

This is how you should pray:

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Matthew 6,9 -10



Proto se modlete takto:

Otče náš, který jsi v nebesích,  
posvěť se jméno tvé,  
přijď království tvé,  
buď vůle tvá  
jako v nebi, tak i na zemi.

Matouš 6, 9 -10

Vy sa teda modlite takto:

Otče náš, ktorý si na nebesiach,  
posväť sa meno tvoje,  
príď kráľovstvo tvoje,  
buď vôľa tvoja  
ako v nebi, tak i na zemi.

Matúš 6, 9-10

# Glorious Hope Slavná naděje

Vol. 47, N° 1, March 2021

Ročník 47, číslo 1, březen 2021



Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! John 1,29

Hle, Beránek Boží, který snímá hřích světa! Jan 1,29

Hľa, Baránok Boží, ktorý sníma hriech sveta! Ján 1,29



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Financial Secretary's Office  
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Czechoslovak Baptist Convention  
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Make check payable to **Czechoslovak Baptist Convention or CZSKBC**.  
Feel free to make a special designation on the bottom of the check:  
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Please do not mail checks to our main address in Detroit, MI.

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## Convention Mission Statement

The Czechoslovak Baptist Convention of USA and Canada exists 1) to assist in extending the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in lands of central and eastern Europe, particularly the Czech and Slovak Republics; 2) to support the work of Baptists and other evangelical churches in North America that minister to persons of Czech and Slovak descent, and 3) to provide a Christian context for worship, fellowship, teaching, and appreciation of heritage among those in the United States and Canada who bear interest in the nationalities we represent.

## Misijní posláni konvence

Československá baptistická konvence Spojených států a Kanady byla ustanovena za účelem: 1) napomáhat v šíření evangelia našeho Pána Ježíše Krista v zemích střední a východní Evropy, zvláště v České a Slovenské republice; 2) podporovat práci baptistů a jiných evangelikálních církví v severní Americe, které slouží českým a slovenským potomkům; 3) předkládat formu bohoslužby, obecnství a učení, vážít si dědictví těch, ve Spojených státech a v Kanadě, kterým leží na srdci národy, které reprezentujeme.

## Glorious Hope/Slavná naděje

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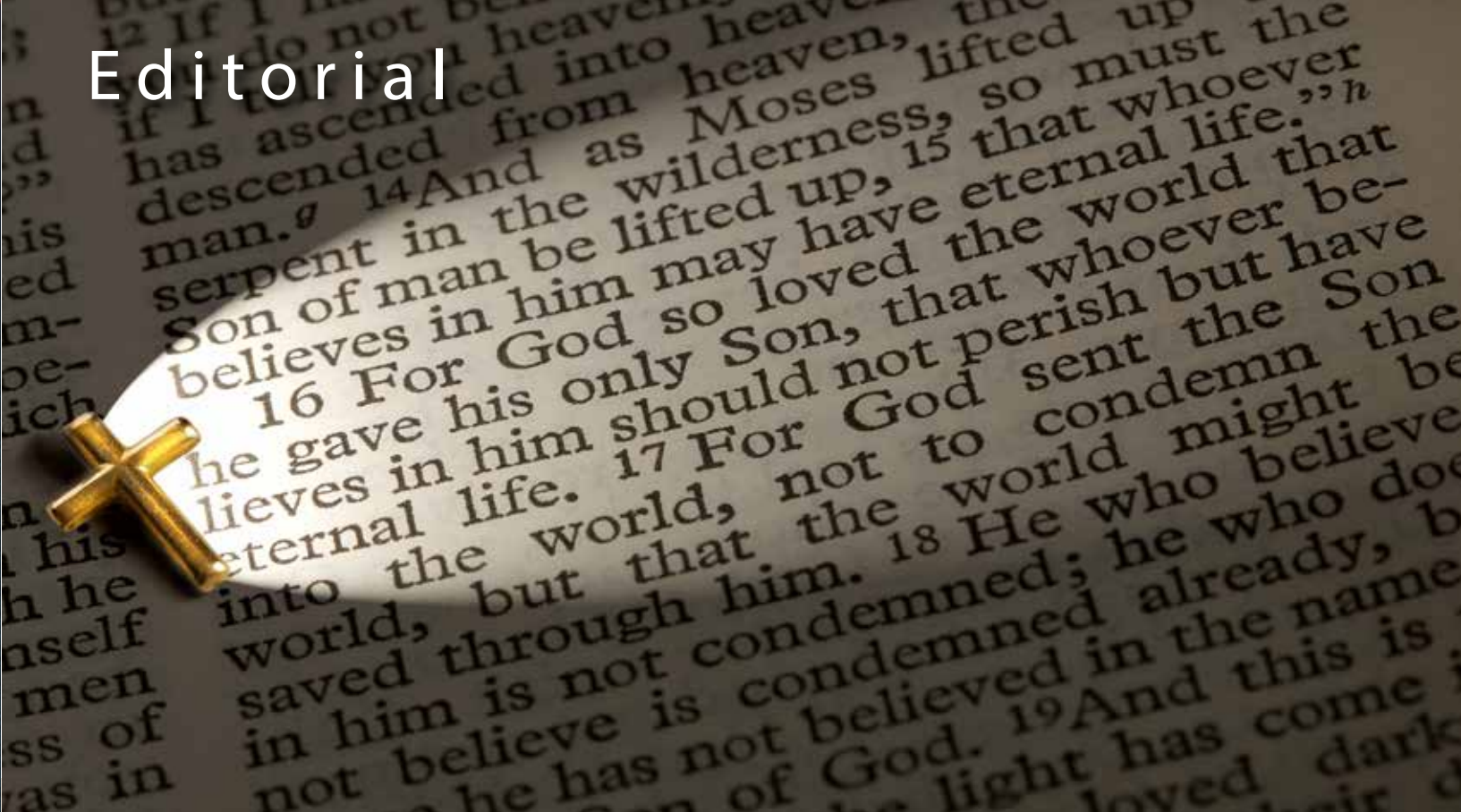
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# Editorial



## The Love of God

People have different interpretations of love. It is a strong and positive relationship of affection, devotion or desire. Love is a primary human need. Christians perceive God's love as a relationship between the Creator and creation, that is, between God and human beings—and that is the core of the whole message of salvation.

God sends Jesus, his son, into the world so that through him we can become closer to God. And Jesus patiently fulfills his mission. He walks among people for three years, speaking about God and teaching them how to live. At the center of His message is love. He calls this relationship the new commandment.

*"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."* (John 15, 9–13)

The Lord Jesus didn't only teach, but also prayed to God the Father. He prayed and pleaded on the behalf of all who believe.



Continues on page 9

## Boží láska

Lidé si představují lásku různě. Jedná se o silný pozitivní vztah—náklonnost, oddanost nebo touhu. Láska patří mezi primární lidské potřeby. Křesťané vnímají Boží lásku jako vztah mezi Stvořitelem a stvořením, tedy mezi Bohem a člověkem. A to je jádrem celého poselství o záchraně člověka.

Bůh posílá Ježíše, svého syna na svět, aby jeho prostřednictvím se k člověku přiblížil. A Ježíš trpělivě své posláné plní. Tři roky chodí mezi lidmi a hovoří o Bohu, učí je, jak mají žít. Centrem Jeho poselství je hlavně láska. Nazývá tento vztah novým přikázáním.

*"Jako Otec miloval mě, tak jsem i já miloval vás. Zůstaňte v mé lásce. Zachováte-li má přikázání, zůstanete v mé lásce, tak jako jsem já zachoval přikázání svého Otce a zůstávám v jeho lásce. Toto jsem vám pověděl, aby má radost byla ve vás a vaše radost aby byla dokonalá. Toto je mé přikázání: Milujte jedni druhé, jako jsem já miloval vás. Nikdo nemá větší lásku než ten, kdo položí život za své přátele."* (Jan 15, 9–13)

Pán Ježíš nejenže učil, ale také se modlil k Bohu Otci. Modlil se a prosil za všechny, kteří uvěří. *"Slova, jež jsi mi svěřil, jsem předal jim a oni je přijali. Skutečně poznali, že jsem vyšel od tebe, a uvěřili, že jsi mě poslal. Prosím za ně.*

*Neprosím za svět, ale za ty, jež jsi mi dal, neboť jsou tvoji. Všichni mé je tvé, a co je tvé, je mé. Má sláva je v nich."* (Jan 17, 8–10)

Pokračuje na straně 9



# From the President



The four gospel accounts of Jesus' life all differ dramatically in their endings from normal biographies. Whereas ordinary biographies inevitably conclude with the death of the man or woman they are written about, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all conclude with a record of Jesus' resurrection. The details differ but the central astounding claim is the same. **"HE HAS RISEN!"**

In a year which has seen us locked away in isolation, separated from the nurturing rhythms of family, church and community fellowship, how much we need to hear and believe this world-changing affirmation. The disciples, more than us, had had their hopes and aspirations dashed. Their faith soared as they had seen Jesus' miracles and believed He was the Lord's anointed—the Messiah, who would restore the Kingdom of David to its former glory. Then in a matter of hours He was arrested, tried, sentenced to death and crucified. In fear and dismay the disciples gathered in a closed room full of gloom and despair. This was not the story they had followed Jesus to be part of.

But then reports began coming in of something unusual. Some of the women had found Jesus' tomb empty on Sunday morning. Two of their number returned Sunday evening from the town of Emmaus saying they had encountered Christ alive and recognized him as he broke bread with them at supper. Slivers of light were coming in through cracks and crevices, and then suddenly He was with them there in the room. **"Peace be with you,"** He said. He showed them the wounds in His hands and feet. He ate a piece of broiled fish to reassure them He was real, and He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures; that what had happened was not a mistake or failure of God's purpose, but the fulfilling of it.

So it is with these days we are going through right now. The pandemic, government edicts and pronouncements, social unrest and economic uncertainty cannot disrupt and confine God's unfolding plan. In all of this the Risen Christ reminds us too:

**..."This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."**  
Luke 24:46-48

By the mercy and grace of God, our Czechoslovak Baptist Convention has a part in this. For present trials, for our share in Christ's suffering and role in proclaiming salvation in His name, may we hear and pass on the earth-shaking, joy-bringing news:

*HE HAS RISEN!*

Happy Easter to all,

Stan Mantle

## Convention Update



CZECHOSLOVAK BAPTIST CONVENTION  
of  
United States and Canada

**Dear Friends:**  
As of this writing there are many positive signs of progress regarding the pandemic. In our various countries vaccinations are proceeding and bringing a significant measure of protection. We thank God for this and for so many who have been and are working to care for the sick and protect the vulnerable.

Having said this, the land border between Canada and the US is still closed except for "essential" travel. For Canadians returning from another country, a two-week quarantine is required. How long these restrictions will remain in place is still unknown, but while they are in place, physical printing and mailing of our *Glorious Hope* magazine is not practicable. We are watching developments of course with a view to what will be possible and wise regarding a Convention gathering this summer. Please be in prayer about this.

Concerning Convention finances, last fall the General Board passed Operating and Mission Fund budgets for the most part unchanged from the previous year. The amount allocated to Missions support is **\$23,200**. These funds support outreach among the churches of the Czech and Slovak Baptist Unions as well as individual missionaries.

This year's mission budget includes support for:

- **Anthony & Jamie Valhala** (theological training & church planting—Kromeriz CZ)
- **Ruby Mikulencak** (mentoring and encouraging West African missionaries serving under SIM in a different country and culture)
- **Jan and Anna Franka** (evangelism and radio ministry in Serbia with ABWE)
- **Vit** (associate pastor at South City Church, Prague CZ)
- **Sherri Paulson** (widows, women and children's ministry in Ghana under SIM)

Due to the Covid pandemic we were not able as a Convention to physically meet at Malone University in Canton, Ohio, last July. We missed the fellowship and encouragement of this annual reunion, celebration of heritage and recommitment to the spread of the Gospel. The Lord's vision of fields white unto harvest and His concern for laborers to bring it in is still compelling and urgent. We are grateful for the financial support received this year under very trying circumstances toward the Missions budget. We are, though, about **20%** (or **\$4500.00**) down from last year at this point. I was thinking

when the history of the pandemic is written, wouldn't it be great if it could be said of our Convention that when times were difficult, they made a greater effort and surpassed their giving in "normal" times. What if we made an effort not only to erase the \$4500.00 shortfall but to make a \$1000.00 advance over last year? That would mean a goal of raising an additional **\$5500.00**, which I think is not at all unreasonable. Wouldn't it be a step in the right direction and pleasing to the Lord? Wouldn't it set the stage for future growth as those who are faithful with a little are trusted with more?

Here is how it could be broken down.

1 gift of \$1000.00 .....	\$1000.00
2 gifts of \$500.00 .....	\$1000.00
4 gifts of \$250.00 .....	\$1000.00
8 gifts of \$125.00 .....	\$1000.00
10 gifts of \$75.00 .....	\$750.00
10 gifts of \$50.00 .....	\$500.00
10 gifts of \$25.00 .....	\$250.00
	<b>\$5500.00</b>

What do you say? Could you give one of these gifts to test the Lord and support His work through the Czechoslovak Baptist Convention? Please mark your gift Easter 2021 Appeal. Make cheques payable to *Czechoslovak Baptist Convention* and mail to:

### USA

Czechoslovak Baptist Convention  
Financial Secretary's Office  
2222 Parker's Hill Drive  
Maidens VA 23102

### CANADA

Czechoslovak Baptist Convention  
Treasurer's Office  
138 First Lane  
Elora ON N0B 1S0

Paul spoke of the grace that God gave the Macedonian churches (2 Cor 8) that out of trial welled up generosity. He also said if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have. Let us see what God does as in gratitude and love we each give what we can. And to God be the glory.

Stan Mantle



# The Easter Message

**T**he next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!' (John 1:29 NIV)

The most important message for the human race is heard again.

The world, bending under the weight of failures, disasters and the loss of the values of life, seeks salvation, or a way out.

*"The center of salvation is the Cross of Jesus. The Cross is the point where God and sinful man merge with a crash and the way to life is opened—but the crash is on the heart of God.*

*The Cross was a superb triumph in which the foundations of hell were shaken. There is nothing more certain in Time or Eternity than what Jesus Christ did on the Cross: He switched the whole of the human race back into a right relationship with God. He made Redemption the basis of human life; that is, He made a way for every son of man to get into communion with God."* (Oswald Chambers)

At the meeting of the Lord Jesus with the disciples after the resurrection, the words are heard: Peace be with you! These words resonate for centuries and are reflected in everyone's heart even today.

The Lamb of God brought the Peace that is here to stay.

"Peace be with you."

Natasha Laurinc

□

## Florian Manas

### He Loved You

**A** young but hot-tempered officer in the army one day struck a low-grade soldier. The soldier whom he struck was also young but especially known for his courage. He felt the insult deeply, but military discipline forbade that he return the blow; he could only use words. He said, "I will make you repent it."

One day in the heat of a furious battle engagement the young soldier saw an officer, who was wounded and separated from his company. The young soldier gallantly strived to force his way through the enemy line and upon reaching him recognized him as his insulter. He rushed to his assistance. Supporting the wounded man with his arm, together they fought their way through to their own lines.

Trembling with emotion the officer grasped the hand of the soldier and stammered out his gratitude. "What a wonderful return for an insult so carelessly given."

The young man pressed his hand in his and with a smile said gently, "I told you I would make you repent it."

In a similar way Christ Jesus died for us while we were enemies of God. We read in Romans 5:8 *"But God commanded his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* Oh, what wonderful love.

### The Measure of God's Love

**F**or years I have been interested in magical illusions. When I was nine years old I witnessed my first such performance in my elementary school. The bug bit me, and from then on I wanted to be a magician. It became a very serious hobby for me. After my teenage conversion I began to use my magic talents to illustrate Gospel truths and share my testimony. Later on, for a number of years I owned my own magic supply store, catering to magicians. It was during this period that I met some of the nation's most outstanding magicians as they would journey through Cleveland.

The one magician whose friendship I cherish above all other magicians is Andre Kole. He is considered one of the great entertainers of our time, having performed before millions of people in seventy-four countries on five continents. In addition, he has appeared on national television in over forty countries. But the best news about him is that he is a born-again Christian and is using his illusions to present the claims of Christ through the ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ.

About a year ago (1992) at Winona Lake, Indiana, during a Fellowship of Christian Magicians Convention, I had a long talk with Andre Kole. He told me about an incident that he



Florian Manas

heard years ago that influenced him to make a decision for Christ. "For years," he said, "I heard about Jesus Christ dying for a person's sins, but somehow it did not make sense until one night I heard of a man who worked on a railroad. It was this man's task to raise and lower a giant railroad drawbridge over a river.

"One day this man took his eight-year-old son with him to work. The bridge was up. A ship had just gone through and now a train was coming. He started to lower the bridge. Suddenly he heard a horrible scream behind him. He turned around to see that his son had slipped and fallen down among the giant gears of the bridge and was about to be crushed to death. The father knew that if stopped the action of the bridge and raised it, he could save his son's life. But he also knew that this would cause the long passenger train to be wrecked, with scores of lives lost. He had to make a decision. He made the decision, and as he lowered the bridge he had to watch the death of his own son as he was crushed among the gears of the bridge. As the train went over the bridge, there were a number of people who waved to the father as they went merrily on their way, unaware of the sacrifice that he had made to save their lives."

Andre went on to say that he had learned that 2,000 years ago God had to watch the death of his own Son on the cross when He could have stopped the whole thing at any moment. But the Bible says, *"For God so loved the world (so loved you and me), that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16)

That is truly the measure of God's love.

□



## Jane Widlicka

Born in Buffalo, New York  
12 May, 1930

Jane received Christ as a teenager at Calvary Baptist Church. She was active at church playing the piano, and also was involved at City Mission in Buffalo, doing secretarial work and playing piano for services.

She was involved in Pioneer Girls and camp ministry.

She met Dan Widlicka in 1963 and was married on 25 June 1966.

From June 1966 to 1971, Jane served as pastor's wife at Erieside Church on the Boulevard in Wickliffe, Ohio.

In 1971 Dan and Jane were called to the Scranton Road Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio, where they served for 20 years. They were active in crusades, camp ministries, intercity ministries, City Mission, shut-in ministry, hospital ministry, conventions, Good News Club, mission work in Europe, San Juan Puerto, Bible study groups, and growth groups.

In 2017 Jane moved to Pennsylvania to live with her son and daughter-in-law until she went home to be with the Lord on 6 December, 2020.

Jane had a servant's heart and was faithful, leaving us a good example to follow.

### II Tim 4:7-8

*I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

**A.** Jane fought a good fight of faith. She by the power of the Holy Spirit overcame the world, the flesh, the devil; she stood up for Biblical morals and led by example for other believers who observed her conduct.

**B.** Jane finished her course. God has a course for each of us to navigate. Jane followed the course, being led by the Holy Spirit. She kept her eyes on the finish line—Jesus—looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

**C.** She kept the faith. The bible says that in the later time many shall depart from the faith. Jane did not swerve in the faith race. Some in the life of Paul had a faith shipwreck. Jane finished the race well and she is up there in the grandstands of heaven watching all of us.



Daniel and Jane Widlicka  
Convention 2010

She would say keep your eyes on Jesus and you will do just fine.

### Rev 5:11-12

*And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; 12 Saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

Jane Widlicka went to be home with the Lord on Sunday, December 6, 2020.

The funeral took place on Friday, Dec. 11, at Brooklyn Heights Cemetery, Cleveland, OH.

Her husband, Pastor Dan Widlicka, preceded her in death in 2013. □

### Editorial...

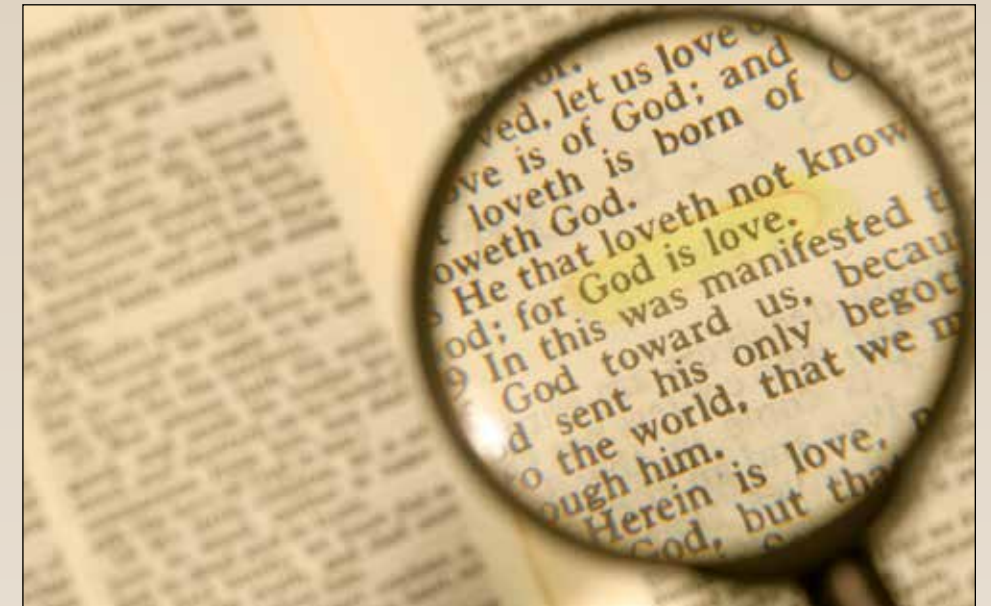
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*"For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them."* (John 17, 8-10)

The apostle John recalls the importance of this relationship:

*"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us."* (1 John 4, 7-12)

God remains in us because of our unity with Jesus Christ. God's love is demonstrated in the lives of everyone who chooses to follow him. This truth was certainly felt by the participants in Convention meetings. A look at the more than 110-year history of the Convention testifies to this. It is impossible to forget the memories of all the enthusiastic faces of the organizers of the annual meetings. We also remember the reverend Florian Manas and his unique approach to bringing God's love closer to children and young people. He



was born 100 years ago and left for his heavenly home in 2005. (*Glorious Hope*, March—April 2005) He was an engaging speaker, and accompanied his talks by performing magic tricks pointing out the love of the Lord Jesus. Thanks to these abilities, the magician got a nickname. This issue of *Glorious Hope* features his two short testimonies of God's love. Along with the messages of our missionaries, there is an opportunity to realize the greatness of God's love and the consequences of sacrificing the Lord Jesus on the cross. It is certainly a great encouragement to the missionary activities of each reader in the place where he or she is. Because God is love.

Editor-in-Chief *Natasha Laurinc*  
Translated by *Elizabeth Jane Fields*

□

### Editorial... Pokračování ze strany 3

Apoštol Jan připomíná důležitost tohoto vztahu:

*Milujme jedni druhé, milovaní—vždyť láska je z Boha. Každý, kdo miluje, se narodil z Boha a zná Boha. Kdo nemiluje, nezná Boha—vždyť Bůh je láska. V tom se projevila Boží láska k nám, že svého Syna, toho jednorozeného, poslal Bůh na svět, abychom skrze něj získali život. V tom je láska, ne že my jsme milovali Boha, ale že on miloval nás a poslal svého Syna jako smírnou oběť za naše hříchy. Milovaní, jestliže Bůh takto miloval nás, musíme i my milovat jedni druhé. Boha nikdo neviděl. Když ale milujeme jedni druhé, Bůh v nás zůstává a jeho láska v nás došla naplnění.* (1. Janova 4, 7-12)

Bůh zůstává v nás díky jednotě s Ježíšem Kristem. Boží láska je demonstrována v životech každého, kdo se rozhodl k následování. Tuto skutečnost jistě pocítili i účastníci konvenčních setkání. Pohled do více než 110-leté historie konvence o tom svědčí. Nelze se ubránit vzpomínkám na všechny ty

nadšené tváře organizátorů každoročních setkávání. Vzpomínáme také na kazatele Floriana Manase a jeho jedinečný přístup k přiblížování Boží lásky dětem a mládeži. Narodil se před 100 lety a do nebeského domova odešel v roce 2005. (*Slavná naděje*, březen—duben 2005) Poutavě vyprávěl a svá vyprávění doprovázel předváděním množství triků, poukazujícím na lásku Pána Ježíše. Díky těmto schopnostem dostal přezdívku kouzelník. Toto číslo *Slavné naděje* přináší jeho dvě krátká svědectví o Boží lásce. Spolu se zprávami našich misionářů se nabízí příležitost znovu si uvědomit velikost Boží lásky a následky obětování Pána Ježíše na kříži. Jistě je to velkým povzbuzením k misijním aktivitám každého čtenáře v místě, kde se právě nachází. Protože Bůh je láska.

*Natasha Laurincová*, šéfredaktorka

□



## There Were the Women

**A**fter this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means. (*Luke 8:1-3*)

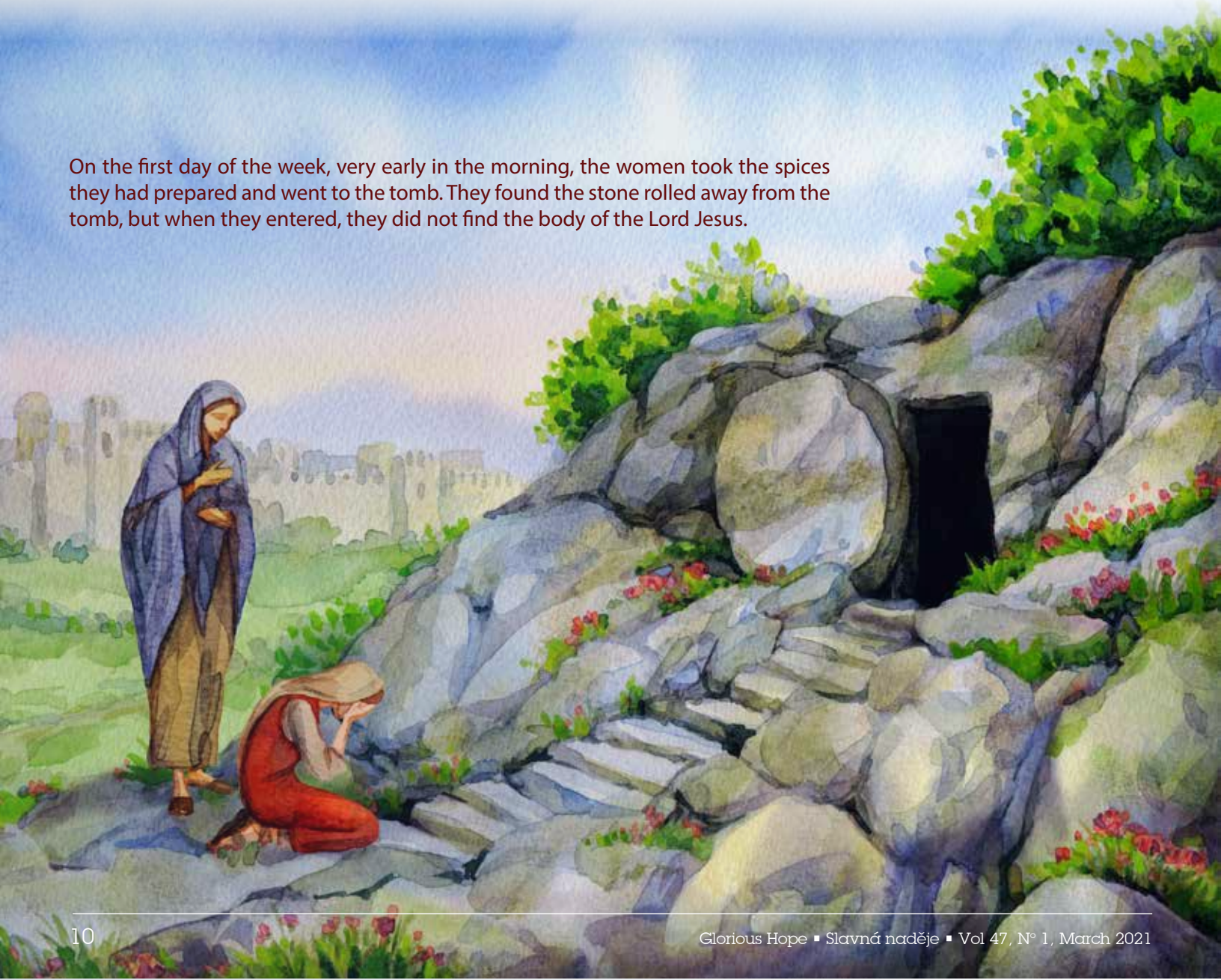
As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet

listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." (*Luke 10:42*).

Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.



The women were the first people to carry the greatest message our world has ever known: Jesus is alive.

Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

"Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." (*John 12*).

When Jesus was arrested, all the disciples deserted him and fled.

As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children." (*Luke 23*)

When all the people who had gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph of Arimathea, who had asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. They saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. (*Luke 23*)

On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. In

their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words.

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

That same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him.

He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

"What things?" he asked.

"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus." (*Luke 24*)

There were the women. They were faithful.

The women were the first people to carry the greatest message our world has ever known:

Jesus is alive.

Natasha Laurinc





## Známosť pravdy, ktorá vedie k pobožnosti

Jozef Hodul

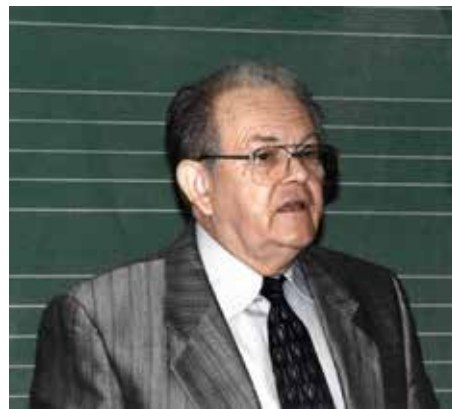
### Epištola Titovi

#### Časť 1.

**T**ext: Titovi 1,1: „Pavel, služba Boží a apoštol Ježiša Krista, podľa viery vyvolených Božích a podľa známosť pravdy, pravdy podľa pobožnosti...”

Titovi 2,11–14: „Lebo sa zjavila milosť Božia, spasiteľná všetkým ľuďom, ktorá nás vyučuje, aby sme sa odriekli bezbožnosti a svetských žiadostí a aby sme rozumne a spravodlivo a pobožne žili na tomto svete, očakávajúc blahoslavenú nádej a zjavenie slávy veľkého Boha a nášho Spasiteľa Krista Ježiša, ktorý sa vydal za nás, aby nás vykúpil zo všetkej nepravosti a očistil seba ľud zvláštny, horliaci konať dobré skutky.”

Bez známosťi nie je možná existencia človeka. Každý človek sa snaží získať vedomosť alebo známosť v čo možno najširšom zmysle. Preto máme školy. Kedysi, keď neboli školy, tak ľudia, ktorí mali bohaté skúsenosti, vyučovali podľa nich druhých. Najprv otec a matka svoje deti, neskôr múdri a vzdelaní ľudia organizovali školy. Židia mali synagógy, kde vyučovali Písmu, zákonu Mojžišovu. Dnes máme toľko škol, že ich ťažko spočítať, ale nestačí mať nejaké školy. Rozumní ľudia chcú dobré školy, kde sa učí nielen vedomosť, ale sa cvičí a vypestováva charakter človeka. Zaujímavé je, že každý, i hriešny človek, chce poznať pravdu, aby vedel, ako má dobre a rozumne žiť. S poľutovaním musíme



povedať, že nie všetky školy sa o to snažia. Najväčším podvodom a lžou je, že každý má svoju pravdu. Dokonca v niektorých krajinách majú noviny, ktoré volajú Pravda, ale v nich nachádzame aj mnoho nepravdy (lži a podvodu). Veľa ľudí sa snaží hľadať pravdu na zlom mieste a v zlých knihách. Poznať skutočnú pravdu je obrovský zisk. Pán Ježiš hovoril o sebe: „Ja som tá cesta i pravda i život, nikto neprichádza k Otcovi len skrze mňa”. (Ján 14,6)

Na inom mieste povedal Pán Ježiš: „Mnoho mám o vás hovoriť a súdiť vás, ale ten, ktorý ma poslal, je pravdivý, a ja čo som počul, hovorím svetu.” (Ján 8,26) Ďalej verše 30–31: „Keď takto hovoril, mnohí v nebo uverili. I riekol Ježiš Židom, ktorí uverili: „Ak vy zostanete v mojom slove, ste v pravde moji učenci a poznáte pravdu a pravda vás vyslobodí.”

Keď sme tiež uverili a vieme, že tou pravdou je sám Pán Ježiš, týmto sme získali známosť alebo vedomosť, ktorá nás vedie ku slobode a večnému životu. Vidíme tu následnosť, ktorá smeruje k pobožnému a

posvätnému životu. Pravá známosť vedie k poznaniu skutočnej pravdy, ktorá vedie k pobožnosti. Mali by sme všetci mať cieľ dosiahnuť s pomocou pretvárujúcej moci Ducha svätého taký charakter, ktorý by sa mohol volať pobožným charakterom. Máme mnoho biblických príkladov pobožných ľudí, ktoré by nám mohli byť vodidlom.

Epištola Titovi je krátka, iba tri kapitoly, ale je plná návodov a povzbudení od apoštola Pavla k tomu, aby sme mohli žiť posvätený a pobožný život. V prvej a druhej kapitole, ktoré sa nazývajú pastoraálne, hovorí Pavel, akí majú byť biskupi a služobníci Boží. Majú byť vzorom ako Titus v konaní dobrých skutkov. Pohnútkou k tomu má byť iba milosť Božia, ktorá sa zjavila v Pánu Ježišovi a priniesla nám spasenie. Máme sa všetci horlivo snažiť, konať dobré skutky preto, aby ľudia chválili Pána Boha, a nie na svoju chválu. Toto je zdôraznené 6-krát v kapitole 2 v 7. a 14. verši, v kapitole 3 v 1., 5., 8. a 14. verši.

Teda pobožný život radostného a poslušného kresťana, ktorý je plný dobrých skutkov, ktoré v nás vyvoláva Duch svätý a ktoré boli pre nás prichystané od vekov Pánom Bohom.

Slovo Božie hovorí tiež o odplate alebo odmene za dobré skutky. Je zaujímavé, že my vlastne nemáme nijakú zásluhu na tom, že konáme dobré skutky. Iba ak to, že sa poslušne podrobíme Duchu svätému,

ktorý skrže nás koná. Tu sme znovu a znovu pri koreni všetkého, a to je poslušnosť.

Bez poslušnosti voči Pánu Bohu nemôžeme robiť dobre, iba zle. I keď to vyzerá v očiach ľudí, že sme dobrí, v očiach Božích sme dobrí iba vtedy, keď ho poslúchame. Predovšetkým poslušní toho, čo nám hovorí Božie slovo. Preto je dôležité, aby sme boli neustále v Jeho slove, ktoré nám dáva tie najlepšie rady do života. Tí, ktorí si denne nečítajú Bibliu, prichádzajú do nebezpečia, že budú konať skutky, ktoré nie sú v očiach Božích dobré. A kto nečiní dobre, má hriech.

**Prvý list Timoteovi je epištolou pobožnosti. Je tu spomenutá pobožnosť 9-krát.**

1. V kapitole 2., verši 1. a 2.: „Napomínam ťedy, aby sa predovšetkým konaly prosby, modlitby, prímluvy a pokračovania za všetkých ľudí, za kráľov a za všetkých, ktorí sú vo vysokom postavení, aby sme žili pokojný a tichý život vo všetkej pobožnosti a počestnosti”.

2. V kapitole 2., veršoch 9. a 10.: „Tak iste aj ženy, v rúchu zdobnom a slušnom, ozdobovať sa so stydlivosťou a rozumnosťou, nie zápletami a zlatom alebo perlami alebo drahým rúchom, ale to, čo sluší ženám, ktoré priznávajú sa k Bohu sľubujú bobabojnosť, dobrými skutkami.”

3. V kapitole 2., verši 16.: „A vyznane veľké je tajomstvo pobožnosti: Bôh zjavený v tele, ospravedlnený v Duchu, zjavený anjelom, kázaný pohanom, uverené mu na svete, bore vzatý v sláve.”

4. a 5. V kapitole 4. verši 7. a 8.: „Ale obecné a babské bájkky odmietni a cvič sa v pobožnosti. Lebo telesné cvičenie je na málo čo užitočné, ale pobožnosť je na všetko užitočná.”

6. V kapitole 5., verši 4.: „Ale ak má niektorá vdova deti alebo vnukov, nech sa učia najprv dokazovať pobožnosť voči vlastnému domu a odplácať sa rodičom, lebo to je dobré a príjemné pred Bobom.”

7. V kapitole 6., verši 3.: „Ak niekto inak učí a nepristupuje k zdravým slovám, slovám nášho Pána Ježiša Krista, a k učeniu zodpovedajúcemu pobožnosti, je nadutý...”

8. V kapitole 6., verši 6.: „No, je naozaj veľkým ziskom pobožnosť so spokojnosťou.”

9. V kapitole 6., verši 11.: „Ale ty, ó, človeče Boží, utekaj od takých vecí, ale sa žej za spravodlivosťou, pobožnosťou, vierou.”

Keď sa pozrieme na význam čísla deväť, tak vidíme, že je to posledné číslo ako jedna číslica. Je to teda číslo, ktoré nám poukazuje na koniec. Môžeme povedať, že konečná fáza vo vybrúsení ľudského charakteru je pobožnosť. V liste Galat'anom, kapitole 5., verši 22. čítame, že ovocie ducha je: láska, radosť, pokoj, zhovievavosť, nežnosť, dobrotivosť, vernosť, krotkosť, zdržanlivosť. Deväť vlastností, ktoré by mal mať vypestované každý kresťan.

Ďalej vidíme, že v 1. epištole Korint'anom, v kapitole 12., veršoch 8.–10. je vymenovaných deväť darov Ducha: slovo múdrosti, slovo známosti, viera, uzdravovanie, robenie zázrakov, prorockvá, rozoznávanie duchov, rôzne jazyky a vykladanie jazykov.

Číslo deväť teda poukazuje na koniec človeka a jeho prác.

Vieme, že každý človek musí telesne zomrieť, a Slovo Božie hovorí, že duch odíde späť k Bohu a veriaci človek si oddýchne od všetkých prác. Teda aj skutkov, ktoré konal.

Zaujímavé je to, že budeme odmenení za skutky, ktoré sme konali v mene Ducha Svätého. Je na nás, ako ďaleko sa podrobíme, aby náš charakter sa podobal Ježišovmu.

Milosť ako pohnútkou k dobrým skutkom.

#### Časť 2.

Text: „Ale Bôh súc bobatý v milosrdenstve pre mnohú svoju lásku, ktorou nás zamiloval, aj keď sme boli mŕtvi v previneniach, spolu nás oživil s Kristom—milosťou ste spasení—a spolu vzkriesil a spolu posadil v ponebeských oblastiach v Kristu Ježišovi, aby v nasledujúcich vekoch ukázal nesmierne bobatstvo svojej milosti dobrotou na nás v Kristu Ježišovi. Lebo ste milosťou spasení skrze vieru, a to nie zo seba, je to dar Boží, nie zo skutkov, aby sa niekto nechválil. Lebo sme jeho dielom, stvorení v Kristu Ježišovi nato, aby sme konali dobré skutky, ktoré Bôh vopred pripravil, aby sme v nich chodili.” (Efežanom 2;4–10 „Verné je to slovo, a chcem, aby si o tom o všetkom pevne dotvrdzoval, aby tí, ktorí uverili Bohu, hľadeli konať dobré skutky.” Titovi 3,8

Skutok alebo dielo je výsledok nejakej činnosti, práce alebo pôsobenia. **Poznáme tri druhy skutkov: 1. skutky Božie, 2. skutky diablove a 3. skutky ľudské.**

**Skutky Božie** sa prejavili v Božej činnosti stvorenia, udržiavania sveta, vesmíru a tiež neba. Žalm 8,4: „Keď vidím tvoje nebesia, dielo tvojich prstov, mesiac a hviezdy, ktoré si postavil, pýtam sa: Čo je človek, že naňbo pamätáš?” Nakoniec v Jeho diele spasenia vidíme, sú to skutky najlepšie. Každý skutok Boží rozpráva a svedčí o Božej sláve, moci múdrosti a dobrotivosti Božej. Človek ktorý bol stvorený na obraz Boží, zaujíma mimoriadne postavenie medzi všetkými dielami Božimi. Žalm 8,6–7: „Učínil si ho málo menším než je Bôh; korunoval si ho slávou a ct'ou. Učínil si ho vládcom nad dielami svojich rúk; všetko si položil pod jeho nohy:” Práve preto, že človek a svet sú Božím dielom, vzhliada na nás so zvláštnou pozornosťou, záujmom a milosťou. Žalm 145,9: „Hospodin je dobrý všetkým a jeho zľutovania nado všetky jeho skutky.”





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Teda Boh je nielen stvoriteľom a udržiavateľom sveta a človeka, ale aj zasahuje do celých dejín ľudstva v náš prospech. A to je to najkrásnejšie. To nám dáva pokoj a istotu, že sa nič nedeje bez Jeho dovolenia. Celá Biblia—Slovo Božie je plné dôkazov Jeho lásky k človeku. I keď človek sklamal a v 1. Mojžišova 6,6 čítame, že: „Keď však Hospodin videl, že skazenosť ľudí na zemi bola veľká a že všetko zmýšľanie ich srdca bolo ustavične zlé, Hospodin oľutoval, že učinil človeka na zemi a mal bolesť vo svojom srdci.“ Predsa však Noach našiel milosť v očiach Božích. Toto je dôkaz, že Božia láska je väčšia nado všetok hriech a zlo. Pán Boh mal plán, ako človeka zachrániť a priviesť naspäť do rodiny Božej. Obetoval na to to najdrahšie, čo mal—Svojho Syna, Pána Ježiša Krista.

**Skutky diablove** sa prejavili v vzbure proti Pánu Bohu, potom v zvedení k hriechu človeka a nakoniec v jeho rušiteľskej a ničivej činnosti. To sú zlé a najhoršie skutky. Diabol pôsobí cez neposlušných synov: „Tak naplnil aj vás mrŕvych pre vlastné prestúpenie a hriechy, v ktorých ste kedysi žili primerane veku tohoto sveta, podľa kniežat a mocností vzduchu, ducha, pôsobiaceho teraz v neposlušných synoch.“ *Dielo Satanovo je sprevádzané „všetkou mocou, divmi a zázrakmi lživými“* (2. Tes. 2,9), ale i tak podlieha Božej moci, ktorá ho dokonale ovláda (2. Tes. 2,11). Pán Ježiš „prišiel na to, aby kazil skutky diablove“ (1. Ján 3,8)

**Skutky ľudské** musíme rozdeliť do dvoch skupín podľa toho, ku ktorej strane sa človek prikloní. Keď človek poslúcha Pána Boha, tak je

ním vedený ku konaniu dobrých skutkov. Písmo hovorí, že koná Božie skutky. Keď sa prikloní ku diablu, tak koná skutky, ktoré koná aj diabol, luhá, kradne, vraždí a ničí, teda koná diablove skutky, diablovo dielo. Neuvedomuje si, že koná proti sebe, lebo diabol sa snaží človeka zničiť. Dielo hriešnikov je falošné, i keď na pohľad vyzerá dobre.

Je tu totiž jeden háčik. Človek, i keď si myslí, že robí dobre, jeho pohnútky a motívy sú nie dobré, a to z toho hľadiska, že tým, že si myslí, že robí dobre, neoslavuje Pána Boha, ale sám seba. Tým sa povyšuje nad svojho Tvorcu. Toto musíme mať na mysli najmä my, ktorí sme kresťanmi. Totiž Slovo Božie nás nabáda na 12 miestach, aby sme konali dobré skutky. **Dobrý skutok** je iba

ten, ktorý plynie z úprimnej viery v Pána Ježiša a zo vzťahu k nemu. Farizeji konali dobré skutky iba pre chválu od ľudí. Kristovi učeníci preto, aby bol oslávený Pán Boh.

1. Matúš 5,16: „*Tak svieť vaše svetlo pred ľuďmi, aby videli vaše dobré skutky a chválili Otca v nebesiach.*“ K týmto dobrým skutkom ale musí byť človek stvorený—uspôsobený t.z. že ich musí konať so srdcom očisteným a od Pána Boha v Kristu pretvoreným, inými slovami musí byť znovuzrozený Duchom Sv. Odtiaľto pochopíme boj apoštola Pavla proti „skutkom zákona“—ustanoveniam židovským, ktoré sa im stali prostriedkom k dosiahnutiu vlastnej spravodlivosti. Apoštol Pavel hovorí u Galatským 3,2: „*Len to by som sa chcel od vás dozvedieť, či ste prijali Ducha zo skutkov podľa Zákona, alebo tým, že ste počúvali posolstvo viery?*“ Proti skutkom zákona stavia NZ skutok Boží. Keď človek spolieha na svoje „dobré skutky“, tak stráca spasenie v Pánu Ježišovi.

2. a 3. Keď v Betánii žena vyliala na hlavu Ježišovu drahocennú masť a učeníci namrzení ju kárali, tu čítame u Matúša 26,10 a Marka 14,6: „*Keď to spozoroval Ježiš povedal im: Čo zarmucujete túto ženu? Ved' mi preukázala dobrý skutok!*“

4. Skutky 9,36 „*V Joppe žila učeníčka menom Tabita, čo v preklade znamená Srnka. Robila mnohé dobré skutky a štedro dávala almužny.*“

5. Rimanom. 2,7: „*Ktorý odplatí každému podľa jeho skutkov večným životom tým, ktorí s vytrvalosťou v dobrom skutku bládajú slávu, česť a nesmrteľnosť.*“

6. 2. Epištola Korint'anom 9,8—: „*Ved' Boh má moc rozbojniť vo vás všetku milosť, aby ste mali vždy a vo všetkom všetkého dostatok na každý dobrý skutok, ako je napísané: Rozsýpal, dával chudobným, jeho spravodlivosť trvá naveky.*“

7. Epištola Efežanom 2,10: „*Lebo sme jeho dielom, stvorení v Kristu Ježišovi nato, aby sme konali dobré skutky, ktoré Bôh vopred prihotovil, aby sme v nich chodili.*“

Epištola Galat'anom 5,11–23 stavia proti sebe skutky tela a ovocie Ducha, čo sú vlastne charakterové vlastnosti, ktoré vedú k dobrým Božím skutkom.

Apoštol upozorňuje veriacích, že tí, ktorí žijú podľa telesných žiadostí, ktoré menuje skutkami tela, nebudú dedičmi kráľovstva Božieho. (Gal. 5,21)

Epištola Efežanom 4,25–32: „*Preto složíac lož hovorte jeden každému pravdu so svojim blížnym, lebo sme si navzájom údami. Hnevajte sa a nebrešte; slnko nech nezapáda nad vašim rozbehvaním sa, ani nedávajte miesta diablu. Kto kradne, nech už viac nekradne, ale radšej nech pracuje robiac dobré vlastnými rukami, aby mal čo udielať núdznemu. Nech nevychádza nijaké mrzké slovo z vašich úst, ale ak je nejaké dobré na vzdelanie, práve potrebné, aby dalo milosť tým, ktorí počúvajú. A nezarmucujte Svätého Ducha Božieho, ktorým ste zapečatení ku dňu vykúpenia. Každá borkosť a prchkosť a hnev a kriek a rúbanie nech je odňaté od vás so všetkým, čo je nešlachetné a zlé. Ale si buďte navzájom naproti sebe dobrotiví, ľútostiví, odpúšťajúci si, jako aj Bôh v Kristu odpustil vám..*“

Tu vidíme, že rozsah dobrých i zlých skutkov je viac než veľký, je obrovský. Všetka naša každodenná činnosť obsahuje niektoré dobré, ale i zlé skutky. Záleží na tom, aká je naša pohnútky k ich konaniu. Skutok je vykonaný čin. Keď je vykonaný, nesie následky, ktoré je ťažké, ak vôbec možné obísť. Pretože nie sme na svete sami, ale žijeme v rodine a ľudskej spoločnosti, každý skutok má vplyv na druhých a nesie so sebou následky. Je preto mimoriadne dôležité, aby sme prv

ako konáme, premysleli každý náš čin a skutok. Slovo skutok je odvodené od slova skutočnosť. Kým iba myslíme na skutok, ktorý by sme chceli vykonať, je čas sa zastaviť a nekonať.

Keďže poznáme Božiu milosť, ktorá sa nám stala v Pánu Ježišovi, táto by mala byť tou prvoradou pohnútkou k dobrým skutkom. Keď Pán Boh ma tak miloval, že obetoval svojho Syna, aby ma svojou smrťou vykúpil, tak ja by som mal poslušne konať to, čo je Božia vôľa—Božie skutky.

Apoštol Pavel napomína na mnohých miestach—(2. Korint'anom 9,8): „*A Bôh má moc rozbojniť vám každú milosť, aby ste vždycky vo všetkom mali všetkého dostatok a tak hojnili na každý skutok dobrý.*“

8. Epištola Kološanom 1,10: „*žeby ste chodili hodne Pána, aby ste sa mu vo všetkom ľúbili nesúc ovocie v každom skutku dobrom a rastúc v známosti Boha.*“

9. 2. Epištola Tesaloničanom 2,17: „*nech ráči potešíť vaše srdcia a upevniť vás v každom dobrom slove a v skutku.*“

10. 1. Epištola Timoteovi 2,9–10: „*Tak iste aj ženy, v rúchu zdobnom a slušnom, ozdobovať sa so stydlivosťou a rozumnosťou, nie zápletami a zlatom alebo perlami alebo drahým rúchom, ale to, čo sluší ženám, ktoré priznávajú sa k Bohu sľubujú bobabožnosť, dobrými skutkami.*“

11. 1. Epištola Timoteovi 5,25: „*Tak iste zrejme sú aj dobré skutky. A to, čo je inak, nedá sa ukryť.*“

12. A aby činili dobré, boli bohatí na dobré skutky, štedrý, zdieľní a tak si zhromažďovali dobrý základ do budúcnosti a dosiahli skutočný, večný život. Epištola Židom 10,24: „*A pozorujme sa navzájom tým cieľom, aby sme sa rozneovali k láske a k dobrým skutkom.*“



# Jesus Loves the Little Children

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

And He called a child to Himself and set him among them, and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you change and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. So whoever will humble himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (*Matthew 18:1-4*)

Now they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He would touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them. But Jesus called for the little ones, saying, "Allow the children to come to Me, and do not forbid them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all." (*Luke 18:15-17*)

But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their hearts, took a child and had him stand by His side, and He said to

them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great." (*Luke 9:47-48*)

"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it is better for him that a heavy millstone be hung around his neck, and that he be drowned in the depths of the sea." (*Matthew 18:6*)

"See that you do not look down on one of these little ones; for I say to you that their angels in heaven continually see the face of My Father who is in heaven." (*Matthew 18:10*)

"So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish." (*Matthew 18:14*)

Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world.

Verses from New American Standard Bible

Natasha Laurinc



Radio Logos NEW app located on Google Play and App Store



Dear friends at the Czechoslovak Baptist Convention, there was never a more urgent time to bring the Good News of Jesus' resurrection to the homes of people than now. With half the world in lockdown, and a lot of churches closed, or open with some limitations, we are glad to report that our radio ministry, in partnership with Radio Logos in Slovakia, is not slowing down as the COVID-19 crisis is more and more developing.

Thanks to partners in the ministry, Radio Logos was able to obtain a new

app for smartphones. It was purchased from a worldwide Christian radio organization, and then adapted to local needs. For several years, listeners with Apple devices were complaining that they could not hear Radio Logos due to software incompatibility.

Finally, we have a NEW app located on Google Play and App Store. Please follow this link:

<http://www.radiologos.sk/smartphone.html> to get the app for your device and let us know how it works for you. If possible, please write a positive review. Radio Logos is a ministry in the Slovak

language, and most of you, reading our update, do not speak Slovak. But take a peek at the app and then find someone who speaks Slovak as a first language and recommend it to him/her. In exactly this way we found a new listener in Spain, when our English-speaking friend recommended Radio Logos to his Slovak friend who came to Christ recently and never had a chance to hear or to read the Bible in her language.

Wishing you many blessings for Easter.

Jan & Ana Franka



Baptist Church Vlasotince, Serbia





# Sherri Paulson in Ghana

"Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart".

Psalms 37:4

**Last days**  
January 17, 2021



Last days, last drives with snow on the roads, last foods, last goodbyes. But many firsts await me. Like the first time arriving in Accra, I will quarantine for 10 days. The first time I will not go and run around and visit my friends. The first time I will have someone grocery shop for me.

I sent out a prayer email for people to be praying for me, and I have at least 70 people walking with me, going to Ghana with me. This morning I woke up and had no worries, no "Oh no! I forgot this", no "What do I do if this doesn't work out?" or butterflies in my stomach. And as I thought and praised God about it, I realized that every day since I sent out that prayer update, my worry has lessened, my to-do list has shortened, my complaints are quieter, and my joy for returning has increased.

I don't want to say I don't believe it, because I do. I know it is because I have people praying for me. But there is a part of me that is like, "NO WAY!!!" I said to my aunties something like: if this is how God is going to be answering his people, then I am so excited to go!! What is God going to do these next few years?

Our world is unknown. When I say goodbyes to people, I wonder what they will be doing, or where they will be when I come back or if they will be closer to the Lord or farther away because of the circumstances that come around. And me too, what will my life be like in a few years or even a month?? I have my ideas, but really, I do not know. I do not know what Covid has done to the country, even though I hear of very few deaths and people not wearing masks. I do not know what ministry will look like, even though I have contacts and needs and ideas.

So, since I cannot control any of this, since I cannot control how people are going to change with the world changing around us, since I cannot control my Covid test, or the airlines, I will let it go and not worry. Anne Graham Lotz says that worry is unbelief, as it frets over things instead of trusting God completely. So, let's just believe. Believe in God's bigness. Believe in God's love. Believe in God's plans. Sounds cheesy. Maybe a bit too simple. But the Word says that worry is not going to add anything to your life. So, let's keep it simple.

**Back in Ghana**  
February 4, 2021

God really outdid Himself. Or is that just normal Him-being-God? I went from a "I wonder what God is doing?" to ending up in Ghana singing "God is so good".

It was the evening of the day I wrote my last blog, January 17<sup>th</sup>. I was ready to fly on the 19<sup>th</sup>. I got a call that night from a nurse telling me I am positive for Covid-19. I listened quietly, holding back sobs, and asked her when I could retest again since I am asymptomatic. She said in 10 days. I hung up. I bawled. My family was just as shocked as me. But we sat, we trusted in God's knowing more than us, and we rolled out the next 10 days. I think we all enjoyed that extra time. I had nothing to do. I had no place to go. My family had all had Covid already, so they were not concerned about getting it. We played games and I read books and I cooked and relaxed. It was a blessing.

So, then January 28<sup>th</sup> came around to get tested again. My amazing parents took me, and we waited. I had a travel agent on standby. I had my last suitcase just waiting to be filled with last-minute toiletries and such. AND...they emailed me early on the 29<sup>th</sup> that I was negative. YEEE HA! So, I had time to call the travel agent and I got a seat on a flight for the 30<sup>th</sup>. I filled out paperwork that would be needed for a Covid test at Accra airport. I took an online health screening test provided by Ghana. We left at 6:30am for Minneapolis and the Delta attendant was



This is the cute lil' back apartment  
I am staying in for quarantine at the SIM Guesthouse

very kind. All papers, visa, tests were accepted. The man next to me was being told he had the wrong Covid test and could not fly! How terrible! I got to JFK airport and had a long layover, but I didn't care—I was going!! The flights had seats empty next to me so I was able to stretch out. I arrived in Accra the afternoon of the 31<sup>st</sup> and went thru all the lines and my rapid Covid test came back negative. I had people waiting for me. And here I am now, at our SIM Guesthouse, in isolation, for a week. I will then take another test, which will hopefully be negative, and then I am FREEEEEEEE!!

Other missionaries have cooked food for me since I cannot go out. Some have asked if there is anything I need and gone shopping for me. Some other missionaries traveled with a truck up north and I was able to hand off most of my suitcases, as now I do not have to worry about them. My phone number is connected and I can call people. I have all I need. I am so thankful. I am so, so very thankful.

**By God's Grace**  
February 15, 2021

My time in Accra has been great. I had a week of quarantine. It actually went quite fast. I think I am good at doing nothing. And then my second week has been visiting and catching up with friends and people who I used to do ministry with. I was back and forth, in and out of the guesthouse. We have to wear masks all the time so that is exhausting and cumbersome, but so be it. Some friends came to the guesthouse to hang out, others I visited at their place. I am back to greetings like, "How are you?" "I am fine, thank you, and you?" "Oh, by God's grace we are doing well." It is amazing that some of the little kids I used to do programs with are now about to enter high school. Or some of the youth I was part of are now youth leaders. So very encouraging.

I would like to share with you one of the quiet times I had.

One night, I could not fall asleep. I was desperate. Since Dagbani makes me tired, I pulled out my Dagbani Bible and English Bible. I went through Matthew 5. Jesus says, "Do not resist the one who is evil." The evil person here is one who takes your cloak and then you should give your shirt. Or one who slaps you, and you then give him the other cheek. Or one who forces you to go one mile, and you go with him another. Also he says to give to the one who begs.

The phrase that got me was "Do not resist the one who is evil." "Really, Lord? Ok! I will be ready to love this kind of person, one who is evil." My pride in me was thinking: I love people, this will be easy.

The next morning, I borrowed the SIM van to run errands. I came up to a traffic light. At traffic lights here there are beggars. The man who came towards my vehicle was a person of a different religion. I could tell by the way he dressed. I heard myself in my mind say, "This man is evil because he is against



Some of the youth I was part of are now youth leaders.  
Very encouraging

God." So, as he passed I did not give him anything EVEN THOUGH this Scripture passage came to me and pricked my conscience! I was grateful for the green light so that I could run away from what I should have done.

Now, there are lots of discussions on what to do with beggars. Give or not give. Give money or food. Share a tract or pray

with them. This is not the point. The point is I had an encounter with the Lord in His Word about not resisting one who is evil. I failed. I decided what was right in my own eyes. I judged this man based on his religion and previous experience with these people. My attitude and actions fell short of love.

Does anyone love this man? Does anyone care for him and feed him? I do not know. Just because I give him a few coins, does that mean he is cared for? Have I done my Christian duty by helping a beggar like the other part of the Word says?

God, how can you love this man who doesn't believe you, who may even hate you? I asked this of the Lord and sensed a quiet response of, "Because he doesn't know Me."

God gave me an opportunity to experience Him and his ways. I was stuck in a way of thinking that is familiar with a pharisee. I thought myself too "big" to stoop to this level. The level was love. The level was not resisting. You would think it is so simple. You would think a missionary would be an A student at this.

I needed this reminder to see where I really am in reading and doing the Word. There are many people here who I would consider "one who is evil" and yet that was who I once was too. But by God's grace I have been made friends with God, says Romans 5. I am sure these people also would love to know how they can be friends of God.

Next time may I be ready in word or deed to show them they are loved.

Love you. Thanks for praying. □

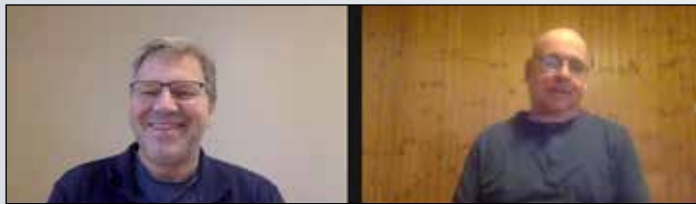


*"Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth!  
For I am God, and there is no other."*

Isaiah 45:22

We'd like to share with you a conversation that Mark had in January with our outreach worker, Petr Vlček, about the church-planting efforts in the Prosek neighborhood of Prague.

The spiritual situation in **Prosek** is, of course, very difficult, because Satan does not want a new active local church to be established in this location. Despite the fact that there is a large percentage of atheistic people here in the Czech Republic, which is a result of Communism here in this country, where faith was suppressed and the nation was devastated; despite this, **God is**



**calling us to this work.** He is calling us to this ministry to serve these unbelieving and seeking people, a truly great number of people around us.

So, there's lots of work to do here at Prosek! I am personally **praying for more co-workers**, for more Christian brothers and sisters, who will join us at the Prosek church plant and help us with this very great work. Prosek is calling out for help in this spiritual work. **People need to be saved.**



At this time, the Corona crisis in the Czech Republic has reached its peak. The Czech Republic is literally the **worst-hit country in Europe**, maybe even in the world, but despite this we are proclaiming the gospel, giving out Bibles, and serving the Lord. We are following all the government guidelines: distancing, masks, and so on, and we are able to meet in person within the number of 6–8 people.

We are also very grateful to the Potma family, specifically **Mark and Gretchen** and their children, because without



Mark Potma, this work would not be so far along. Together, Mark and Gretchen have done an incredible work in the northern districts of Prague. They have left a large footprint, and we are deeply grateful for the Potma family.

My testimony is, in conclusion, that even with these huge obstacles, and in this adversity, **we can see the light of Christ.** And may I

remind each one of you that while you may have a tragic situation in your life, something very difficult, some kind of spiritual darkness, the light of Christ always shines there – always look and see him there, and **you will always find Him**, even in the most difficult moments of your life. This has been my experience. Amen.

Please **PRAY** for the unbelievers in the city of Prague and especially the 37,000 people who live in the **Prosek** neighborhood.

**PRAY** for Petr and for all those who are working together with him, sharing the good news of Jesus in **Prosek**.

**PRAY** for more Czech believers to join in the work.

**PRAY** against the spiritual opposition in Prosek, and **PRAISE** God for His grace and love which has the power to overcome darkness.

**PRAISE** the Lord for providing financially for the needs of the **Prosek church plant**, and please **PRAY** for God's blessing on all those who support the ministry at **Prosek**.

### The best Method of Evangelism

Mark is a member of the Czech church-planting task force which is mobilizing support and resources to initiate 20 new churches and 30 new church-planting projects by the year 2030.

What will it take to see this vision become a reality?

### Support

Petr: The Church-Planting Department is here to support local churches as they start missional communities, church plants and also churches. But it's also about educating people because it's been shown that planting churches is one of the best ways to bring the good news to people. We want to bring practical tools and connect groups across the whole church.

### Change

Bedřich: Church planting is about three things. The first is about the change in people's lives which I have seen, whether it is in people who are meeting God for the first time and what it means, how hard it is sometimes, how long it takes, or whether it is change in people for whom their faith maybe wasn't completely real in their lives. Sure, they believed in God, but not that they would take up the challenge to go somewhere, to change something. Now all of a sudden, they have to believe God every day.

### Friendship and Creativity

Bedřich: The second thing is friendship and cooperation. I am happy that every day I can work in cooperation with my best friends to plant churches. We've gone through some hard things together, but the fact is that we're together a lot and often, and I can say today that they're my best friends. The third thing is creativity. It's incredible to see how creative people are and how they manage to think up new ways of reaching unbelievers, how to do church, and what they themselves want to have in the church and what they are capable of thinking up and starting.

Tomáš: The Church of the Brethren has church planting in its roots, in its foundations. In its first 25 years of existence, 23 churches and 60 smaller local church plants were started. The years of Communism separated us from our roots and we have to learn it again in our generation. In the last 25 years, 30 new churches have been started and the number of churches has almost doubled. Even though this process hasn't always been completely positive, we see that it is this investment into new churches that is bringing huge results.

### Teamwork

David: I've had the privilege of being part of starting two new churches. I didn't lead either team, but I was able to be part of these teams. I learned a lot of new things. One of these things was that we started out as a team and so I learned



very well how to work in a team. The second thing that was great is that we came to a place in Prague where the gospel hadn't been preached before. It was what we call a "white field" in terms of Christian witness. Then there is the third thing – that we left our mother church and all at once we were surprised that in these mother churches, lots of people got involved in ministry, and often it was people that we never would have expected. I saw that planting a new church benefitted the mother church also, and these churches still are doing very well today.

### Basic Training

Petr: The support that we give is made up of seven areas that naturally are connected to one another, which all begin with the letter Z in Czech. The first is preparing the soil for church planting through teaching. We want to support the

raising up of new leaders. We offer a mirror—we put a mirror up to the main leaders, so that they can see their weak and strong sides, their giftedness for church planting. We offer basic training to the teams. We want to offer a supporting environment for teams, in the form of guidance and coaching – resources, and not just financial, but also written materials, for example. And lastly, we want to create a platform for sharing our experiences with each other.



### Church-Planting Foundation

Tomáš: It's clear to us that planting churches needs financial support as well, and for this reason, we established the Church-Planting Foundation, which supports new projects, and we try to obtain resources for a new generation of church planters.

### Prayer Points:

1. Please **PRAY** with the Czech church-planting task force that 20 new churches would be established and 30 more would be initiated by the year 2030, for God's glory.
2. **PRAISE** God for recent opportunities we've had in person and online to share our ministry, and **PRAY** that God would continue to open doors for us to share the vision of reaching new regions, planting new churches, discipling new believers, and training new leaders in the Czech Republic for God's glory.
3. **PRAY** for a new generation of believers in these new churches who will be actively involved in leading others to faith in Christ and in discipling them to spiritual maturity.
4. **PRAY** for the current church-planting coaches and mentors, and that God would raise up more new coaches for the additional 30 new church-planting projects.
5. **PRAY** also for 20 leaders for these 20 church plants, and that God would raise up 30 more leaders who can be coached to competently lead 30 more new church-planting projects by 2030.

Thanks for praying with us and partnering with us to reach new regions, plant new churches, disciple new believers, and train new leaders in the Czech Republic.

Proclaiming repentance and forgiveness to all nations,  
*Mark and Gretchen*

