



[Home](#) | [Women of Gentle Spirit](#) | [Study Materials](#) | [Software & Tracts](#) | [Special Items](#) | [Music](#) | [Staff](#) | [Authors](#) | [Links](#)



Greatly Blessed

By: Lucia Rukovanska

I have been greatly blessed by the Lord. I have a wonderful job working here in Slovakia with an evangelist from the States. Fred Newman and his family have been here for almost seven years and even though he has been learning Slovak, he still finds it to be a great challenge. He understands a lot, but cannot speak it much. After I graduated from the university, I started working for him full-time and I see that as one of the greatest blessings. Not only am I helping others to hear the Word, but I'm learning about God myself in the process!

Lifestyle here is quite different from the one in the States. Teaching the Bible is very different, because the influence of the Catholic church is so very strong here and everyone who is not part of it or the Evangelical church (I believe that would be Lutheran church) is considered to be involved in a sect (something considered extremely scary). People are generally quite unwilling to change,

believing that the traditions of their grandparents are the truth, afraid to understand the implications of hearing the truth.

During communism people were allowed to join the Catholic



or the Evangelical churches. Generally, faith in God was not something one would talk about, and Czechoslovakia was a very atheist country. People who did believe in God weren't persecuted, but when it was known they were believers, they wouldn't get promotions in their jobs and were generally in a disadvantage. Religion was generally looked upon as 'the belief of simple-minded', tolerated and acceptable only when coming from Grandmas and Grandpas and I believe that in many atheists' minds that's how they still see it. Interestingly enough, should you ask people in a survey in the street if they are believers, or members of a church, most of them will tell you that they are Catholics, even if they go to church just once a year or were christened as little babies! They've simply concluded that as long as they believe in their heart, they don't need to go to church.

Things have changed much over the past few decades around here. I was quite young when Czechoslovakia broke free of the communist rule, but I remember what things used to be like. In a way, life was much simpler back then. Everyone had a job and unless they had done something really bad, they were guaranteed to keep it until they retired. There were no really rich people and no really poor people. At that time I didn't see that, but now I know that many things were really lopsided. Educated people made less money than manual laborers, we could see that when we looked at my Mom's salary and Dad's. Dad as a doctor never made as much money as Mom did as a clothes designer. Shops closed very early and there wasn't much food to choose from. The shops were dirty and gray, shelves were empty, many times we had to go to several different shops to find milk that wasn't soured or dripping from the smelly plastic bags it was sold in and the everyday simple joys consisted of being able to find very basic staple products. The selection of fruit and vegetables was very limited as well, while citrus fruits, bananas and pineapples were a Christmas treat! Now we have shops where you can find anything you need (and even more things one really doesn't need) and it brought so many changes with it!



People used to work from 8am till 5pm and that was it. Now the job situation's changed and many people have to work extremely long hours if they want to keep their jobs. That's how we ended up with people who work twelve to fourteen hours a day, with no time for anything. It seems like there's no time in some people's lives for the simple joys anymore, because they are too busy making money! It's difficult to find a good job in Slovakia, though it's easier in Bratislava (the capital).

I believe that communism really corrupted people's

character. I remember that there used to be a saying that 'He who does not steal, is robbing his own family.' It was normal to take things from work, since things didn't belong to anyone. People continue in this trend. Unfortunately, we see it everyday in the political situation, but also on a much smaller scale. People who have opened their small businesses cheat in taxes, don't pay the State for their employees, the workers still consider it to be 'a normal thing' to take things here and there. This is something that Christians have to battle with on an everyday basis. Kids at school go through the same thing. Cheating at school is something 'everyone does' and never give it a second thought. It's about being inventive and why should one not help their neighbor when they don't know something on a test? It would be considered as 'rude' and 'selfish' and certainly no kids would play with you then. That's what Christian kids have to fight with at school every day. Home schooling is not allowed in this country, so one can't simply take kids out of school and teach them at home. This is true at least while they're little so later on they'd be more able to resist the snares and would not be afraid to stand up for the truth and doing what's right.

The culture of busy working mothers has been around for decades and it was something greatly supported and encouraged by the communist party. Mothers have always had a right to be on maternity leave for three years and they get some money from the State during that period of time. It's not much, but most mothers make use of it or at least part of it. Afterwards though, just about every woman heads back to work, and I have to say that I've never met one Slovak 'full time housewife' in my life around here. That, however, is not just a matter of choice in most cases. It's a matter of being able to have enough money to meet one's everyday needs so if the women can find a job, they get one. Of course there are regions in Slovakia with very high unemployment rate (up to 80% in some places). I really cannot imagine how they make ends meet there.

The housing situation in Slovakia is quite bad. It's very expensive to buy an apartment or a house, so it is not unusual to find two or three generations living in one, two, or three bedroom apartments. Renting an apartment or a room is very expensive too, so young people usually choose to remain living with their parents instead. One of the Christian families from our church lived in a very small apartment that consisted of a hallway (which was made into a small kitchen), a bathroom, and one small room. In that one room that was their bedroom, living room, dining room – simply an all-purpose room, there were six of them and a dog! They lived like that for



three years and they were a great motivation for me and a great encouragement. They moved outside the city (about 3 years ago) – about 45 miles, so they'd be able to have a two bedroom apartment. They commute every single day. It may not seem like a long way, but they have to walk to the train station every day (15 minutes), the train trip takes them 45 minutes and then they still have to take a bus to work (another 15 minutes). They are a wonderful family and a great example to all the Christians here, I believe. They of course have to travel that same distance when they come to the Bible studies or the worship, many times with small children. Our evangelist studies with their family every Monday and that one study alone takes us from 1.30pm till 8.30pm with all the travel and the study time.

The Lord blesses us greatly, I consider myself to be extremely blessed. I have a job I love and am a part of God's wonderful family with great brothers and sisters who are an example to me and who I can learn from!