

# **Remembering Ludek Broz: Theologian of a Radical Christian Humanism**

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Korea is a land where one honors one's ancestors. In the living out of the theological vocation, one is always aware of theological ancestors who have gone on before. Some of these theological ancestors have been lifelong companions, such as St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and John Calvin. Others have been with us for a much shorter period, such as Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, and Ham Sok Hon. Still others have been passing acquaintances, whom we have met through their lectures, books, or in chance personal meetings, such as Jurgen Moltmann, Tissa Balasuriya, C. S. Song, and Jung Young Lee.

One of these latter theological ancestors was the Czech theologian Ludek Broz, who was a visiting professor at Hanil University and Presbyterian Theological Seminary during the spring semester of 1997. This was the first time that I made his acquaintance, and little did I know that a friendship would develop which continued until his death in August of 2003. Since he was an advocate of contextual theology and a particular friend of Korea, it is fitting that in 2008, five years following his death, he be remembered.

## **Introduction: Twentieth-Century Czech Theology**

Ludek Broz was one of an outstanding company of postwar theologians and ecumenical leaders to emerge from what was then Czechoslovakia. Included in this group were Josef Lukl Hromadka, Jan Milic Lochman, and Milan Opocensky. Together with Broz they engaged with a prophetic voice the Soviet power which occupied their homeland.<sup>1</sup> They lectured, preached, wrote books, edited journals, and kept alive the light of faith even in the darkest of times. They took part in a Christian-Marxist dialogue that was often misunderstood, both by the Soviets and by many in the West.<sup>2</sup> They were active in the Christian Peace Conference and were sometimes labeled as communist sympathizers as a result. On visits to the United States they were frequently picketed and heckled by right wing Christian groups. In ecumenical meetings they sought to rise above the political division of East and West and were denounced by some and praised by others. Only now, in this third millennium, when their voices have been stilled, are we beginning to understand how prophetic they really were.

Josef L. Hromadka (1889-1969), the elder teacher in this group, was a prolific author, lecturer, theologian, and professor at the Comenius Theological Faculty in Prague. He was a founder and first president of the Christian Peace Conference as well as a guest professor at Princeton Theological Seminary. Active in ecumenical affairs, especially in the World Council of Churches, he always sought to overcome the East-West divide while at the same time recognizing that the context for his theological life and work was primarily on the eastern side of that divide. His words delivered at the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1948 are perhaps more timely now, in

this age of globalization, than they were at the beginning of the Cold War: “The Church of Christ has got to go beyond the present national, political and “bloc” divisions. She cannot, if she be loyal to her mission, identify herself with any group of people....Without illusions or self-deception she is aware of the terrible dangers lurking within the Western and Eastern heart.”<sup>3</sup> Hromadka, as a theologian, professor, church leader, and ecumenist, influenced twentieth-century Czech ecclesiastical life and work more than any other person.

Jan Milic Lochman (1922-2004), was the quiet scholar in the group, who although active in both the World Council of Churches and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, spent eighteen years as a professor of theology at the Comenius Theological Faculty and over twenty-three years as a professor at the University of Basel in Switzerland. Indeed he writes that “If there is anything special about my theological and academic pilgrimage, it is the simple fact that I have taught theology both in Eastern and Western Europe.”<sup>4</sup> Lochman was a sensitive interpreter of the theological situation in the East. He took a leading role in producing a WARC statement on the theological basis of human rights in 1976 and always championed the eschatological hope of the Czech reformers of the past, beginning in the fourteenth century and continuing up through the seventeenth century even into the twentieth century as in the Prague Spring of 1968. According to Lochman the forerunners and leaders of the Czech Reformation “were able to apply this hope not only to their personal destiny but also to their church and society.”<sup>5</sup> Lochman’s influence came primarily through his teaching, and while at Basel, there were numerous doctoral students who were attracted to him and to his incisive thought.

Milan Opocensky (1931-2007), was both a theologian and professor of social ethics at the Comenius Theological Faculty. However in more recent decades his major focus was within the ecumenical movement, especially the World Alliance of Reformed Churches where he served a number of positions including that of general secretary. From early on Opocensky attempted to cross the East-West divide and he frequently lectured in the West.<sup>6</sup> Always critical of the dehumanizing forces, in both East and West, Opocensky was a strong advocate of those oppressed by unjust political and economic structures. Following the collapse of communism in Europe, Opocensky turned his attention to the free market system and the forces of globalization. He watched in dismay as the East emulated the West in the pursuit of material and monetary gain. It was Opocensky more than any other person who advocated a *processus confessionis* within the churches of Europe and North America, whereby the churches would turn away from the free market system and seek to alleviate the problems brought about by an unjust global economic order.<sup>7</sup>

Ludek Broz (1922-2003), was perhaps the least known of the four theologians in this group. For most of his career he was a professor of theology at the Comenius Theological Faculty and director of the Czech church publishing house Kalich. He served with Hromadka in the Christian Peace Conference and in founding the quarterly journal *Communio Vitorum* which he edited for many years. Unlike Lochman and Opocensky, who spent much of their careers living and working in the West, Broz served the Czech church as a theologian and publisher in Prague. Aside from special lectureships, including a term as visiting professor at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, and involvement in the ecumenical movement, Broz occupied a position of editor and publisher which kept him largely out of the public eye. As an advocate for economic

justice, Broz focused his non-European travels on Africa and Asia, and often lectured at theological institutions and to groups that were outside the usual ecumenical circuit. Through his extensive editing and writing, Ludek Broz has left an enduring legacy. Broz and his theological life and work deserve to be remembered, for he has much to teach us about the times in which we live.

### **An Overview of the Life and Work of Ludek Broz**

Ludek Broz was born on 2 May 1922 in Prague.<sup>8</sup> Following the completion of his secondary education in 1941, he began his theological studies in an illegal seminary of the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren. This was during the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia and all of the recognized theological faculties were forcibly closed. During these years Broz also gave religious instruction in several schools and helped in several church parishes. Thus from the very beginning of his theological studies, Broz had to contend with the forces of occupation. It is significant that he resisted those forces through his vocation as a teacher and pastor in training.

Following the end of World War II and the collapse of Nazism, Broz continued his theological studies at the Hus Faculty of Protestant Theology at the Charles University in Prague. At the same time he studied philosophy and Semitic languages in the Faculty of Philosophy. He completed his Bachelor of Theology degree at the Protestant Theological Faculty of the University of Strasbourg in France in 1948. While in Strasbourg Broz became fluent in French and this was to serve him in good stead many years later when he turned his attentions to francophone Africa. He returned to his homeland to study for the doctorate in theology and received his degree in 1961 from the Comenius Faculty of Theology with a dissertation on the renowned Italian reformer Pierre Martire Vermigli.<sup>9</sup> This was followed by the completion of his Habilitationschrift which qualified him to become a professor in the theological faculty.

With the exception of a guest professorship at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary in the USA in 1988, Broz spent his entire teaching career as a member of the Comenius Theological Faculty where he was professor of systematic theology. From 1976 onward he was the Head of the Department of Systematic Theology and from 1988-1990 he served as Dean of the Comenius Theological Faculty. In 1986 he was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Geneva. He retired from full-time teaching in 1990.

Although only one of Broz's books has been published in English translation, he was a prolific author in the Czech language and wrote several books and numerous essays in festschriften and academic journals.<sup>10</sup> As a systematic theologian he had wide interests and his bibliography includes essays on O. Cullmann, J. B. Soucka, M. Buber, L. Wittgenstein, C. Levi-Strauss, P. Ricour, Y. Congar, and M. Chenu. He also wrote on hermeneutics, semantics, linguistics and logic. He was particularly interested in the thought of his mentor J. L. Hromadka and in one essay, compared Hromadka's thought with that of Karl Barth. In 1988 he authored a Czech biography of Barth. Broz was an active translator and he translated many books from French, English, and German into Czech.<sup>11</sup> In addition to his work with the Christian Peace Conference, he participated in numerous ecumenical projects between various Protestant groups and between Protestants and Catholics. Broz was a participant in the Prague Consultations which were

held in 1986, 1987, 1989, 1994, 1998, and 2000. Initially held in Prague for the first three years, the consultations later moved to other cities such as Geneva and Strasbourg. He was also an active member of the Societe Europeenne de Culture. Theologically Broz served as a bridge builder between the Czech church and the world, and the world and the Czech church.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of Broz to the theological life and work of the Czech church was through his service as an editor and publisher. He first became involved in publishing as a result of his work with Sunday schools and continuing education for church elders. From 1949-1971 he was secretary of the Synod Council responsible for church education and in this position he worked with the editing and publishing of curriculum materials. From 1946-1949 he was editor of a Protestant weekly *Kostnické Jiskry* which gave him an ecumenical audience beyond the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren. In 1958, together with J. L. Hromádka and J. B. Souček, he founded the international journal *Communio Viatorum*, a theological quarterly which appeared in English, French, and German. Broz served as chief editor of *Communio Viatorum* from 1958 until his retirement in 1990. It was through this journal that Broz's audience became an international one. Not surprisingly he also served as the chief editor of the church publishing house Kalich for over twenty years. No doubt his greatest publishing effort was the journal *Metanoia*, which he founded in 1991 and edited through 2002 shortly before his death in 2003.

### **A Decade of Independent Publishing**

Following his retirement from teaching at the Comenius Theological Faculty and from all of his official church editing and publishing positions, Broz founded a new journal with the rather lengthy title *Metanoia—An Independent Periodical of Social and Cultural Issues*. Although several of the early issues were published by Kalich, Broz took over the publication of the journal himself and founded the L. Broz Metanoia Press expressly for this purpose. Originally conceived as a quarterly, *Metanoia* was published in English and French and was thoroughly international in its contributors, readership, and subject matter. Buoyed by the success of the journal, Broz added a Czech edition in 1993 known as *Ceska Metanoia*.

In the first issue, which appeared in the summer of 1991, Broz wrote that “By calling this quarterly *metanoia*, we intend to express our program for the last ten years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>12</sup> Ten years later, using the terrorist attack in the United States on 11 September 2001 as a reference point, Broz wrote an editorial entitled “The Unquestionable End of the Twentieth Century.”<sup>13</sup> Although the journal was to continue publication for another year, there can be no doubt that Broz did fulfill his promise to chronicle the events of the final decade of the century and provide a thoroughly Christian and humanistic program to deal with those events.

There were some, of course, who used the collapse of communism in Europe as their reference point for the end of the twentieth century. This was true both in the East and in the West. In Pärnu, Estonia, in front of the Pärnu New Art Museum also known as the Charlie Chaplin Centre, there is an unusual statue of Lenin with the head and hands cut off. Cast iron statues of Lenin were found in town squares and school yards all throughout the former Soviet bloc. With the fall of communism these statues were pulled

down and discarded. The artist brought one of these discarded statues to the museum and replaced the head and hands with flashing yellow lights. But what is most telling is the sign on the base of the statue. It reads simply “Bye-bye the 20<sup>th</sup> Century!”

In the West this argument was put most forcefully by Francis Fukuyama in the summer of 1989 in an article entitled “The End of History” in the journal *The National Interest* and followed up in 1992 with the book *The End of History and the Last Man*.<sup>14</sup> According to Fukuyama “a remarkable consensus concerning the legitimacy of liberal democracy as a system of government had emerged throughout the world over the past few years, as it conquered rival ideologies like hereditary monarchy, fascism, and most recently communism.”<sup>15</sup> Liberal democracy involves not only political rights, but also economic rights. Thus Fukuyama asserts that “In its economic manifestation, liberalism is the recognition of the right of free economic activity and economic exchange based on private property and markets.”<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, he avers that those democratic states that “protect such economic rights we will consider liberal; those that are opposed or base themselves on other principles (such as “economic justice”) will not qualify.”<sup>17</sup> With the collapse of authoritarian political systems—the last of which was communism—liberal democracy, and with it the free-market economy, emerged triumphant and “History” came to an end.

Broz, however, did not see the collapse of communism as signaling the end of the twentieth century, and the reason can be found in the editorial of the first issue of *Metanoia* where he wrote that “Socialism became an enormously discredited word and democracy, which once protected the poor majority against the rich, now guards the well off middle class, sufficiently large, from the poor.”<sup>18</sup> He went on to note that a global electronic network functions “exclusively for *sheer financial gain*” and this is the source of most of our contemporary evils.<sup>19</sup> Broz, following in the footsteps of Hromadka, saw clearly that both communism and liberal democracy had within them the seeds of evil. In his editorial of 2001 he wrote:

What after September 11, 2001—when so many things considered certain became uncertain if not ambiguous—remains absolutely sure, is that our world took a very different turn. Not only that the great successes of western man (wealthy, skillful, capable of anything) appear questionable, it seems that the composite of his well-being, the whole system upon which he built up his life, whether we call it liberal capitalist or post-modern, is in jeopardy. The collapsed *Twin Towers* and the damaged *Pentagon* are two horrifying shouts. They reveal the depths of human hatred and force us to realize that the situation had become so dramatically serious that we cannot go on as before.<sup>20</sup>

For Broz the true end of the twentieth century came with the realization that liberal democracy with its ties to the free market economic system contained within it the seeds of its own destruction. Thus not one, but *two*, twentieth-century socio-political economic systems had either collapsed (communism) or were showing signs of terminal weakness (free market capitalism). The former was characterized by political and economic control; the latter was characterized by political and economic freedom. Both in their own way were dehumanizing.

In an earlier editorial in *Metanoia*, Broz argued that liberal democracies could only become truly democratic by becoming humane. He asserted that “the morality of a group depends on the morality of its members.”<sup>21</sup> It is here that religion has an important role to play.

Perhaps very much depends on the rediscovery of the original Latin meaning of *religion*: to be linked up (from *religare*) with other members of the *civitas* (originally of an *urban community*), which has now become the global village of ill repute. And if you ask me how it can be done—this *link up/religare*—I can assure you there is no other ‘technique’ then that of comprehension, sympathy and imagination in the effort to meet others’ needs—which naturally means to set up qualities which are absolutely lacking in the egoists professing the fundamental articles of the free market.<sup>22</sup>

As the journal *Metanoia* examined world affairs between the years 1991 and 2002, there was a concerted effort to bring religion to bear upon all aspects of society and culture, and this was nowhere more obvious than in dealing with the globalized free market economy.

There were, however, other topics for consideration such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the role of science and technology in contemporary life, interfaith relations, racism, unemployment, as well as issues specific to one country such as Haiti, South Africa, and Germany. Contributors to *Metanoia* included such well-known figures as Raimund Panikkar, Robert N. Bellah, Huston Smith, James W. Heisig, Hans Ucko, Albert Longchamp, Konrad Raiser, Jan Milic Lochman, and Joseph Joblin. J. B. Wright occasionally contributed the “London Letter” and Pieter Bouman kept the readers informed of significant happenings in Rome. *Metanoia* provided a voice for scores of lesser-known scholars and ecumenical workers from around the globe. There were book reviews as well as brief citations from significant books, articles in other journals, and documents from conferences and seminars. Of course, the highlight of every issue was Broz’s editorial—strong, opinionated, and usually right on target.

The uniqueness of *Metanoia* was due to its independence. It was not beholden to any denominational or church hierarchy nor was it under the control of a board of directors. The editor and the contributors were able to state their views forcefully and without fear. This meant, of course, that *Metanoia* was almost always chronically short of funds and it went from a quarterly to a biannual publication schedule. In some years only one issue went to the press and numbers were frequently combined into one issue. Broz continued to publish, however, for he was convinced that the problems of contemporary society and culture can be solved only through a radical *metanoia* of those who call themselves Christian.

In one of the last issues of *Metanoia* to be published Broz wrote at length concerning what he considered to be the major problem of today’s world.

Till September 11<sup>th</sup> the wealthy free world could console itself that the fringe elements of the world society (*les marginaux*) have not the power and force with which they could oppose it. This opinion has been made so radically problematic by the destruction of the *Twin Towers* just as the security of Israel by the *Intifada*. These complicated, sore and painful facts, which are the substratum of

the cruel, killing and suicidal resistance subsumed by ideologues under the heading of terrorism, cannot be eliminated by the police or the army. These matters of fact are a challenge and target for pedagogues and economists, social workers, physicians, for the International Red Cross and Crescent, for theologians who can forget their own beliefs and for politicians who don't abhor cosmopolitanism, for people who can be neighbors. Are there people of this sort anywhere?<sup>23</sup>

There can be no doubt that Ludek Broz was most certainly person of this sort and he drew others of a similar mind to contribute to *Metanoia*. During its eleven years of publication it was one of the most intellectually stimulating, prophetic, and thought provoking journals to appear on the scene in Christian journalism.

### **The Quest for International Understanding**

Although thoroughly European in his education and theological context, Ludek Broz was always reaching outward to understand the Other, whether in Africa, Asia, or North America. Through his writing and publishing and in his travels, Broz sought to foster international understanding, for he really did believe that the people of the world are neighbors. Initially his interest was in francophone Africa and it was here that he put his linguistic skills to good use. He made visits to Lambarene in Gabon, Dakar in Senegal, and to areas of French speaking Cameroon where he lectured in theological schools, met with church and community leaders, and carried out research on the effects of globalization and free market economic policies. He became a supporter of theology from the developing world and sought to make Europeans aware of how their economic policies were affecting the lives of ordinary Africans.

In 1988 Broz visited the United States where he served as a guest professor at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary in the state of Iowa. Originally founded as the German Theological School of the Northwest, Dubuque has had a long history of involvement with central Europe. At the time of Broz's visit Dubuque's professor of Old Testament was an immigrant from Yugoslavia. The nearby city of Cedar Rapids had a large Czech immigrant population and many streets had Czech names. In addition the University of Dubuque had an exchange program with the Comenius Theological Faculty and Czech students came to Dubuque to study for a year.<sup>24</sup> Earlier Hromadka had been a guest lecturer at this same university. Broz sought to strengthen these East-West ties through his teaching and his presence in a region of the United States that was politically conservative and strongly anti-communist.

Broz was also concerned with Asia. He made a trip to Indonesia, and in December of 1991 presented a paper at the World Symposium on Human Rights held in Quezon City, Philippines. Both Indonesia and the Philippines had been under colonial rule, both were struggling to emerge from years of rule by military dictatorships, both were suffering from numerous human rights abuses, and both were heavily involved in the globalized free market economy. Broz found that many of the problems of Africa and Asia were similar, both as to their causes and as to their possible solutions.

Broz had an especially close relationship with Korea. Significantly the first issue of *Metanoia* included a one-page quote from Chung Hyun-Kyung's presentation at the

Seventh Assembly of World Council of Churches held in Canberra, Australia entitled “for *Metanoia*: toward a Political Economy of Life.”<sup>25</sup> In 1997 Broz came to Korea to attend a “Consultation on Government-Sponsored Lotteries” held in Pusan from April 7-10. Delegates came from the Philippines, Scotland, the USA, Uganda, Taiwan, and the Czech Republic. Staff from the WARC were present, as well as delegates from the member churches in Korea and from Pusan Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Korea. Broz, along with others at the conference, was concerned that government sponsored lotteries targeted the poor and where a form of economic exploitation.

It was in the spring semester of 1997 that Broz also came to Hanil University to serve as a special lecturer in the field of systematic theology. In addition to speaking to specific classes and lecturing to the international students, Broz interacted with Korean faculty and brought a new awareness of Czech theological concerns as well as strengthening the emerging ties between the Korean and Czech churches.

In a lecture entitled “The Czech Churches in the Post-Socialism” delivered at Hanil in April of 1997, Broz returned to familiar themes, themes that had long been the focus of his editorials in *Metanoia*. Delivered to a Korean audience, these themes took on a dramatic new meaning, for they were spoken against the background of a divided Korean peninsula in which the South is democratic and capitalist, and the North is authoritarian and communist. One might possibly say that the current situation in the North is similar to Czechoslovakia under communism and the situation in the South is similar to the Czech Republic under a liberal democracy. Broz pointed out that in one sense, “*socialism did not work*.”<sup>26</sup> As a result the word itself has become “rather cursed; few people dare to even pronounce it. The optimism of 1989-91 was replaced by skepticism: *We have left real socialism to enter into real capitalism*, is the last word and expresses the feelings of many.”<sup>27</sup>

Broz went on to point out that almost no one asked why socialism did not work. Why? Because “the majority is absorbed by the very concrete questions, how to live in a free society with continuous price rising without any security or social care from the state.”<sup>28</sup> In Broz’s view socialism was not socialist enough; that is, it failed to truly be humane. The problem, however, is that liberal democracy is not much better. He said, “We call this democracy *liberal*, in reality it is correct only that it is linked to the *liberal economy*, which is a euphemism for capitalism and its market called ‘free.’”<sup>29</sup> Under the socialist system, with all of its mistakes, there was “a society without unemployed persons, with developed social and health care, [and] generally accessible basic education.”<sup>30</sup> Under the globalized free market economy, millions of persons are simply left out of the system with no form of social security, no access to health care, and no opportunities for quality education. Using Eastern Europe as a model, Broz challenged his Korean audience to keep these realities in mind when considering the reunification of the Korean peninsula. He concluded his lecture with the following words concerning the positive aspects of socialism: “But these positive aspects are the argument of Czech Christians for their task to reconsider the meaning of the relatively recent past in order of having better prerequisites for composing and shaping their more human future.”<sup>31</sup> Clearly in the opinion of Ludek Broz, the twentieth century may be ended, but the process of history is far from ended and Christians, along with others of good will, have a crucial role to play in the continuing historical process.



## **Ludek Broz and Christian Humanism**

Some months ago it was suggested that the term “theological liberalism” be replaced by the term “Christian humanism.”<sup>32</sup> Ludek Broz was a Christian humanist by almost any definition of the term, for he was profoundly Christian in his faith commitment and ecclesiastical affiliation. At the same time he was deeply humanist in his belief that all people are neighbors and that we are all responsible for one another. The problem with communism (or socialism as he put it), and liberal democracy, is that they were not humane. Ideology on the one hand and economic profit on the other were placed ahead of the human person and his or her wellbeing. Rather than serving humankind, both systems demanded that humankind serve the system. Throughout his lengthy career as a theologian, editor and publisher, and champion of the developing world, Broz fought against systems that dehumanized and oppressed.

There were, according to Broz, two major problems that led to this dehumanization. The first was that both communism and liberal democracy functioned on the basis of slavery. Under communism the people were slaves of the state. Their personal freedoms were curtailed, the state took over the means of production and private ownership was eliminated, and all political opposition was banned. In return the state guaranteed its citizens housing, medical care, education, and social security through government pensions.

Under liberal democracy the situation was dramatically reversed. Political opposition and the right to dissent were guaranteed, personal freedoms were virtually unlimited, and all means of production and property were in private hands. However under liberal democracy people were slaves of the free market economy. Housing became expensive, and for many unaffordable. Medical care and health insurance became so costly that millions of people had no medical coverage whatsoever. Although in theory education was open to all, the high costs of higher education meant that it was beyond the reach of many. Most troublesome of all was the almost complete elimination of the pension system and social security for the sick and elderly.

When the Velvet Revolution took place in Czechoslovakia in 1989, Broz was already 67 years of age and nearing his retirement in 1990. He felt this change personally as he was forced to rely on his own resources for social security during his retirement years. This became even more problematic as the currency went through several devaluations with the result that personal savings and what church pension one had lost considerable value. For persons of Broz’s age group, there was an entire generation that was in this transition time between a communist/socialist system to a liberal democratic free market system.<sup>33</sup> Broz and others of his generation were quite literally caught in the gap between two political and economic systems, and there was no social safety net during this transition period.

Of course Broz’s argument went beyond just his own personal experience. He could see that even in a rich country such as the United States there were as many as forty-seven million people without health insurance, most of whom were poor and people of color.<sup>34</sup> And this fact brought him to consider the second problem leading to dehumanization—the market put profits before people. This is true in the post-communist East and in the capitalist and liberal democratic West. Even in the United States, undeniably the wealthiest nation in the world, there is an appalling disregard for the

welfare of the sick, the elderly, and the poor. The value of a human person is dictated by the market. If one is a producer and a consumer, then a person has value. If one ceases to be a producer, but because of personal wealth continues to be a consumer, then a person has value. But if one ceases to be producer and a consumer, then a person has no value whatsoever. A person who is retired, who is sick, and who is poor is left with virtually no forms of social security, for that person plays no productive role in the free market economic system. Thus “the United States has increasingly developed a two-tier pension system. Companies seeking to increase profits have cut retirement benefits....But executives have persuaded their directors to reward them with ever-larger pay packages.”<sup>35</sup> The problem is not that there are no funds to care for those in need; the problem is that these funds are increasingly being allocated to the rich even as social programs are cut for the poor. Broz could see that the problem of dehumanization was endemic to the free market economic system itself. Hromadka was correct in his assertion that there is an evil which lies in the human heart in both the East and in the West.

It was the belief of Broz that this dehumanization could only be counteracted by a form of Christian humanism, and for this he returned to the original emphases of the Czech Reformation found in the work of John Hus (1371-1415) and John Amos Comenius (1592-1670). Hus was the religious reformer.<sup>36</sup> He was the pastor, the preacher, the tireless advocate of religious reform, and ultimately the martyr. Comenius was the humanist reformer.<sup>37</sup> He was the teacher, scientist, educator, writer, and bishop. He was the tireless advocate of educational and social reform. Comenius is usually considered to be father of modern education. He was also asked to be the first president of Harvard University, a post which he graciously declined. Today his legacy lives on in the many schools, institutes, and colleges and universities which bear his name. One of UNESCO’s most prestigious awards honoring outstanding achievements in education, the Comenius Medal, is named after him. And, of course, it was at the Comenius Theological Faculty where Broz spent his teaching career.

Significantly both Hus and Comenius lived under religious and political systems which were dehumanizing. Hus was burned at the stake for heresy after being summoned to the Council of Constance. Although the Emperor guaranteed his personal safety, even if he were found guilty, the members of the Council still had him executed. Comenius, because of the persecutions during the Counter-Reformation, found himself a refugee and exile in Europe for forty-two years and he died and was buried, not his Czech homeland, but in the Netherlands. Yet Hus stood for religious reform and Comenius stood for social reform thus giving the Czech Reformation a distinctly Christian humanist perspective.

As Broz considered the dehumanizing tendencies of communism’s political system and the dehumanizing tendencies of liberal democracy’s free market economic system, he could not help but harken back to the Christian humanism of the Czech Reformation. It was his opinion that the humanistic focus of Comenius has been largely forgotten by the church in its tendency to be overly confessional and concerned with theological correctness. With his own denomination, the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren in mind, he wrote:

It became a theological custom to denounce the greater part of this struggle in the Brethren Unity as moralism, and to deplore similar characteristics in Comenius’ thought and work as his questionable humanism....But is it possible

to be inclusive without being exclusive? To say *Yes* to peace without saying *No* to arms? To try to create a new world without hunger and not to fight against the so-called free market? Can we realize a world-wide ecumenism without fighting against *l'esprit de chocher* (the parochial mentality) of our confession?

The Czech Reformation of days gone by reminds us that perhaps the most suitable epithet for an actual Reformation would be “*radical*”.<sup>38</sup>

Broz believed that the legacy of the Czech Reformation was both religious and humanist, and that if the truly radical nature of the Reformation was to be realized in our time, the humanist Reformation legacy must be recovered.

### **Conclusion: Ludek Broz as a Person**

It is not often in an academic essay that one writes concerning a theologian's personal life, however, considering the political changes that Broz had been through in his lifetime, and considering his on-going struggle against the free market economic system, he remained remarkably optimistic and hopeful. Unlike some people who have become embittered or overwhelmingly critical, Broz kept his sense of humor, maintained his interest in culture and the arts, and was a loyal friend.

In his personal life Broz was a man who showed humanity in his relations with others. He was married and had two children and enjoyed a rich family life. He was respected by his colleagues and students, and by those in the Czech church which he faithfully served. One sign of his humanity is that he was an excellent correspondent and was eager to share his observations on the personalities and events making news in the church, society, and culture.<sup>39</sup> In one letter he mentioned that he still had about twenty letters to write yet that day.<sup>40</sup> This indicated that he personally answered virtually all of the letters he received. In another letter he wrote “that I could not refuse if any occasion appear [sic] to visit Korea again.”<sup>41</sup> In many of his letters he enquired concerning Korean theologians and scholars whom he had met. The ties that he had with the countries he visited were both personal and deep, and he longed for the opportunity to make repeat visits.

Broz also exhibited a dry wit that often came out in his writing. On one occasion following three major ecumenical meetings where the global economic situation was discussed, and where statements were issued, it was obvious that none of the churches involved would actually do anything. The discussion and statements were purely cosmetic. Broz was convinced, however, that at least some good came from getting together to meet and discuss the issues. He wrote “With my natural naivety I tried to convince one rather malicious friend of this. ‘To meet people I prefer to go to the pub. It is less expensive,’ he answered. And I remained (ecumenically) open-mouthed.”<sup>42</sup>

On one occasion when my wife and I invited Broz out to a restaurant for dinner following a lecture at Hanil University, he inquired, “What kind of food will be served at this restaurant?” When we told him that the main meat dish would be beef he replied with a twinkle in his eye, “Ah, then we can still be friends, for if chicken were on the menu I am afraid that would be the end of our friendship, for I hate to eat chicken.”

Students were especially attracted to Broz's lectures, for he always carefully explained what he was saying and was very patient with questions, particularly in Korea

where there was often misunderstanding due to difficulties in translation. He came across to the students not only as an excellent teacher, but also as a warm human being. In his interpersonal relationships Broz lived out the Christian humanism which he so passionately advocated.

Ludek Broz was a Christian humanist in the finest sense of the word. He was a champion of progressive theology in its fight against the free market economic system and its openness to the Other no matter what religion, ethnic group, or nationality. He believed that all humankind are neighbors and that it is a Christian imperative that we live—and act—as such. It is fitting that he be remembered, for he has left a rich theological legacy for us all.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> For the philosophical roots of twentieth century Czech Protestant thinkers see Lubomir Novy, Jiří Gabriel & Jaroslav Hroch, eds., *Czech Philosophy in the XXth Century: Czech Philosophical Studies II* (Washington, DC: Paideia Press & The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1994), 63-76.

<sup>2</sup> One of the fruits of this dialogue was Vitezslav Gardavsky, *God Is Not Yet Dead*, trans. Vivienne Menkes (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin Books, 1973). The book became something of a bestseller in both the East and the West.

<sup>3</sup> Josef L. Hromadka, "The Church and Today's International Situation—Amsterdam, August 1948," in *50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the WCC—Challenges of Remembering: To the Honour of J. L. Hromadka* (Praha: Christian Peace Conference, International, 1998), 14. As a theological student in the mid-1960s, I remember attending several lectures by Hromadka delivered at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.

<sup>4</sup> Jan Milic Lochman, "Theology and Cultural Contexts," *Center of Theological Inquiry Reflections* 2 (1998), 24.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>6</sup> In the early 1960s, Opocensky came to lecture at the University of Washington in Seattle. Since it was a state university and Opocensky was both an ordained minister and a theologian, he was not permitted to lecture on the campus. His lecture was held across the street from the campus in Wesley House. He was picketed and heckled by a number of right wing Christians affiliated with the Bible Presbyterian Church who accused him of being a communist. In spite of the shouting going on in the street outside, the lecture and the question and answer period which followed took place without any further incident. I was a student at the university and attended the lecture. Many years later, during a meeting with Opocensky here in Korea, I reminded him of that lecture and of his entering Wesley House through the crowd of hecklers. He replied, "I really felt at the time that I was being thrown to the wolves."

<sup>7</sup> See "Confessing Christ in an Unjust World: A *processus confessionis*," a series of papers resulting from ecumenical consultations [<http://warc.ch/pc/index-e.html>], accessed on 5/3/2000.

<sup>8</sup> Much of the material in this section concerning the life and work of Ludek Broz is taken from several sources including the *Czech Working Group Newsletter* (Autumn 2003), the University of Dubuque *Seminary Notes*, 8/2 (2004), *WARC Update*, 13/4 (2003), as well as faxes and correspondence from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Rev. John Michael co-editor of the *Czech Working Group Newsletter*.

<sup>9</sup> For more information on this Italian reformer see Joseph C. Mclelland, "Vermigli, Peter Martyr (1500-1562)," *Encyclopedia of the Reformed Faith*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 384-385. Significantly, Vermigli spent several years teaching on the faculty at Strasbourg, where Broz was to study four hundred years later.

<sup>10</sup> See Ludek Broz, *The Gospel Today* (Delhi: ISPCK, 1984).

<sup>11</sup> One such translation was the author's book: Daniel J. Adams, *Cross-Cultural Theology: Western Reflections in Asia* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987). Broz translated it into Czech as *Teologie Napric Kulturami: Zapadni Uvahy v Asii*, trans. Ludek Broz (Praha: Metanoia Press, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> Ludek Broz, "Editorial," *Metanoia* 1 (1991), 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ludek Broz, "Editorial: The Unquestionable End of the Twentieth Century," *Metanoia* 11/3-4 (2001), 1.

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- <sup>14</sup> Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History," *The National Interest* 16 (1989), 3-18 and Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1992).
- <sup>15</sup> Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, xi.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., 44.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., 44.
- <sup>18</sup> Broz, "Editorial," *Metanoia* 1 (1991), 9.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., 10.
- <sup>20</sup> Broz, "Editorial: The Unquestionable End of the Twentieth Century," *Metanoia* 11/3-4 (2002), 1.
- <sup>21</sup> Broz, "Editorial: Democracy, This Ambiguous Venture," *Metanoia* 6/4 (1996-7), 171.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., 171.
- <sup>23</sup> Broz, "Editorial: More Horrors to Follow?" *Metanoia* 12/1-2 (2002), 4.
- <sup>24</sup> In the autumn semester of 1991, while a visiting professor at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, the author of this article met a Czech exchange student and his wife who were from the Comenius Theological Faculty.
- <sup>25</sup> Chung Hyun-Kyung, "for Metanoia: toward a Political Economy of Life," *Metanoia* 1 (1991), 61.
- <sup>26</sup> Ludek Broz, "The Czech Churches in the Post-Socialism," lecture delivered at Hanil University, 15 April, 1997, 4. It should be noted that in the East "socialism" is the preferred term, referring to the economic system, while in the West "communism" is the preferred term, referring to the political system. In reference to the pre-Velvet Revolution Czech Republic (then Czechoslovakia) and to North Korea the terms can be used interchangeably.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., 4. Several years ago, in a conversation with an official of the US Embassy concerning the situation in North Korea, I mentioned that perhaps there were some things in the communist system, such a universal health care and guaranteed employment, worth preserving. He answered that to the effect that people under communism have suffered so much that they want to keep nothing from the old system. He went on to suggest that this would be the same reaction in North Korea should the current communist system there collapse. "They will," he assured me, "welcome free market capitalism with open arms."
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., 4.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., 6.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., 9.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., 9.
- <sup>32</sup> See Edgardo Coon-Emeric, "Symphonic Truth: von Balthasar and Christian Humanism," *Christian Century* 122/11 (2005), 30-34. The reason for this suggestion was in part to overcome the so-called liberal-conservative divide in the churches. It is believed that the term Christian humanism more closely describes the unity of religious and human concerns as well as is more faithful to the meaning of the Incarnation.
- <sup>33</sup> For a discussion of this problem as it relates to the post-communist situation Estonia and Lithuania see Daniel J. Adams, "Postmodern Dislocations and Christian Responsibility," *Theology and Society* 20/1 (2006), 89-112.
- <sup>34</sup> The number 47,000,000 is taken from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP). See Bill Novelli, "Time to Get Mad—Again," *AARP Bulletin* (December 2007), 31.
- <sup>35</sup> David Leonhardt, "For Executives, Nest Egg is Wrapped in a Security Blanket," *New York Times* (March 5, 2002).
- <sup>36</sup> For the life and work of John Hus see the following three books by Matthew Spinka, *John Hus and the Czech Reform* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941, 1966); *John Hus: A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968); and *John Hus at the Council of Constance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965).
- <sup>37</sup> For the life and work of John Amos Comenius see Matthew Spinka, *John Amos Comenius, That Incomparable Moravian* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943) and *John Amos Comenius on Education*, introduction by Jean Piaget (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1967). Two of Comenius's well-known works that are available in English are *The Labyrinth of the World* (Chicago: National Union of Czechoslovak Protestants, 1942), and *The School of Infancy* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1956).
- <sup>38</sup> Ludek Broz, "Towards a More Inclusive Concept of the Reformation," *Metanoia* 10/1-2 (2000), 96.
- <sup>39</sup> I have a bulging file of Broz's correspondence including a number of artistic post cards with special Czech commemorative stamps. Remembering that I was a stamp collector, he always made certain that the stamps on his envelopes and cards were collector's items.

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<sup>40</sup> Letter from Ludek Broz, October 20, 2000.

<sup>41</sup> Letter from Ludek Broz, February 6, 2002.

<sup>42</sup> Ludek Broz, "Editorial: The Meeting-Places," *Metanoia* 7/3 (1997), 102.

## Abstract

Ludek Broz is perhaps the least known of a group of twentieth-century Czech theologians which included Josef Hormadka, Jan Milic Lochman, and Milan Opocensky. However, Broz has left a theological legacy that deserves to be remembered. For most of his career Broz was a professor of theology at the Comenius Theological Faculty in Prague and chief editor of the Czech church publishing house Kalich. He was a founding editor of *Communio Viatorum*, author of numerous works on contemporary theology, and a frequent speaker at ecumenical gatherings.

From 1991 through 2002 he was the editor of *Metanoia—An Independent Periodical of Social and Cultural Issues* which highlighted progressive theological thought and commentary from around the world. Through his editorials, Broz was a relentless critic of the free market economic system which has become a hallmark of liberal democracy.

Broz was also interested in world affairs and traveled throughout Europe, Africa, North America, and Asia to further international understanding. His relationship with Korea was especially close as he visited here to attend an international conference and to be a guest lecturer at Hanil University. In his international work he always sought to show the connections between the global economy and the gap between the rich and the poor nations.

Drawing upon the religious reformer John Hus and the social reformer John Amos Comenius, Broz advocated a Christian humanism that opposed both the dehumanizing forces of the East which were political, and the dehumanizing forces of the West which are economic. He favored a Christian faith that was humane and he sought, in a true Christian fashion, to show that the Reformation was in its original intent truly radical.

As a person Broz was caring, witty, warm, and understanding. He was truly a Christian humanist in the finest sense of the word, and he has left us a rich theological legacy.

## Key Words

dehumanizing, *processus confessionis*, communism, socialism, liberal democracy, free market economic system, *metanoia*, globalization, capitalism, Christian humanism

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