

“For You See Your Calling...”

“My Parents Hard Road to Freedom”

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Last summer I went to Edmonton, Alberta to find out something that I wanted to know about for a long time.

My parents and I had come to the United States as refugees after World War II. They were very good friends with another couple that moved from Lyssenko refugee camp in Hanover, Germany to North America.

My parents would talk to us siblings about how they survived the war and how they came to the United States, but these stories came in bits and pieces over the years. The stories were very sad. They were mixed with a longing to be with family and many times my mother would start talking about missing her home; she would talk about the bombing in Germany; the bombing in Ukraine and I would just say: “Mom can I just go out and play ball?” I just did not want to see her cry; I did not want to talk to her about it; I did not want her to talk to us about it.

Both my parents were in the faith. My father died suddenly at age 42 when I was a freshman at Ambassador College and my mother died before her time at age 58 of acute leukemia. Bev cared for her as a nurse the last days of her life.

I never understood or could put together my parent’s full story in chronological order. I knew that the only people that had the full account were the couple who were their good friends who lived in Edmonton, Alberta. They were 78 years old and if I was going to get their story I knew I’d have to get it pretty soon. I went there last year (2003) and I videotaped and talked to them for hours. A story emerged, an amazing story of tribulation, of love, of friendship, survival, courage, liberation and triumph through God’s providential guidance and protection. It’s a story that’s filled with spiritual parallels about everyone’s spiritual journey from this world to the Kingdom of God.

My parents were refugees and they had gone through a tribulation. They always talked about (we talk about a tribulation but) and told us: “we have already gone through a tribulation.” I was born in a United Nations refugee camp and we were homeless for a number of years not knowing what would become of us. My parents couldn’t go back to Ukraine. We couldn’t go anywhere else in the world unless we had a sponsor and were delivered. Ultimately we were delivered, we found a sponsor and were delivered to the United States and became naturalized citizens with new identities and a new nationality.

Their story begins with Operation Barbarossa. This was Germany's, the Nazi attack against the USSR. It began at dawn on June 22, 1941. Three million German troops rolled across the Russian border with 3,300 tanks. The initial blitzkrieg devastated city after city. The Germans made quick headway with little resistance. The Germans then forcefully, methodically deported millions of Ukrainians to work in German factories and farms. The majority of the German men were in the Army so they needed this kind of labor to keep the country going while the country was fighting a two-front war. Young people from Ukraine became slave laborers for the Germans.

My mother lived in her town with her parents. She was 15 at the time when the Germans attacked a city 50 miles south of Kharkov, called Lichacheyev. She and her closest friend Dusia who is the wife of the man in Edmonton, Alberta that we visited were put on the same boxcar and sent to work in Germany. This was June, 1942, one year after the start of Barbarossa. Both girls were 16 years old.

Ironically in the beginning of the war Germany was the safest place to be in the war. It was only towards the end of the war that Germany became a place that was bombed. But Germany was fairly safe. It was most dangerous in the USSR where the Germans were waging war that it was most dangerous.

The Germans had subdued the city of Lichacheyev, about 70,000 people, months before she was taken. In the first air raid 700 people were killed. My mother at that time was herding cows back home when the bombs came. In her fright she crawled under the cows. She came home shaking and trembling. She never recovered from that. When we knew her as children she always trembled and always shook and that was from the very first encounter with bombing but that was not to be her last. She would experience bombing many more times.

When the Germans occupied the cities they conquered, they deported teenagers to work in Germany, who had no choice about going. The Germans told them they would go to work for three months and then come home. For my mother it would be another 27 years later before she would see her parents. The Germans took them to work in the city of Magdeburg, about 50 miles west of Berlin. The two girls Nina and Dusia both 16 years old worked in a shoe factory along with other friends from Ukraine.

My father was taken to Germany from western Ukraine and he came also to work in the city of Magdeburg. While I was in Ukraine this last week to my father's village, I saw the actual place where the train station was that took them, all the cars to Germany. Walter and my father got to know each other. My father worked at the fruit-processing factory and Walter worked at a metallurgical factory and the two dated the two girls. They were double dating all the time.

Conditions for foreign workers were very harsh at the time; strict controls were imposed on their movement after work and on weekends. They had to wear a patch, a big patch that had the words Ost meaning "East." They were called "Ost Arbeiters" or "East workers," workers from the East. They were not allowed to walk on sidewalks and had to walk in the main streets.

The Germans had a cast system for who they worked with and dwelt with during the war. The British, the Americans were always treated with the high respect and whenever any Englishman or American were captured they were treated respectfully. However, if a black paratrooper came down he was executed immediately. We all know what they thought of the Jews and people from the East were treated like just a work force. But during this time, for about two years Walter and my father Igor managed to date these two beautiful girls who later became their wives.

One cannot understand the present day Russian mindset, for that matter many of the countries in the East without appreciating what those countries went through in World War II. Soviet casualties in the war were unbelievable; fifteen million military deaths; fifteen million more civilian deaths; half the housing destroyed. Of those who went into the red army at age nineteen, only one in one hundred returned.

When Doctor Hoeh and I visited the Soviet Union in 1967, Doctor Hoeh at that time was 38 years old and he said: “You know one thing I really notice, there’s hardly anybody my age in this country, it’s old men, it’s children and lots of women.” In fact there were 100 women for every 65 men after World War II.

The devastation was beyond anything that we can imagine of or our countries have gone through and the people of Russia and Ukraine are still traumatized to this day. They think often of the great patriotic wars though they were the only ones fighting it. Often time they hardly mention anything that the Americans have done in World War II. They still relive it as though it was fought yesterday.

Just in Moscow four years ago a huge monument to victory in World War II was built. The monuments and the cemeteries are unbelievably grand and huge. Amazing that Russians have a hard time honoring people in real life. They honor them after they’re dead like nobody else does. In Kharkov, one cemetery had stones, and we said: “Well what are these stones here at this cemetery?” They looked kind of interesting; their size; they weren’t very big but they weren’t very small and as you walked through them we saw that each stone represented fourteen thousand killed. We took our Y.O.U. there three times to experience seeing these huge monuments to remarkable past events, the human experience.

I came across a few letters of my mother that tell the stories, that tell just a few of the millions of stories that people have gone through in World War II.

Here is a letter I found. June 7, 1943. It was from her brother in Ukraine writing to my mother who was in Germany. There was a war going on, but there was still some mail going back and forth from Germany to Ukraine. My uncle Victor, writing to my mother says the following:

“In the first lines of our short letter, our family greets you Nina. Are you all right? You write that you are getting lonely living on foreign soil but you’re not the only one separated from their family. Many people are finding themselves in this condition. Nina,

we're not receiving your letters. In 1943 we've have received only two postcards from you, one dated January 20th and the other February 8th which we received in June.

"Nina, you asked about your brother Alex, we haven't heard from him in two years. He was in service; he came back though.

"If we live, we will meet again. The weather has been good for growing, the gardens look good and we'll have things to eat in the winter. The Russians came in February but the Germans returned in March. On the front where we are there has been no shooting but in May many people in the neighboring village died. The land is covered with blood and the end of the war is not in sight. We're tired of the war."

I found these things among my mother's personal papers and it brought to light what's happened in our family as part of our family experience.

We had a family reunion in that village in 1988 and Uncle Victor took us up and down the streets showing us what had been bombed and how they lived. For two solid years they lived underground cellars because all the homes were destroyed. The letter continues:

"You said you'd like to see the flowers and the homeland again, that would be good but now the land has been ravished by war. I think often of your cheerful smile and your kind words, my loving sister. Mom and Dad and you sister Tonya work on the collective farm, I work on the railroad. Please write to us and tell us how you are eating and are the Germans good to you. We are not receiving your letters. Please give greetings to your friends with whom you're working."

Then my aunt wrote just shortly after my mother's death, which was 1984.

"My dear nephews and nieces. Your mother had a hard life. In the years of the war our village changed hands six times between the Russians and the Germans. All but the youngest were evacuated. Nina stayed behind where all the fighting took place. The Germans bombed our village, then they took Nina to Germany."

My father's story was quite similar. Back in Ukraine, his family had moved from one village to another neighboring one called Uhorsk. When the Germans they rounded up everyone in the village they moved from, put them in a barn and lit it. Everybody was incinerated. There's a memorial there right now that we've gone back to a few times the last times we visited.

In Germany now, the foursome are dating and getting to know one another. However, suddenly, my father was arrested by the Gestapo and put into a concentration camp. This is very upsetting to the foursome because you could never find out what the charges were or any information about what happened. Many who were put into a concentration camp did not return. Walter tried to visit the camp and see what was going on but to no avail. He was not able to see his friend, my father. Sometimes he would see him marching in a long column to work because their job

was to clear rubble after air raids. The Germans used East workers, "Ost Arbeiter" to dig for unexploded ordinance and look for survivors after an air raid. The ordinance would sometimes explode but Ost Abeiters were expendable.

One day Igor was in a long column of prisoners going to work. Walter waved to him and threw him a piece of bread. Months went by and there was no help for my father in his imprisonment. But one day a miracle happened. Walter was walking on a street that was bombed just the day before and he heard a voice. "Walter, Walter." Walter turned around and saw a shadowy figure in the rubble. "It's me, Igor." Walter looked around; he could hardly recognize his friend. His skin was all scratched up from picking up stones and working through rubble. He had a striped uniform of a prisoner and an unshaven face and scratched from head to toe. After a brief hug, he took my dad to a friend's apartment.

There was so much chaos in the last days of the war that my father's absence was just not followed up on and that he was "lost." Walter had to wait till nighttime to find a place for him but then he moved him out into the country and got him to work on a farm, He got him a job on a farm; nobody asked questions; everybody was waiting for the war to come to an end; Germans, the slave workers, everybody knew that liberation was near.

There was a lot of confusion and disruption with the bombings. Everybody was just wanting to survive and just live. In the last of the war the Americans were coming through with carpet bombing. Americans bombed all day long, the British bombed all night long. The city of Magdeburg was a very important strategic city because it was where a lot of the fuel was stored for German vehicles.

The two men were now out in the country but the girls were still working in the factory in town. The men were so afraid that the girls would perish or would have or had perished. In her recollections to me, my mother recollected how many times she had to flee from her dwelling and go into bomb shelters. The bomb shelters were zigzagged so that when a direct hit occurred in one of the zigs, somebody in the next section would now die but the people in that section that got a direct hit died; a lot of her friends perished. My mother said that after a while, they didn't even bother going to the bomb shelter, it was surreal, they were just like watching the bombing like fireworks as the Americans bombed all day long, the British all night long. At that time they did not have the kind of precision bombing like they did over the cities of Serbia and in Iraq in our time.

As the Germans saw the Americans advancing and destroying all the bridges across the Elba River, they were beginning to use the Ost Arbeiter as human shields; they were marching them on bridges and sending a message to Americans: "You want to kill these people? Well, you just go ahead and destroy the bridge."

My mother and Dusia were in a long column that was headed towards a bridge. Igor and Walter spotted them and snatched them from the line when the guards were distracted and took them out to the farm and hid them in the attic.

The Americans finally came. April, 1945. Liberation! Finally, there's chocolate, food, all kinds of wonderful things. The happy American spirit was there.

A very interesting event took place at this same time. My father when he started attending the Worldwide Church of God in Minnesota happened meet a fellow Spokesman's Club member and invited him over to his home. This man's name was Frank Muehlbauer. Frank Muehlbauer saw a picture on dad's wall in our house that he said looked familiar. Dad and Frank Muehlbauer talked about the fact they were both in Germany. Frank Muehlbauer was a sniper in World War II and heard my dad's story. He said: "That farm building sure looks familiar." My father said that the painting was of a sketch that he made of the farm building that he was staying at outside Magdeburg. Frank said: "I can't believe it, exactly where was it?" They got the coordinates down to where Frank Muehlbauer was assigned as a sniper to watch over this exact farm in the Magdeburg area for any suspicious activity where my father was staying. Frank said: "I watched through my gun sight day after day looking for suspicious activity." This story has been the subject of several Spokesman Club speeches.

The war was over. Freedom at last! Not quite. Two days later my parents woke up and they didn't hear American voices anymore. They heard Russian voices. What's going on? According to the agreement at Potsdam partitioning Germany after World War II, no matter how far the Americans got into the German territory, the land was divided so a part of Germany that became East Germany was the Russian zone. Germany was partitioned into the British, French and American zones. Even though the Americans advanced past Magdeburg the agreement was for them to pull back to the old border of East Germany and the Russians rolled in.

Things got bad very quickly. The Russians treated the Ost Arbeiters very badly. They considered them collaborators and traitors. They were herded into trucks and put them into transition camps and interrogated them incessantly. It was unbearable as these workers were all kids, ages 19 to 21. The Russians were going to send them off to Siberia and the men they were going to put into the service since Russia had just now declared war against Japan and was mounting an offensive.

The foursome were in a transition camp and they told each other: "We've got to escape." My father volunteered to work with horse stables with the Red Army and had a pass to go out. He scouted out what he might possibly do and he actually took a train all the way to the British zone and talked to the border guards and tried to arrange for an escape. He had nothing to lose. The border guard said: "Yes, you can have your freedom if you bring a watch, a suit and a bottle of vodka and we'll let you cross the border."

My father came back to the transition camp and the part of the camp where they were facing the outside and they convinced the person to look the other way as the four of them climbed out the window and left.

But there was an additional problem. They had to cross the Elba River. But all the bridges on the Elba River were destroyed by the American bombers. Of course the Army Corp of Engineers (this is good American friendship) put up a U.S. Army Corp of Engineers bridge across the Elba

River that they just gave to the Russians. But they had to get across this bridge because it was a major river and they had to get to the British zone but they had to cross the river first. The girls walked together and got across the bridge just fine. They had strict security at the bridge. The men though who came together later, they turned away. Now what? They found a German coal wagon and they crawled into it and they were taken across the river.

The four of them got on a train and headed for the border. All they had with them was a few personal effects, a bottle of vodka, a suit and a watch. That was to be the price of freedom; they had nothing else. They didn't know what they were going to do if they did get across the border. As the train came to a halt they found a purse with three hundred Deutsch Marks in it which was just enough money for them after they got off the train if they were to get off to the side to get to someplace.

At midnight the guard had to pay off two other guards; that's why there needed to be three gifts. He had to pay off the guard to his right and the guard to his left, and right at midnight with the changing of the guard my parents leaped across the fence into the British zone. The Russians noticed the noise and started firing but my mom and dad and Walter and Dusia ran and ran and ran and ran and ran several miles and everybody said: "I think we're safe." They were surprised that they were even alive.

They were free at last from slavery, communism, oppression and evil. They found their way to Hanover where a United Nations refugee camp was set up. When they got there the news of the day was that an atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima. This was August, 1945.

My parents were married in early 1946 and I was born in that camp in October 1947. But, what now? There were millions of refugees in Europe after World War II. Different countries around the world were accepting quotas of refugees; Australia, Canada, Brazil, Argentina were taking refugees from Europe. Where could this foursome go? Obviously not back to Ukraine because they would be shot.

Walter, however, found an uncle in Edmonton. Walter knew he had an uncle in Edmonton. He asked a Canadian soldier to put an ad in the paper, in the personals section of an Alberta newspaper to see if his uncle would respond. Sure enough, his uncle saw that personal and sponsored him to Edmonton.

But my parents did not have any sponsor. Walter said that he would try and get them to Canada when he could. My parents were trying and trying and trying for different countries but nothing was coming through. But they finally found a sponsor at the University of Minnesota; a professor of Ukrainian origin who sponsored them to Minnesota. So my parents finally came over in a troop ship from Bremerhaven, Germany to America and sailed past the statue of liberty, Ellis Island, the United States of America.

One of the most poignant moments of my life was second grade when I became a naturalized citizen of the United States just like Peter Eddington will become here soon. I had a new nationality because I had no national status at all. I was a refugee, not even a German citizen and now I had a status. I was an American. I had a country.

My parents became naturalized citizens. At that time becoming naturalized and becoming a citizen required a little bit more than it does now. First of all, you had to know the English language; it's not required any more. You had to know who George Washington was. You had to know who Abraham Lincoln was. You had to know who Dwight Eisenhower was. You had to know how our nation was governed. You had to explain to the person who was interviewing you for citizenship that there was an executive, legislative and judicial branches of government. You had to pledge allegiance to this nation and forsake all other allegiances.

Hearing the story which deeply, deeply affected me when I finally got it all together, made me understand and made me appreciate some of the parallels that we go through spiritually in our lives because we don't have as dramatic a story as what I told you about my parents. But spiritually our story is no less dramatic than what my parents had gone through, what millions of people had gone through.

First of all, as Paul preached through the New Testament world, he said and spoke as part of what it becomes; what it means to be a Christian; through much tribulation you will enter into the Kingdom of God; through much tribulation. It is not something that is minor or that you become baptized and you're so happy and excited that it's just going to be a free ride to the Kingdom of God. Every single one of us has a battle, has a war, has a campaign to live through in life. Our tools are different and our warfare weapons are different; they're not carnal; the weapons are just spiritual tools that God give us to live with and to work with.

Acts 14:22 *Through much tribulation you will enter into the Kingdom of God.*

This was as though this was a statement of, this is what to expect; this is what you'll be looking forward to.

Here Paul was strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, saying: "We must through many tribulations enter the Kingdom of God."

We live in some of the most wonderful, exciting and safe times of all human history. We're just a razor's edge away from oblivion but nevertheless, we live in peace and safety and one thing we thank God for in this country is the peace and safety that we have. But Christians in many other periods of history lived through much tribulation.

I could tell you many stories about the Sabbatarians that I've been working with in Ukraine and about what they went through between 1946 and when Ukraine became liberated in 1991. Their stories of tribulation were dramatic about what they had to go through physically. They maintained a ministry that was outlawed, the Word of God outlawed and yet they were driven, they were moved to obey God, to obey His commandments and laws and to be faithful to Him. What we live through right now is an exception rather than the rule historically. When you see the writings of Paul, what they went through in the book of Acts and what the history of the first century New Testament church was, it was not a safe period and there were martyrs and

there were some who died for the faith. Through much tribulation we enter into the Kingdom of God. Our citizenship and our politics, if you will, are of God.

We have been called from this world into another political system, into another kingdom.

Philippians 3:20 *For our citizenship is in heaven (or from heaven), for which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The reason I used the word politics is because the word citizenship is from **politeuma** which is the word from which politics is taken. The word means community; it means citizenship.

My parents had to be able to tell back the one interviewing them for citizenship what the basic structure of the nation was and who some of the leaders of the nation were. We have to as part of becoming a citizen of the Kingdom of God be able to understand how it's organized and set up, how the government functions and works. What are the laws that define how that kingdom rules and functions and works? We have to be able to speak that kingdom's language. We have to forsake all other allegiances to be a citizen of the Kingdom of God. We also need a sponsor. We all need a sponsor to enter the Kingdom of God just like in coming to the United States and for that matter to any country. You just can't come into a country to become a resident; you have to be sponsored. You have to have somebody who will vouch for you; who will speak for you; who will be your advocate; who will guarantee you. That had happened in the case of my parents where a Ukraine Professor did just that.

We are sponsored by Jesus Christ. He is the one who speaks for us, who vouches for us, who guarantees our citizenship in His Kingdom. We are being called, we are being asked by Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior to be sponsored or to be not sponsored into the Kingdom of God. Once we become a sponsor or once we have accepted sponsorship; one thing that is interesting among all the immigrants is that they become sponsors themselves. My parents felt a deep obligation because of gratitude to sponsor other people to come to the United States. Actually most of these sponsored people from South America (because you were fortunate if you got to the U.S. or Canada or Australia) but going to Brazil, well that was kind of like a consolation prize. My parents sponsored a family to the United States from Brazil who had gone there from Germany. Even I have sponsored a family from Ukraine, last year to Portland, Oregon. Somehow it's just in my blood or system. It doesn't cost anything. You just have to guarantee if something goes wrong that you'll speak for them and pay for them for six months.

Once the immigrants came to the new world, to the new land, they stuck together. The first thing they did was establish a church. Surprisingly many of these people who came from the USSR had no church affiliation. They came from atheistic communism but I hardly knew of any atheists after they came to the United States. They assembled either in organized Catholic or Orthodox churches. One thing about them is they stuck together. They all valued each other's experience.

This wore off with the second generation, including mine because I had no interest in my parent's past. It was interesting but not something that I was drawn to. It was the fact that my parents died young that has caused me to want to understand all of what they had gone through in their experience of getting from the USSR to the United States.

I do know that the immigrants all helped one another, they supported one another; they overlooked a lot of things about each other because they were a special group that survived. So many times in church when I was attending as a youngster the priest would talk about how God had taken a shovel out of a miry pit of mud and taken this group of people at who we were stuck there and flung them over to this country and how thankful we should be that we weren't there with all those who died or who were left behind.

It's interesting when I went back to visit my family reunion in 1988 and saw some of the friends of my mother who went back. They were the Ost Arbeiters who didn't go West but had to go back East. I would never, never want to be like they were. I would hate to live in that society in that country. I am so thankful for being given a new nation, a new land as Abraham was, as he was promised physically and also spiritually, how we are promised a new kingdom in a new country of peace where people all value one another because they were close survivors; they treat each other with the deepest respect as we should.

Brethren, we are survivors from this age; we have been individually called by God. We all have our own experience of how we've become part of the church and how we have been brought together. But do we sometimes forget the fact that we're just survivors; that we're infinitesimal small percent of this world's population that has been spared and saved and given priority citizenship in the Kingdom of God? What that should do is to make us draw closer to one another, appreciate one another and help one another; support one another; treat each other as close survivors in a world where we have the devil, we have society working against us to destroy us; to deceive us and we have each other besides having our Savior, Lord and Master. God has called each one of us out of the world for salvation at this time.

We live in a world that is suffering. This is a world my parents came from physically, but spiritually this is the world we're coming from right now.

Romans 8: 22 *For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.*

Verse 23 *And not only they, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

This is the reality of what it is to be a Christian. Is there somebody here whose had an easy life as a Christian? Please talk to me because I'd like to find out exactly what you did or how you rated or whatever. I know from my friends, my fellow workers, from experience in the church, it's not always easy. We have so many pressures against us from society and we have a responsibility to fight a battle but not using the weapons of this world but to use kindness; to show appreciation for one another; to lift each other up and consider one another as co-survivors; that we have survived this world. We've been brought together here into the safe zone; we have

been spared and we've been given a entry point into the Kingdom of God before the rest of the world knows about it and express a gratitude.

I know my parents, my mother told me about as far as people supporting and helping one another. She said that when they lived in the refugee camp there was hardly enough food even for them at our family of three and she said they gave me all the sugar. But they said that sometimes a box would come and had the words CARE on it. Sometimes we make fun of CARE packages. These CARE boxes were distributed to them from Nebraska, Chicago or any number of locations from US cities. They would cry as they opened these because they knew that somebody on the other side of the ocean who they did not know giving them life; giving them food and caring for them. They talked so many times about how the kindness of others helped them and supported them.

Here's where we come from spiritually.

Ephesians 2:1 *And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,*
Verse 2: *in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,*

We have been made alive, we have been spared; we've been spared destruction that faces this world. We've been called; we've been given the tools; we've been given hope of salvation. The rest of the world lives in a different attitude and spirit and marches to the beat of a different drum.

Verse 3: *among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.*

We've been spared and we've been saved.

I Corinthians 1:26 *For consider your calling, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble.*

Verse 27: *But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are strong;*

Verse 28: *and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, (But actually it says that He hasn't chosen many of the greats of the world but He actually hasn't chosen many of the weak people of the world either. It is just as we are the ones who He is working with and we need to appreciate and honor that.) and the things that are and the things that are not that He may nullify the things that are.*

Not many people have been called but God has brought us to this calling and salvation and He says consider this in the new King James, I believe the wording is: "For you see you calling." I believe in the new American Standard Bible in this particular verse: "Consider where you come from and consider the salvation that you have received and compare us all to the rest of the world that is going to go through a serious tribulation which we have been spared from."

This is who we are and this is how the language came forth from the apostles. It was a language that was a very excited language about the status of the people that we need to apply to ourselves.

I Peter 2: 9 *You are a chosen generation, (This church is a special select group of people) a royal priesthood, a holy nation, (We've been given a new citizenship; a new identity; a royal priesthood; we have a function spiritually for this world) His own special people, (My parents always felt very, very special and my mother said: "We're co-workers." Somebody who works side by side with her would be found dead in a bunker the next morning but they would have to move on; go ahead; but she felt she could have been that person very easily and so many places along the way, they were spared. You know spiritually we've been spared that as well. There were so many times where God has brought us through as a church; as individuals and we need to be grateful for and appreciate and we can show that appreciation and gratefulness to God in thankfulness and in the way we work and deal with one another.) that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;*

Verse 10: *who once were not a people (at one time we were nothing individually but now we're something; we're special in God's eyes; we've been called to salvation; we've been granted citizenship; we have a new country before us) but are now the people of God, (one time we're nothing, now we're the people of God) who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.*