirit into our lives.

Only the Holy Spirit can make us more holy. Only the Holy Spirit can enable us to give ourselves to be more open to God. In spiritual terms, we're all like chickens trying to fly! Until the Spirit of God draws us

into Jesus, and lifts us like eagles. Then things change.

For you and I to grow spiritually, again and again we will have to face the reality of our failure. It is a painful thing. We want to be so perfect, but we're not. We want to please God, knowing we cannot. That's the one part of the paradox. So thank God for the other part of the paradox. The other part is that God accepts us, totally and completely. Because of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has opened a doorway for us, to enter through.

So let's go through. Together as failures. Accepting and forgiving. Also together knowing the

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PASTOR'S LETTER cont.

power of God through Jesus Christ. The power that comes to who those who seek and wait.

Face your failure and mine. Know you deserve nothing from God. But remember too what Jesus Christ has done for us all. And open your arms in thankfulness. And then wait to see what will surely come. God will lead you forward, deeper into the total surrender that is found in Jesus Christ alone.

In His love,

Jim

TREASURER'S REPORT

March through April is probably the busiest time for the treasurer. March means making sure records are all up to date, and ensuring everything that needs to be paid in the current financial year is paid (with time to ensure the cheques clear, otherwise it makes me more work!). April means preparing the accounts, making sure everything balances and finally allocating everything to the correct funds.

As I mentioned in the last issue of the magazine, the level of our church income allows me to prepare simplified accounts. Well at least in theory it does. OSCR have just published guidelines and example accounts, and at first sight the examples look more complicated, not simplified! Hopefully this is because I'm not so familiar with the new layout and structure. All the basic categories are there, offerings and expenditure, it's just that some things need to be joined together where as previously they were reported separately ... and that means work to revisit last year's figures as these are also included in the accounts.

This year we've done well. Offerings have held up compared to last year, and we've been more than able to cover our running costs and our support of other causes, but things are not all well. We have spent all the money in the Building Fund, and there are more repairs and

TREASURER'S REPORT cont.

improvements to be done. Much of the work is essential safety work. This is obviously a concern, as we have to be careful about how much we overspend.

There is better news regarding how much money we've been able to give away this year. LOM has been given £5000 in love gifts and to support their winter soup kitchen. We've also been able to give £1000 to BMS, and £600 to Bethany. Church members have also contributed generously to the Belogradchik Orphanage appeal.

Thanks to those of you who have chosen to use the weekly offering envelopes. Should anyone else like to take the envelopes please let Christine know. Christine is also our Gift Aid co-ordinator. If anyone would find it easier to pay by standing order to the church, and several people already do, then please let me know and I'll give you the relevant account details.

Paul Watson

ENGAGEMENT

Congratulations to *Matt Baines* (pictured below left) and *Karolina Kurtyka* (right) on their engagement. Pray for this young couple as they prepare for marriage later in the year.



ELECTION OF DEACONS

Our annual election of deacons is due to take place at the beginning of June. Appointment as a deacon lasts for three years with effect from the Annual General Meeting, unless foreshortened by decision of the members. Of the present deacons, David Pollard and Paul Watson have each served two years of their current 3-year term, while Christine Lumsden, Robert and Andrea Mill, Craig Smith and Barbara Toal have completed one year. It is therefore open to those in full membership of Bristo Baptist Church to consider prayerfully any addition to the diaconate.

This note outlines the responsibilities of members and deacons and sets out the procedures to be followed and the timetable for this year's election.

Duties of Deacons

The deacons are responsible to the church for the day to day running of its affairs, seeking to guide the church as collectively we discern the Lord's will as a congregation. They co-ordinate

reports, bring recommendations to the church and implement its decisions. The deacons are also *ex officio* trustees of Bristo Baptist Church and so carry certain responsibilities under the charity laws. Above all, as the name (*diakonos*) suggests, deacons are servants of Jesus Christ and of this congregation, supporting the pastor in his spiritual leadership.

Qualities of Deacons

We read in **Acts 6:1-6** how the early church chose the first deacons. They were men of good report, full of faith, of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom. In **1 Timothy 3:8-13** Paul advises Timothy of the qualities he should look for in deacons. They should be reverent, holding the mystery of faith with a clear conscience, tested and found blameless. In other words they should be mature in faith, ready to listen to God and to the people they serve, seeking to encourage and care for others in service, and leading lives honouring to God.

ELECTION OF DEACONS (CONT.)

Nominations

Nomination for election to the office of deacon should be submitted in writing to any of the present deacons, together with the names and signatures of two referees, the candidate's express agreement having been obtained previously. Candidates, proposers and seconders should all be full members of Bristo Baptist Church. Nominations should be submitted not later than **6.30 p.m. on Sunday 11 May**. Ballot papers will be distributed to members who participate in morning or evening worship on either **Sunday 18 or Sunday 25 May**. Arrangements will be made to issue ballot papers to the housebound or those prevented by illness from attending.

Procedure

Ballot papers should be returned no later than the evening service on **Sunday 1 June**. For appointment as a deacon of Bristo Baptist Church not less than 2/3 of the total votes cast must be in the candidate's favour. Two of the continuing deacons will act as scrutineers and Dr Purves will give private confidential intimation to the candidates before the result of the election is announced at the Annual General Meeting on **Wednesday 4 June**.

The election of deacons is one of the most important responsibilities we have as church members and we each have a role to play. During the next few weeks may we all prayerfully consider the following questions:

Is God calling me to this task?

Whom has the Lord laid on my heart to nominate for this service?

Let us all in humility draw near to God and seek His will as together we go forward in the power of the Holy Spirit that we may *through love serve one another*. (**Galatians 5:13**).

Christine Lumsden

PRAY FOR COLOMBIA

Miguel Palomino of FATELA, who was part of our fellowship some years ago, has sent us a prayer letter from one of his Colombian colleagues based in Medellin. Please remember Miguel and his friend Manuel.

As you may have heard or read, the Colombian armed forces found and killed “Raul Reyes” the man who was believed to be the No. 2 of the terrorist organization called FARC, and one of its most extreme hard liners. From the beginning the Colombian government acknowledged that this man and his bodyguard were pursued even when they had entered Ecuadorian territory, and allegedly his death occurred one mile within this neighbour country’s jurisdiction. The Ecuadorian President’s (Rafael Correa) initial reaction was one of apparent understanding of the situation; however, hours later Venezuela’s President, Hugo Chávez, sent a strong warning to Colombia, closed its embassy in Bogota and ordered ten battalions to be mobilized immediately to the Colombian-Venezuelan border. Ecuador’s reaction then changed immediately and dramatically, rejected all Colombian apologies, and did the same as Venezuela, recalling its ambassador in Bogota and deploying troops at the Ecuadorian-Colombian border. Last night [March 2nd], the last we knew was that the Colombian Chief of Police went on live TV showing a document found in the laptop of the killed terrorist, where he reported to the Secretariat that he had met with Ecuador’s Minister of Defence, sent by President Correa to offer FARC official recognition as a belligerent force (as Venezuela has already done), in exchange for the opportunity for President Correa to appear as the broker of the release of one of the hostages that FARC keeps, and also bringing an offer to remove from all territories where FARC has presence in Ecuador of all army and police Ecuadorian officers that are not sympathetic with them. Now it is Colombia that is demanding explanations.

That’s the summary of what we know through the media, and be as it were, the truth is that two of Colombia’s neighbours are at the brink of declaring war on her. The governments of both countries are sympathetic to the armed group that has sown terror and violence and chaos for the last 40 years, and seem to be prepared to do whatever is necessary to help them now that the Colombian legitimate armed forces have the upper hand (a good number of important mid-level leaders of FARC have been either captured or killed in the last year alone, and last Friday it was a high ranking member of the Secretariat that was killed, even believed by some to be the No. 2).

PRAY FOR COLOMBIA cont.

If you look at a map, you'll see Colombia sitting between Ecuador at the South West and Venezuela to the North East. The other neighbours are Panama, Brazil and Peru. What is not that easy to see is that Ecuador and Venezuela are the only two countries with whom Colombia has contact by road (the Pan American Highway); the other three are jungle borders, completely inaccessible. That means that in case of war, you won't see the usual images of hundreds of thousands trying to escape reaching the

opposite borders. People here will be trapped in a three-pronged clamp: an immensely rich and well armed enemy led by a hideous madman at the north, a much smaller but noxious enough enemy led by a puppet of the madman at the south and a vicious and blood thirsty guerrilla (more like a powerful drug cartel really), supported by the previous two from within.

How to pray?

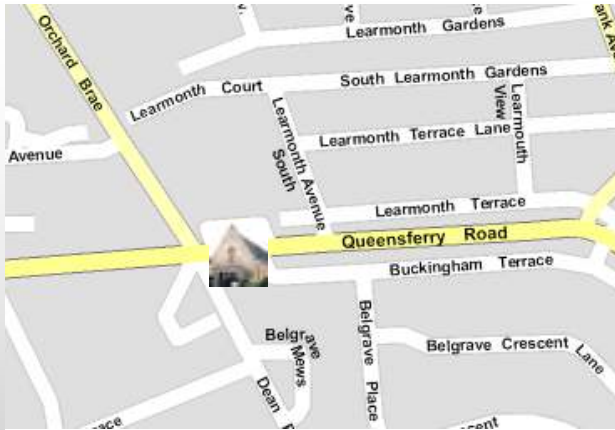
- All we know at the moment is that we must pray that open war is not declared and does not develop.
- Chávez's egomaniac plans for conquering all South American countries (or at least those that were freed from the Spanish Empire by Simon Bolivar) to be thwarted somehow. Chávez thinks of himself as the reincarnation of Bolivar, but he's actually closer to Hitler or Stalin than to anyone else.
- Pray that Christians can bear witness biblically and that in this time of crisis many more people can turn to God in the midst of their fear and despair.
- Pray for safety for us. If this turns from bad to worse, Patty [Manuel's wife] and the kids would have to be sent to Peru (one of the few countries where they don't need visas to go in a moment's decision). The problem is that if things get to that point, it is very possible that Peru may get sucked into the conflict, like it or not.

We don't know if things will get as bad as they could; it all seems so unreal, so fantastic, so hard to believe ... but we don't need them to get that bad to pray anyway, do we?

Thanks for being there. God bless you.

Manuel Reaño (Principal, Medellin Bible Seminary)

LOCATION



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*If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender
my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain
nothing.*

1 Corinthians 13: 3 NIV