



continuous conversion

by Jaroslav B Tusek

A BRIEF MEMORY NOTE OF MY FATHER, JUDR JAROSLAV TUSEK

I put together hastily, after my father's funeral in August 2001 in Prague, Czech Republic, the following assemblage of personal thoughts and recollections of my father. I did not use any documents, personal notes, diaries or other printed materials but simply composed this note based on my own recollections. (Matthew 11: 27). I updated it for the 96th anniversary of my father's birth in January 1912. This is Part II of my memory note of my father; Part I was in the August 2008 issue of continuous conversion.

CITIZEN OF SEVEN LANDS (CONTINUED)

My Father's Accomplishments

During his lifetime my father, Jaroslav Tusek, accomplished many things. He was an educated man who valued greatly his education, his family and friends, as well as his citizenship in seven different countries. He imbued his two sons, Zdenek and myself, with a life-long love for learning, for studying languages, and for taking sports seriously. It is not just by chance that I can get by in Czech, Russian, Norwegian, French, German and English and can manage some Japanese as well.

My father was a lifetime student of history, literature, geography, politics, and the Bible. He was a great volleyball player till the age of sixty, and an avid and experienced gardener (a hobby he kept alive to the last months of his life). He followed closely the progress of his children, his grandchildren and his great-great grandchild Ava. It is for a reason that his grandchild David wrote about him that he was a "walking encyclopedia."

My father obtained his law degree from Charles University of Prague, which was established, by the Holy Roman Emperor and

King of Bohemia Charles IV, in 1348. He worked most of his fruitful and productive life as an attorney in Prague, and was proud of his profession. He gained the respect of his professional colleagues, but because of the vicissitudes of the times during which he practiced his profession, I believe he was most happy when he could take care of his flowers, vegetables and fruits at his garden in Mechenice near Prague. There he and his wife Vera developed a close circle of friends, their "parta," with whom they spent their best and most happy times. Besides meeting regularly at least on weekends, they celebrated together their birthdays, special events and national holidays; in earlier years they vacationed in Slovakia

or elsewhere and pursued recreational activities.

Perhaps the most unforgettable memories I hold of my father are our family vacations in various attractive areas of Bohemia and Moravia. During these summer and winter vacations we visited every year one or two places in Sumava, Jeseňany, Kasperske hory, Krkonose, Chodsko, Lazne Beloves u Na-

choda, Lazne Leskov, or another area suitable for our joint favorite activities, which included exploring ruins of various ancient castles, picking mushrooms and berries in the woods, swimming and fishing in lakes and rivers, and skiing in the winter.

My father's outstanding knowledge of Czech history came handy, especially during visits to various castles and places of historical significance in the Bohemian or Moravian countryside. *To p. 2*



In Thermopolis, Wyoming in 1991: Noah and Melissa Shepherd; Grit-Maren Beer; Jarda Tusek; Vera Tuskova; Sara Shepherd; Nadia Linkova, "Big" Jarda, David Tusek.
Photo courtesy Dr. Z. A. Tusek

Always the Leader and Always in Charge

My father loved to act as guide and historian for visitors to his homeland. In Christmas 1991 my wife Sara and I went to Prague with a group of students from Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Georgia where I taught at the time, and from the University of the South at Sewanee, Tennessee, Sara's workplace. My father was the center of attention and completely in charge of organizing our students' sightseeing visits and Christmas Eve celebration with the family. Even during the communist era, many of our American friends visited my parents repeatedly, including my friends Paul and Eeva Hacker, Bill and Mona Angel, Gene Guill, Baruska Benedetto of Macon, Georgia and Columbia, South Carolina and Francis Harrold of Atlanta, Georgia; many more visited after the collapse of communism, between 1989 and 1997. My father always organized their sightseeing visits to places of historical importance and frequently acted as a personal guide.

Although I have been living for the past 33 years in America, I know my father and my mother especially valued and appreciated their friendship with the Bouceks, the Kubiks, the Muchas, and the Kimls. My father's sister (my aunt) Dobromila, who died three years ago in 1998 on the same day, August 16, as my father, was included in all of these social activities and also belonged to this close circle of friends when she visited with my parents in Mechenice.

When he still could write (up to about six weeks before his death) my father wrote letters at least once a week to his children and grandchildren in America. He twice visited the United States of America. At the age of 80 he was still charging buffalos in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming in order to take their pictures. He visited Princeton University and traveled with his wife around New Jersey and Pennsylvania, then they visited my brother Zdenek's family at their home in Norfolk, Nebraska, also visiting South Dakota; from there the combined family (my brother, his son David, my wife Sara and myself with our children Noah and Melissa, my cousin Nadia

and our friend from East Germany, Grit-Maren) traveled through Wyoming, Montana and Colorado, visiting many national parks. Both my father and my mother seemed to enjoy their visits in America and later shared frequently the experiences, pictures and books they brought back with their friends back home.

Quo Vadis Domine?

At my father's death he was honored by his family and friends for his honesty, integrity, sincerity and loyalty. All my father's surviving friends and family members met after my father's funeral on August 22, 2001, at our family's favorite restaurant, Hotel Hejtman (near my parents' home at Zizkov) where my father liked to have dinner on special occasions. The last time he had dined there was during the last Christmas reunion of the extended Tusek family, together again for the first time in 33 years. At that time my father was still in good spirits and, as usual, he insisted on paying for the meal for everybody. He was still in charge.

Perhaps the thing for which I am most grateful to my father is that he helped me to realize that nothing contributes so much to tranquility, peace of mind and imperturbability as a steady and clear purpose – a point upon which the soul may fix its intellectual eye. Thanks to my father, I (and quite likely other people he influenced) can realize that our primary purpose in life is to know God, the creator of the Universe, enjoy Him forever and to see His hand in all His works. My father lived courageously, with a significant level of transparency. He was focused on using and exercising his God-given gifts in places and settings for those purposes God had for him at that given time. For his epitaph we selected a verse from Revelation 14:13.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

(end of Part II. See August 2008 *continuous conversion* for Part I)

