

ESCAPE?

“How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation” (Heb. 2:3)

"The Long Walk" is a popular term attached to one of the most famous prison escapes of the 20th century. After being imprisoned in 1941 in the far north of Russia, Slawomir Rawicz, a Polish soldier and six of his friends, escaped from that Soviet gulag during a violent blizzard. The group consisted of Rawicz, two Polish soldiers, a Latvian landowner, a Lithuanian architect, and an American engineer. On their 4,000 mile walk to India they were joined by a 16 year old Polish girl. Some 11 months later they arrived in India in March 1942. Regrettably, four of the escapees died en route.

In 1970 the Reader's Digest chronicled the incredible escape from Cuba of Armando Socarras Ramirez. The article was titled "Stowaway". 17 year old Armando, and his 16 year old friend Jorge, longed for freedom and dared to stowaway in the wheel wells of a DC 8 on a non-stop flight from Havana to Madrid. They knew that flight #904 would stop momentarily before taking off on the 11,500 foot runway. Hiding in the grass they sprinted to the plane and took their positions at just the right time. Armando is 5'4" and weighed 140 lbs. His presence in the wheel well prevented the wheel from retracting properly and a warning light informed the pilot that something was wrong. He reported the problem to the tower and recycled the gear. Climbing at 170 mph thousands of feet above the ground Armando was hanging on for dear life. This time the warning light went out and Captain Valentin Vara del Rey settled down for the 8 hr. 20 minute flight. There were 147 passengers "on board" and a crew of 10. When they landed in Madrid the frozen body of Armando plopped to the ground. Security guard Jose Rocha Lorenzana, was the first to reach him. Dr. Jose Maria Pajares, who cared for him, called his survival a "medical miracle". Armando made a complete recovery and went to live with his uncle in New Jersey. Armando believes Jorge missed the flight and wound up in jail.

There are thousands of people who resent God and want to escape from Him. The question is "how"? The presence of God literally fills the universe! David wrote: **“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast” (Ps. 139:7-10)**. If you neglect to obey the Sovereign of the Universe how can you possibly escape from Him?

The Serenity Prayer is: "God help me to change the things I can change, to accept the things I cannot change, and the wisdom to know the difference". What can you possibly do to change God? That's obviously off the table. Yes! You can possibly escape from some earthly ruler, but how do you escape from God? Where can you go to escape from God and how will you get there?

You didn't ask to be born but you were. You may not want to die, but you will. These are realities that you cannot change! It is foolish to go through life resenting things you cannot change. This is especially true about God. What you want, think, or demand has absolutely no bearing on the existence of God! He either exists, or He doesn't! On April 12, 1961 Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first man to orbit the earth. Even though he was only a couple of hundred miles from earth he bragged that he didn't see God. On March 27, 1968 he died in a fiery plane crash on a routine training mission. He was only 38 years old. It is interesting to ponder if he has seen God now!

There is an old joke about the man who jumped off the Empire State Building. He was quoted as he passed the 35th floor: "Everything is all right so far!" How about you? Is everything all right "so far"? Shakespeare's Hamlet's made a famous speech on whether to "be or not to be". As he contemplated suicide he dared to dream of life after death. Just thinking about this possibility gave him pause. Killing himself may not be an escape at all. It may be an irreversible decision into suffering that makes our earthly problems pale into insignificance. Jesus escaped from earth by ascending into the clouds (Acts 1:9). He is busy preparing mansions for folks like you and me (Jn. 14:1-3). Some day He will come back for His church so we can also escape to heaven! Are you ready!