

First Unification Church Mission in Communist Eastern Europe: Czechoslovakia

Emilie Steberl

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Emilie Steberl at the Austria-Czechoslovakia border, October 30, 1968

Emilie Steberl - Original missionary to Czechoslovakia (1968-70)

I want to give heartfelt greetings from the Czechoslovakian family. I was there for a few days just a little while ago. The members all want to send you all very much love.

In the last few months they increased to be very strong. They feel very clearly that they are receiving much love from our Father. They have a strong connection to our True Parents. They really love our Parents very strongly.

For reasons of security they cannot live together, or even meet each other very often; and so they all work on a separate basis.

The political situation is increasingly bad, and they had to get rid of all the Principle material. They had to

hide it, because the police are after them ow. Also, they had to burn all the pictures of our Master. During this time, they really grew together. Whatever may come they have really decided to go through it. They would really like our Parents to know the situation as it is now in Czechoslovakia.



One of the Slovak language translations of the Principle of the kind Emilie would smuggle into Czechoslovakia to help teach the Principle to the young members.

About two years ago we made the translation [of Principle content] into the Slovak language. Last fall, I have done it again. I have corrected it. In Essen [Germany] we printed about 150 copies of the book, but only a few as bound volumes. The others are just as separate chapters, so that the police would not be able to find one book in one place.

When we got through the printing of the Principle I crossed the border and took maybe 20 at a time into Czechoslovakia – because there is strict control on the border. But they did not catch me. I was fortunate to either take them, or not to take them, at certain times.

The family over there is being strongly led by the spirit world through dreams. They all work very strongly for the Principle, but they have to do everything secretly.

I live in Frankfurt where I work at Lufthansa; so I have the opportunity to go there at least once a month for about 10 percent of the normal fare to Czechoslovakia, to visit. On the other side, I make good money there to support them financially. Most of them are studying at the university and don't make any money. There are just about all the university departments represented within the family now, even medicine. There are 12 solid members.



The “Hall of Justice” in Bratislava, where 19 members were held for questioning in 1973-74. One member died during this period of confinement.

There is one point for everybody here: The situation with the investigation of the police in Czechoslovakia is very bad now, and even I may have to change my name in order to get across the border. They are being investigated by the government, and for that reason no one should ever go to Czechoslovakia and contact anyone from the family.

Note:

The police investigation in Czechoslovakia resulted in the arrest and incarceration, in the late summer of 1973, of most of the active members in Czechoslovakia.

After months of questioning, some 25 members were convicted, mostly of subversion, and received prison sentences of between one and five years.

After the *Velvet Revolution* [November 17 to December 29, 1989] marked the end of the communist era in Czechoslovakia, the members received a government pardon and their criminal records were wiped clean.