

Glorious Hope Slavná naděje

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So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him. (Colossians 2, 6)

Žijte v Kristu Ježíši, když jste ho přijali jako Pána. (Koloským 2,6)

Ako ste teda prijali Ježiša Krista, Pána, tak v ňom žite. Kolosenským. (Kolosenským 2,6)

MISSIONS

Editorial – Natasha Laurinc.....	3
From the President and the Executive Secretary.....	4
Ladies' Page – Natasha Laurinc.....	5
Sunday Service – Rev. Stan Mantle.....	6
The Great Commission – Jamie Tiffin	10
Missions: Ruby Mikulencak.....	12
Ruby Mikulencak-UPDATE	13
Jan & Ana Franka	14
Váhalas	15
Pastor Al and Eloise Dagel	16
Vladimir & Marijana Cizmanski	17
Mark & Gretchen Potma.....	18
Mark & Gretchen Potma-UPDATE	20
In Memory – Daniel Korcok	22
Flashes from the Past – Convention Photos	24

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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.

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Editorial

Witness to the Gospel of God's Grace

The apostle Paul addresses his readers with his zeal. Prior to his departure to Jerusalem he says his farewells. Not knowing what he will encounter, he nevertheless reassures his brothers in Christ that the most important thing is that he perseveres and doesn't disappoint his calling, which he accepted from the Lord: "However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace." (Acts 20:24). We are familiar with Paul's story. He became a missionary after accepting the Christian faith. Thanks to his zeal and perseverance, Christianity spread amongst pagans and became a world religion. We know from the letters Paul sent to congregations that the faith of the first Christians went through various phases. These phases naturally created many problems in both their practical and spiritual lives. In his letters, Paul taught, admonished and encouraged the Christians. Even today Christianity contends with similar problems, and situations repeat themselves. This is why his letters remain relevant and continue to speak to Christians. Paul emphasized God's grace: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: [it is] the gift of God: Not of works...." (Ephesians 2:8–9).

Many missionaries followed after Paul. Even today's missionaries continue the work Paul started. They likewise endure hardships, found congregations, teach, admonish, and are witnesses to the gospel. Paul calls the faithful to prayer in his letters: "Continue in prayer and watch in the same

Svěděk evangelia o Boží milosti

Apoštol Pavel oslovuje svou horlivostí. Před odchodem do Jeruzaléma se loučí, neví, co ho čeká, ale ujišťuje své bratry v Kristu, že jemu jde pouze o to, aby vytrval a nezklamal ve svém poslání, které přijal od Pána: „Já však na to nedbám; v životě mi nejde o nic víc, než abych dokončil svůj běh a službu, kterou jsem přijal od Pána Ježíše: abych byl svědkem evangelia o Boží milosti.“ (Skutky 20;24) Pavlův příběh známe.



Convention 2018 - Missionary Reports - Ruby Mikulencak

Po přijetí křesťanské víry se stal misionářem. Díky jeho horlivosti a vytrvalosti se křesťanství rozšířilo mezi pohany a stalo se světovým náboženstvím. Z dopisů, které apoštol Pavel posílal do jednotlivých sborů, víme, že první křesťané

při své víře procházely různými fázemi. To přirozeně způsobovalo mnohé problémy jak v praktickém, tak i v duchovním životě. Pavel v dopisech křesťany vyučoval, napomínal, povzbuzoval. I v dnešní době se křesťanství potýká s podobnými problémy, situace se opakují. Proto jsou jeho dopisy stále aktuální a ke křesťanům promlouvají. Pavel kladl důraz na Boží milost: „Touto milostí jste skrze víru spaseni. Není to z vás—je to Boží dar; není to ze skutků...“ (Efezským 2; 8–9)

Po Pavlovi následovalo mnoho dalších misionářů. Také dnešní misionáři pokračují v tom, co apoštol Pavel začal. Rovněž prožívají těžkosti, zakládají sbory, vyučují, napomínají, jsou svědky evangelia. Pavel ve svých dopisech vyzýval k modlitbám: „V modlitbě buďte vytrvalí, zůstávejte v ní bdělí a vděční. Modlete se přitom i za nás, aby nám Bůh otevřel dveře ke kázání slova, abychom mohli mluvit o Kristově tajemství...“ (Koloským 4;2–3) Tato výzva stále platí pro všechny křesťany.



Convention 2018 - Missionary Reports - Jan and Ana Franka

with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ...“ (Colossians 4:2–3). This call is still relevant for all Christians.

In its 111 years of existence, our Czechoslovak convention

Continues on page 22

Pokračuje na straně 22

CZECHOSLOVAK
BAPTIST CONVENTION
of
United States and Canada



NEW DATES
JULY 8-11, 2021



Dear Convention Family

Hello dear friends. We hope you are all well in the ongoing climate of concern and precautions related to Covid-19. Things are gradually beginning to reopen here (Canada) as the government tries to allow economic activity while preserving safety and minimizing infections. We are encouraged by this but know that our ultimate help and hope are in God.

Although businesses are reopening, official gatherings are still limited. The US-Canada border remains closed until at least near the end of August. Many churches are still meeting online, and when we may be able to physically gather together again as usual, is uncertain. The situation is more open in the US, but infections are continuing. Thus we regretfully came to the conclusion that it was necessary to cancel this year's summer Convention.

We have been in contact with Malone University in Canton, Ohio, about rescheduling the Convention next year, and they have reserved July 8-11, 2021 for us.

We hope our intended guests this year from the Czech Baptist Union, President Jan Pavel and Secretary Jan Jackonic, will be able to join us next year, and we have extended the invitation for them to do so. We sincerely regret this postponement but, Lord willing, the 2021 Convention will be all the richer and greater blessing for our being able then to gather face to face once again.

We pray continued good health and safety for all as we move through this crisis.

Grace and peace from Him who holds the world in His hands and each of us as well with tender love and compassion.

Sincerely,

Stan Mantle – President
Darko Siracki – Executive Secretary



Convention 2018 - Ladies Meeting

With great joy and thankfulness we were able to participate in a virtual women's meeting: Joy-Gladness not based on circumstance (1 Peter 1:8-9).

Once again, the rarity of the fellowship has been confirmed. Seeing familiar and kind faces, remembering past encounters, and connecting in prayer across continents and the ocean was amazing. Prayer really has no boundaries. Special thanks to Ruby Mikulencak, Andrea Lamos-Turner and Deb Mulder for their initiative and commitment in this.

Personally, I am very encouraged and moved. I realized how much I miss your sharing on the pages of our magazine. Everyday stories appeal to readers, and sharing with each other makes sense. We live in a time when many things surprise us and we get used to new situations, pleasant and unpleasant. However, the Lord God remains the same, knows our stories and does not leave us. Through life stories, the Lord God

speaks. Therefore, dear sisters in Christ, share your stories on the pages of *Glorious Hope!* Only in this way can we support each other in prayer.

"In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls." (1 Peter 1:6-9)

You can send your stories anytime to: natasha.laurinc@gmail.com.

Natasha Laurinc



Sunday Service

110. CZSKBC Convention - July 14 2019



Rev. Stan Mantle

Precious Redeemer (1 Peter 1:18–19)

"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver and gold that you were redeemed...but with the precious blood of Christ..." (1 Peter 1:18–19)



We live in a time of rushing change. Ancient boundaries are being blurred or they are missing. You know what I mean. Sign posts are being reversed. And a frightening new societal orthodoxy is rising and taking shape. It's not that all change is bad; it's not that the past was unquestionably good. Every age and generation has their own blind spots and prejudices. But positive change and progress depend on mountain peaks to guide the journey and stars to confirm the direction. And reference to things that don't change is essential for safe travel across land and sea, or from the present to the future, a reference point to things that don't change. And so this year's theme for the convention, *Jesus*

Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever, is one of welcome reassurance and comfort to us. Over these days together we have reviewed some of the dependable and foundational facets of Christ's character: world maker, sheep chaser, Son of God, Messiah. These things don't change. He doesn't change: his nature, his character. Today we come to a name that stands out in central and glorious splendor: precious Redeemer.

Our text in First Peter is thought to date from just prior to the outbreak of persecution under Nero in Rome, A.D. 64, addressing people who may already have had to suffer grief and all kinds of trials, and for whom there may soon be more to come. And it strikes me that we might be in a similar situation. We

really haven't had much trial yet, but the signs and moving of the times suggest to me that the freedoms we have enjoyed at little cost may not be long with us, or may be diminishing quickly. And there may be a higher cost to pay pretty soon. So Peter writes to them and to us, I think, through the Holy Spirit: *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver and gold that you were redeemed, but with the precious blood of Christ.* Redemption is the story line and the beating heart of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. God is the Redeemer who brought the people of Israel out of bondage in Egypt. Job's faith in the midst of trials with questions still unanswered exclaimed, and we just sang it: *I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God. I know that my Redeemer lives. I myself will see him with my own eyes—I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!* (Job 19:25–27) David, the psalmist, shepherd, lion-, bear-, and giant-slayer, musician and poet, king of Israel, a great sinner too, but a man after God's own heart. Not because he sinned but he repented of his sin. David knew God as his rock and Redeemer. In the New Testament, the Gospel of Luke relates that when Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple to present him to the Lord, the prophetess Anna came up to them and gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Israel. *In him*, Paul would later write to believers in Ephesus—perhaps about the same time as Peter was writing the words we read earlier—*in him*, Paul writes to the Ephesians, *we have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace.* In him we have redemption. It's stirring to conceive and ponder that both Paul and Peter, in Rome, shortly before their deaths and near the end of their ministries, coming to the conclusion of their lives, were so enraptured by Jesus'

redemption that they wanted to draw the attention of their readers to that. That's what they wanted to point out, that's what they wanted to highlight and to leave with them: Jesus as precious Redeemer. So as we turn our attention this morning in the same direction and look into Jesus' eyes, we find that we are relentlessly loved. We were redeemed at great cost. And we are unchained and set free. We'll look at each of these this morning.

The thought of Jesus as our precious Redeemer points to the fact that we are relentlessly loved. There is a strange and, from a human perspective, unseemly story in the Old Testament book of Hosea. It begins like this: *The word of the LORD that came to Hosea, son of Beeri. When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, and take to yourself an adulterous wife and children of unfaithfulness." So he married Gomer and she conceived and bore him a son. What? This is in the Bible? God telling his prophet to marry a sinful woman? How can that be? What questions Hosea must have had, as well as those who watched and saw what was unfolding. Hosea, what are you doing, are you crazy? You're going to be sorry, I tell you, mark my words! But that isn't even the worst of it. Although they had three children, it appears that the marriage did not come off happily or smoothly. Well, that's a big surprise, eh? We could have told them that. Apparently Gomer was unfaithful to Hosea in their marriage and went back to her former ways. Hosea relates what happens next. *The Lord said to me: "Go and show your love to your wife again, and though she is loved by another and is an adulteress."* Not, go and give her a warning and tell her if she smartens up maybe you can work it out? No, go show your love to your wife though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. So Hosea says, *I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and about a homer and a lethek of barley.* Can you imagine Hosea's conversation with God about that before he did it? Maybe*

it went something like this: *Lord, it was bad enough when you told me to go and marry an adulteress, but I did it and you saw what happened, how she deserted me and gave her love to another. And now you want me to go and take her back? Do you not see how weak and foolish this will make me look, like I have no self-respect? No, she's made her bed—let her lie in it.* Now it wouldn't be surprising if that was how Hosea felt. At least his initial thoughts could have been like that. Nevertheless, he not only took Gomer back, he bought her back. He paid out the money to the one who owned her now; he purchased her and he took her home to live with him once more. What is the explanation? Why is this story in the Bible? Why is God asking his prophet to do these things? This is clearly not a happy tale of two lovers who make each other so happy they can't stand to be apart. This is not a love compelled by Gomer's beauty being so overwhelming that Hosea couldn't resist, and in exchange for her love for him and her beauty, he gave her his love. That's not what this story is showing us. What strange, unearthly kind of love is involved here? As the story unfolds, it becomes clear that God is painting a picture for us of his relentless love for Israel: God loves Israel like this. And Gomer's unfaithfulness represents Israel's turning away from God, and going after other gods. And Hosea is taking disgraced Gomer back as his wife and buying her and restoring her when she forsook and betrayed him, and dishonored him in the arms of another. That is the picture of God's relentless love for Israel. And that's the love that is at work in redemption. This is the love of our precious Redeemer for us! Not just for Israel. It's not just Gomer and Israel who have sinned and have betrayed the Lord and broken his heart. All of us, each of us, you and me, the church, we have all gone astray; the Bible tells us each of us has turned to our own way. And there is no one righteous, not even one. We have betrayed and wounded our Creator, our provider,



Czechoslovak Baptist Convention 2019 - Malone University

our protector, our comforter. Remember there were two lost sons in the story that Jesus told when the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered against him, this man welcomes sinners and eats with them. They didn't like who Jesus was associating with and spending time with, and so Jesus told them this story of two sons. We always focus on the one, but there were two. There was the younger son, who openly forsook his father, ran away, took the family fortune or his portion of it and wasted it away, squandered it in wild living. But there was also the older, stay-at-home son, whose heart nevertheless was angry and embittered. He didn't move away on the outside, but he was far away on the inside. He obeyed outwardly, but his heart was not like his father's heart. His father was arranging a party to celebrate his lost brother's coming home. The father, so happy, he's just rejoicing, we have to celebrate, this is the most wonderful thing that's happened. But the older son ungratefully and disrespectfully complains to his dad. He says: *Look*—and you can almost hear the anger — *look, all these years I've been slaving for you; I've never disobeyed your*

orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. Ingratitude, a sense of “you owe me.” So this son, too, grievously wounded his father's heart, his father's loving heart. So whichever son you want to identify with, we all have sinned against God's love and care, and we become separated, some of us outwardly and some of us inwardly, from him. And so as slaves to sin, we cannot redeem ourselves. We can't get out of it by our own efforts. A slave doesn't get any money for their work. They can work every day, seven days a week, but they don't get a paycheck at the end of that time. So there is no way to earn or save up the money to buy their freedom. Our only hope is for someone to come along who, unbelievably, would pay for us. But what is the chance of that? Why would anyone ever do that? And then the book of Hosea shows us who would. God, the one we have offended, the one we have abandoned, the one we have sorely hurt, comes to pay the price. See his heart laid open, asking, *how can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel?* That would be the obvious thing to do, and God knows it. He said, *I don't want to*

do that, I can't do that. The names are Ephraim and Israel, but you can insert your own. *How can I give you up,* —put your name in there. I put my name in there: How can I hand you over, Stan? Or put your name in there. He goes on: *My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused. I will not carry out my fierce anger. ... For I am God, and not man*—(Hosea 11; 8–9). That's the unfathomable, relentless love of our precious Redeemer for sinners such as you and me.

The second thing to highlight this morning concerning our precious Redeemer is the cost that it came to, what it amounted to. It's one thing to say that He paid for my freedom; it's another to look at what it cost. Redemption, as I said, is the central theme of the Bible. And stories of redemption thrill our hearts. Something is lost, but it is found. Someone is in danger, in dire threat, but somehow is rescued. Someone is in debt as high as the mountains, but miraculously the price is paid by another. There is an interesting story in the Old Testament book of Numbers that sheds light on the concept of redemption. *God told Moses to count the number of the Levites, every male a month old or more. So Moses did so and he came and found out that the total of the Levites was 22,000. Then God said, “Now go and count all the firstborn Israelites, males a month old or more.” Moses did so and he found that it came to 22,273, a difference of 273.* Now in God's reckoning the firstborn were to be the Lord's, they belonged to Him. But God said to Moses, *“Take the Levites for me in place of the firstborn of the Israelites, and the livestock of the Levites in place of the livestock of the Israelites.”* So he says, I'll let the Levites stand in for the Israelites, so all the other tribes don't have to give their firstborn to me in that way; the Levites can be the ones who represent them. But you remember that there was the slight difference. The number of the Levites wasn't quite up to the number of the Israelites; it was 273 short. So this is what God said to Moses:

“To redeem the 273 firstborn Israelites who exceed the number of the Levites, collect five shekels for each one. Give the money for the redemption of the additional Israelites to Aaron and his sons.” So Moses collected the redemption money, which turned out to be 1,365 shekels, and gave it to Aaron and his sons. Now Isn't that interesting? This accounting, this reckoning, we could say, well, couldn't we just round it up? It's symbolic anyway, right? God says no. It's going to be paid to the last, to the full price, the full amount. In this morning's text Peter says, you know it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed. Why not? Silver and gold are valuable. You can redeem other things with them. If your car was impounded and towed away, you could go and pay an amount and get your car back, you could redeem your car. Terrorists sometimes fund their operations by kidnapping someone and demanding a ransom before they release the person. So why does Peter emphasize that we are not redeemed with silver and gold? Because silver and gold are not valuable enough to pay the price. Only one thing, only one thing is able to bring it to the full amount, the infinite amount. What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. *Not with perishable things such as silver and gold were we redeemed, Peter exclaims, but with the precious blood of Christ.* You see, it matters what is offered in redemption. It can't be paid in good intentions, good works, best efforts; it can't be paid by anyone with a blemish or defect themselves. Nor was the redemption that Jesus Christ worked for us a nice, tidy transaction, like paying a bill. You pay your money or put your cheque where it's supposed to be. But this paying was not like that; it wasn't like purchasing something at the store. It was, rather, a terrible battle, a whirling cauldron of violence, a titanic exertion to death. Isaiah 63 paints a

powerful picture of God's day of vengeance and redemption. It depicts God's judgment being meted out on the nations. But there's also here, as scripture often has multiple meanings, there's also here a vivid portrayal of God's fierce judgment on sin, a battle that was waged for us by our Redeemer Christ on the cross. This is what it says: *Who is this coming from Edom, from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson? Who is this, robed in splendor, striding forward in the greatness of his strength? Why are your garments red, like those of one treading the winepress? And then this: I have trodden the winepress alone.* Alone. When Jesus, our precious Redeemer, was taken down from the cross, his body was bloodied and broken. Our familiarity with the story dulls us to the horror, and the shocking cost. Casting it in a different setting helps us to see the enormity of the crime and the amazing love involved in our redemption, helps us to see it with fresh eyes. And this is what C.S. Lewis does in his famous tale *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. He takes the whole story and sets it in a different place, and it brings out the enormity, the wrongness of what happened to Christ. In the story that takes place in the magical land called Narnia, four children, Peter, Susan, Lucy and Edmond, represent the human race. For long years the land had been under the cruel rule of the white witch, who symbolizes Satan. Rumour has it, however, that the great lion Aslan, who signifies Christ, is on the move, and he is coming to defeat the witch and free the land from continuous winter. One of the brothers, Edmond, betrays the others and he becomes the captive of the witch. And by his treachery, his life is forfeit to her, and she means to execute him on a large slab of rock known as the Stone Table. But Aslan has a private conference with the witch, and after that conference he comes back to the others and says, I have settled the matter; she has renounced the claim on your brother's blood. That evening, though, Aslan

seems subdued, and even sad. The two sisters, Lucy and Susan, follow him when late at night he slips out of the camp and makes his way toward the place of the Stone Table, the place of sacrifice. Catching up to him, the children ask: please, can we come with you, wherever you're going? And he answers: I should be glad of company tonight. Yes, you may come, if you will promise to stop when I tell you. And after that let me go on alone. So they went on together and one of the girls was on each side of the lion, but how slowly he walked and his great royal head drooped so that his nose nearly touched the grass. Presently he stumbled and gave a low moan. Aslan, dear Aslan, said Lucy, what's wrong? Can't you tell us? Are you ill? No, said Aslan, I'm sad, and lonely. Lay your hands on my mane so I can feel you're there and let us walk like that. So the girls buried their cold hands in the beautiful sea of fur and stroked it, and so doing, they walked with him. Going up the slope of the hill, they came to the edge of the clearing where the Stone Table was. Instructing the girls to remain hidden and go no farther, Aslan stepped out onto the top of the hill. A great crowd of evil-looking people were waiting, with the wicked witch in the centre. The fool, she cried, the fool has come! Bind him fast! Lucy and Susan held their breath, waiting for Aslan's roar and his spring upon his enemies, but it never came. Four hags darted towards him and shrieked with triumph when they found that he made no resistance at all. Emboldened, others rushed in and rolling him on his back tied all of his four paws together. Had the lion chosen, one of those paws could have been the death of them all. But he made no noise, even when the enemy was straining and tugging and pulling the cords so tight that they cut into his flesh. Before hoisting him onto the Stone Table, the witch ordered that he be shaved. Amidst a roar of mean laughter, snip, snip, snip went the shears, and masses of gold curling hair fell to the

Continues on page 23

The Great Commission

Rev. Jamie Tiffin

As I begin, I wish to thank you for the opportunity to encourage you in our continued partnership in ministry and missions.

The first Bible college I attended was called the Baptist Leadership Education Centre. It was a one-year lay training institute with a residential component and a trimester education system. My pastor saw leadership potential in the activities I participated in, in Sunday school, church youth group, and youth association activities. When the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Québec saw a need to train the young generation with leadership skills, Bible training, and ministry vision, they established the school in Whitby, Ontario. The trimester system worked in this way: Semester One was based on a personal relationship curriculum: subjects such as devotions and devotional lifestyle, personal prayer and meditation, and proper reading techniques of the Bible. The second semester worked on the premise that now each student had a better understanding of a one-to-one relationship with God, so now let's focus on the local church. These courses looked at the ministry of the church; yes, the greater scope of the One Church in Jesus Christ worldwide, but the main focus was on the local congregation and its ministries: worship, music, public speaking, praying, the use of drama and puppetry, and junior church. We looked at the staff of the local church, and the volunteers that worked diligently in the local setting called the church. We learned things such as giving a personal testimony, how to pray publicly, how to read Scripture. We learned the structure of the board of deacons, board of management mission, committees, youth work, the financial aspect, and the role each member played in this work. Finally, the last component of our trimester system was based on whether each of us was fully committed to God in our personal lives, and could now work hand-in-hand with the local church and its ministry, as well as in the partner-



ship of the bigger picture of the gospel. The last trimester looked into "go ye therefore into all the world", and what that meant—missions by definition and in action. We were taught about history, missionary heroes and the places they reached and touched for the glory of God. But most importantly, what did the word "go" mean to each of the students? And this is where our journey for this article begins!

The Great Commission which compels the believer to go is not just for those individuals gifted and called to leave the comforts of home, family and friends and venture to those tribes and tongues in another part of

the world. The Great Commission is for us all. I have often said as a pastor that we are all ministers, because although some of us are called to shepherd a flock, all of us have been asked—better yet commanded—to share the good news with all who have ears to hear and hearts to receive the gospel of Jesus Christ. That being said, I also believe we are all missionaries. Yes, there are those who are called and gifted to learn languages and customs and have a heart to be full-time Christian workers that we call missionaries. But I also believe as I was taught at BLEC that when we look at the great commission, we learn that wherever we are, wherever we live, whatever we do as a vocation, we have a responsibility to go into our world with the people around us with that same gospel invitation.

You see, BLEC has taught me that I am a minister/missionary even if my vocation is being a mechanic, real estate agent, stay-at-home parent, politician, and the list goes on. Missions and the world go hand-in-hand, and where you are is your world, your responsibility, and your opportunity to be obedient to the Great Commission as well.

Which leads me to the main thrust of this article. That lay leadership Bible college turned into a bed-and-breakfast and conference centre during the summer months, employing some of the students with summer jobs, and I was one of



them. During one of the conferences, a mission organization moved into BLEC for their annual business meeting and conference celebration, looking back at the year past and visioning the year ahead. The main speaker that year was an invited guest from Africa. He had a thunderous voice and infectious laugh and a real way with words. That evening as I worked in the main office, I could overhear the worship, the reports, and this African brother in Christ. He began his talk with many thank-yous, for inviting him and paying for his trip and accommodation. He thanked the individuals who were showing him around the sights of Toronto, Niagara Falls, and other major attractions within the region. He spoke with excited wonder of all he was seeing, because he had heard so many stories of that great land called Canada and now he was seeing it with his own eyes and ears—all the beauty of Canada, and he was so thankful to the group that had brought him there. Everyone in the room was feeling good at his words and excitement. His voice came in through our ears but at the same time penetrated deep into our hearts. Especially when he spoke historically on how brothers and sisters in Christ from Canada had for years travelled to his homeland, reaching, preaching, and showing the love of Jesus to the African nation. He spoke personally of the missionary that came to his town and shared God's love through Jesus Christ and his sacrifice upon the cross. He spoke clearly of how those missionaries, not just in word but in deed, reached out with hope to the hopeless, love to the loveless and eternal life to those like himself who were caught in sin. He gave testimony on how he accepted Jesus Christ and how the heavy burden of sin that weighed was instantly relieved through his salvation declaration. The room at this conference centre was alive with clapping and cheers,

and many responses of "Amen" and "Praise the Lord." were heard. The conference, it seemed, was seeing how their investment of people and money along with resources written in the various languages of Africa was returning through this gentleman's testimony, the increase of the kingdom of God. The returns on their investments were multiplying. Then the sounds of excitement and celebration quickly turned to silence when the speaker said; "Canada sent us missionaries and showed us the light in our dark lives and now, years later, you invite me from Africa to bring you back that same message you sent to us."

He went on to say how he saw the life and lifestyle of Canada, and how from a godly nation Canada now had many forms of self-righteous, self-indulgent, and sinful signs,

and was no longer following the triune God that we had sent through missionaries to Africa. He said it was good for him to be able to come back and to give back that same message of "turn from your evil ways and return back to God". The silence in the room was one of conviction. All who could hear his voice that night understood that as we focused on other worlds, we at times were very much neglecting our own mission field—our cities, neighbourhoods, and even our own children, by looking so far away that we couldn't see those right in front of us. Don't get me wrong; we do have to remember those worlds out there that we can financially support and prayerfully encourage our missionary partners to reach for Christ. We have to remember the countries we came from to Canada, our extended family and friends back in our fatherland. Absolutely! But let us also rededicate ourselves to the land that God gave to us, to pledge anew that inasmuch as God has chosen and enabled you and me to be transplanted into this nation, our cities and our children's children, let us remember our missionary goal and may we be just as active as those in overseas mission projects.

Canada has become as much a multi-God and multi-religion society in our life span as it was in biblical times. Just as we want to reach those we do not know by name nor by face nor by address with the good news that Jesus saves, let us be mindful of our children and their friends, our neighbours and community. May those we work alongside and those we invite for a barbecue be on our list of things to focus on for the glory of God. And in so doing may we become obedient to the Great Commission.

□

One of my favorite things to do while living in Ghana was to go on holiday to the beach. I never got tired of sitting on the sand and watching the waves come onto the shoreline. Day after day and on into the night, the waves would just keep coming and coming! Sometimes the waves came quickly and with much force pounded the shoreline, causing a great roar. Other times the waves came slowly, gently and lightly lapping the shoreline. I would sit there all day and just marvel at the beauty of these changing waves that would never stop coming. No matter what time of the day or night it was, the waves never stopped.

This continual arrival of the waves on the shoreline reminds me of the spread of the Gospel. As one studies the book of



The Gospel continues to spread throughout the whole world, and just like the waves on the shoreline it continues on and on as more and more people hear about Jesus. These waves of the Gospel will not stop until He can be worshiped freely in every tribe, language, people and nation. In the book of Acts we learn that the Gospel is unstoppable because it is God's work. It is His desire for the whole world to know about His Son Jesus.

If this Gospel is unstoppable and you are part of this message of Good News, how are you participating in spreading the Gospel into all the world? God's plan is for this to happen, and His plan, amazingly,

includes us. Some of us are sent, some of us are pray-ers for those sent, and some of us are givers to those God sends.

Which one are you? Do you personally know a cross-cultural missionary? Do you know how to connect with them?

Do you know the country where they serve? Do you know what they actually do? Do you pray for them? Do you contact them and encourage them with an email or WhatsApp call? Do you pray for them? Do you know how you should pray for them? Have you made an effort to really get to know a missionary on a one-to-one basis? Have you given to their financial support? What about a project they might have to help spread God's love? Do you wonder how to get involved? How can you be involved? Are you praying for them on a regular basis? Do your children know the missionary? Do they pray for the missionary? What about you and your family adopting a missionary?

Whether you are involved in the spread of the Gospel or not, it will keep on going, because the Gospel is unstoppable, just like the waves that constantly hit the shoreline. Some will go, some will pray or give, and some will do both. By doing this, Christians follow Jesus' pattern to show the world His Kingdom is coming. The challenge is to decide what aspect of spreading the Gospel you should or will be

involved in, and what you will do about it.

In this edition of *Glorious Hope*, you will be reading about the missionaries of the Convention. As you read, I pray you will be stirred to action and become more involved in the lives of our missionaries.

□



Acts, one reads about the beginnings of the spread of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. First, it spread into Jerusalem and then into Samaria through Philip, and then into Judah through Peter and Cornelius, and finally into the whole then-known world through the ministry of Paul and his fellow missionaries.

It is early in the morning of April 12th, 2020, and we've been in lockdown for a month. I personally thought, prayed, and hoped that by Easter the sheltering in place would have been lifted and we would be able to join together face to face in church. Like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, my face was downcast and my heart slow to believe.

Just on Friday, April 10th, I listened while the Gospel went out into the world through Good Friday Worldwide. Unprecedented singing and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. It was truly amazing how the Gospel was shared across the world this weekend like no other time in history.

The Good Friday Worldwide was done by Nick Hall in coordination with World Vision from 2–5 pm Pacific time. Many amazing speakers, like Francis Chan and Max Lucado, mixed in with music from Michael W. Smith, Kari Jobe and Lauren Daigle. All of this was live streaming on the internet. In the evening TBN, a Christian TV station, had Chris Tomlin and Max Lucado on again. At the end of both programs an invitation was given, and who knows how many people responded across the world.

Think of it, we are part of history when on April 10th, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and many other non-Christians might have responded to the Word of God. We will never know the impact until we get to heaven, but I believe there was a wonderful harvest. I also believe that many more people came to Christ throughout the Easter Sunday message as well.

This weekend, there has been unprecedented sharing of God's love and we have been privileged to be alive to see and hear about it, even in the midst of disaster. Isn't it just like our Lord to take what was meant for evil and to give an opportunity for good to prevail? Alleluia, What a Saviour!!

Still, it is hard to be in lockdown, restricted in our movements and pretty much stuck in our houses. What we know as life has changed, death and dying are all around us, and the economy has screeched to a halt. What lies ahead? When will this pandemic end? Will we ever get back to the normal life we knew?

Suddenly, like that Sunday long ago, Jesus appears and says to us, "Why are you troubled and why do doubts rise in your mind? Look at my hands and my feet." (Luke 24:38–39a) Jesus was crucified and died. His death paved the way for our celebration of salvation.

As it was for Jesus' disciples, so it is for us today. Yes, things look bleak and uncertain, but Jesus asks us to trust and not doubt. Remember, his death has brought forgiveness of sins and the opportunity for a renewed relationship with God. **But** remember he also rose from the dead and appeared to his disciples and said "Why are you frightened?" "Why are your



hearts filled with doubt? Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. (Luke 24:38–39 NLT)

Jesus wants to open our understanding as he did to the disciples so he comes and says to us today, look, it really is me. I am here in the midst of this pandemic. I am alive! I am in control. I am with you always, even when everything around you appears to be falling apart. Don't doubt my love and grace. Let your doubt and confusion melt into my Presence and my Peace!! Do not let your hearts be troubled...

As you can see, my zeal and passion for missions has not decreased; in fact, it has become even stronger as we realise that Jesus' coming to earth is sooner than we think. I praise the Lord for a wonderful year of being involved in mentoring two leaders, one from Nigeria and the other from Ecuador. They are directors of two of SIM's newer sending offices. It is wonderful to still be connected with these emerging leaders and to encourage them as they lead. I also have been involved in our church's Missions Committee. I am thankful to the Lord for good health and a year of great ministry.

Please pray for:

- My involvement in encouraging members of the church I attend to be more aware of and involved in the lives of the missionaries that the church has sent out. Many people do not even know the missionaries' names or place of service. The team I am working with hopes to change this by encouraging participation in our missionary's life.
- Pray for the two leaders I mentor to have courage and grace as they encourage churches to be willing to give to missionaries from their country. Pray they will see the need for involvement in the Great Commission by praying and giving towards their own members who want to be missionaries.
- Continue to pray for my involvement in Bible studies and Life groups. They are the highlight of my week!!

□



Normal life is locked down — The Ministry is NOT!

The beginning of May was planned for our moving to Serbia. But something unbelievable has happened. Who would have believed that a virus would lock down the whole world, paralyzing normal life with the fear of death?

Equally incredible is the prediction of the coming day when people will WANT to die, but it will not be possible. *“And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks,*

“Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?” (Rev.6:15–17) Some time between today and the predicted event, our BRIDE-GROOM is going to take us up for “The Marriage Supper of the Lamb!” (Rev.19:9)

Normal life is locked down — The Ministry is NOT!

Jan’s pastoring ministry at Grace Baptist Church officially ended on March 31st. Now, we are working on preparing radio

messages for LOGOS Radio. Praise the Lord that the internet is not “locked down”. In the time of the Corona epidemic, this ministry is gaining more listeners. Two series of messages were completed since the beginning of April, and now we are working on a new series. Ben has finished his semester online and prepared a translated brochure of Our Daily Bread for printing. In the meantime, we have been waiting for the reopening of the borders and airports, and the restarting of flights so that we can move to Serbia. As the Belgrade airport has reopened, and flights are restarting, now is the time to sell our house, ship our belongings overseas and buy tickets for the flight.

In this extraordinary situation, we pray that each of us might be strong in the Lord, abundant in love, joy, hope, and peace—praying that the Gospel will reach those who are looking for the meaning of life.

SLOVAKIA: Pray for the Logos Radio Team that the Holy Spirit will lead and inspire us in writing/preparing, recording, and editing radio messages according to the spiritual needs of listeners.

SERBIA: The Serbian Parliament was dismissed; people were locked down in their homes overnight, on weekends, and on holidays; people 65+ were locked down 24/7 for two months. The European Parliament addressed an admonishment to the Serbian President regarding his extra-strict measures. Since the very first day of reopening the country, there have been constant protests in Belgrade, demanding that the President resign.



Convention 2018 - Missionary reports



Hello from the Váhalas in the Czech Republic. We are glad to bring you up to date about our work in Czech. Aside from the all-knowing God, no one could anticipate that the whole world would be affected by a virus from China. As you know, Europe became the epicenter of the virus very early on. Thankfully, the situation has improved, and the Czech Republic is slowly and cautiously returning to “normal life.” Some schools have opened up again, at least partially, and businesses and restaurants have been opening while following specific rules to prevent the spread of the virus. After two months, masks are no longer mandatory to wear while outside. Nevertheless, as you can imagine, the effect has put a stop to several ministry opportunities that we had planned. We had to cancel our annual Easter Festival, which in the past has given us an opportunity to share the Gospel with hundreds of people. We also had to cancel our Prostějov English Camp 2020. We had a great team coming this summer, and we planned for a very exciting and fruitful week, but our team had to cancel the trip. We had only advertised via FB and by word of mouth, and we already had as many kids signed up this year as we had last year.

Ostrava

There is a group of believers from the third largest city in Czech (Ostrava, 300,000 people), who attend our church in Kroměříž where we go and serve. Fifteen of them became members of our church so that they might be sent out in the future to plant a church in Ostrava. Further, about half of these believers also began to attend CBI, in order to be well prepared to become a core group for the new church. For the Czech context, this is a quite sizable group that grows even bigger when it meets in Ostrava, where it is attended by other believers from the area, who cannot travel an hour and a half to Kroměříž church. These believers, along with the elders from our church in Kroměříž, approached Anthony to prayerfully

consider being the lead church planter for the group. While this is a great opportunity to plant a church in this big city, it would likely involve future changes, even relocation.

Along with focused prayers, our other step in seeking God’s direction in this matter is going to Ostrava once per month to lead morning worship service. This will be held as a satellite service of Kroměříž Church, with Anthony doing the preaching. As part of our work in Ostrava, we are also discipling young men who desire to be leaders and help to lead a weekly Bible study.

Before the abrupt COVID interruption in March, we had held two worship services in Ostrava, and each time we had around 30+ believers attending. Anthony was preaching on the key texts in redemptive history. Next weekend we are going to resume our service in Ostrava, as the ban on public gatherings has been lifted.

CBI, TRAINING, AND PUBLISHING

In January, as a part of ministry preparation, planning, and encouragement, Anthony also attended an annual pastors/leaders meeting. It is a time of great fellowship with like-minded men of God and a time of reflection, prayer, and planning. The men discussed their respective ministries, the Czech Bible Institute, and the publishing efforts that go on.

Anthony continues to teach at the Czech Bible Institute, which during the restrictions went online, with classes conducted via Zoom. There is a great group of students, among



Ostrava

whom are several guys who are being trained to become leaders in two different church plants. Praise God for the opportunity to be part of spreading his Kingdom.

Continues on page 23



It has been quite a year for Eloise and me since our last article in *Glorious Hope*. We enjoyed being with the convention gathering, of course! We also found ourselves visiting relatives and old classmates in September, as we attended Eloise's 50th high school class reunion in Muscatine, Iowa. We also visited and shared in our former home church, Hillcrest Baptist Church. While there, Eloise came down with a case of cellulitis, and spent an extra four days in the hospital. That gave us unexpected visits from friends not seen in nearly fifty years! The trip home took a couple of days, and Eloise recovered well.



In November, we were greatly blessed by being the guests of honor at our own

50th wedding anniversary party! What a joy it was to celebrate this milestone with friends, relatives, pastors, and a few "surprise guests"! It was wonderful! We barely recovered from that event, when our 2020 Vision annual banquet was next on the agenda. It was a great evening, but, due to the onset of the COVID 19 pandemic, our attendance was a bit low. We did not know just what to think, but we shared our vision for 2020 with those who came, hoping to be doing more of what we normally do, but that vision has changed focus.

More on that In a moment...Just after our March banquet, Eloise and I headed for Arkansas to be guests at a pastors' retreat, hosted by the Christian Motorcyclists Association. By the time we left for the retreat, people were beginning to panic,

and many wondered if it was wise (or even safe) to travel, but we did attend, and we were blessed. That is when "normal" left our lives and the lives of our missionaries and ministry partners in Asia and Africa.

As you can imagine, our workers in Nepal (including Peter Kuruc), and Kenya, as well as our partners in India, all found themselves in lockdown, needing supplies, masks, and more. Much of what I had to do for them involved raising money to help sustain them and those they serve. It is hard work, but the last two months have proven to be rewarding, with a nice increase in donations to send. None of our GraceMode family have been ill with the virus, and for that, we praise the Lord! During this time, John Olwanda, our missionary in Kenya, was able to build a home for his family. Immediately, he took in more children, needing a place to stay in hard times.

There is much more, but we long for the day that we can have a "normal" day of ministry again. Until that time, Eloise and I will continue to make masks for those needing them. We don't charge for them, but donations from those receiving them have been generous, allowing us to serve our missionaries better.

Our vision is still wrapped up in church planting, help for poor and orphaned children, and being a part of building up the body of Christ. Our devotioncast, *Moment of Grace*, is in its fourteenth year of bringing the gospel to the world, now sent to 115 countries, including the Czech Republic, added after our last missionary report in *Glorious Hope*.

Finally, our health is always a consideration in travel and ministry. My health is pretty good. I turned seventy this year, and I am going strong. Eloise's right knee replacement on May 29th may change travel plans, but our vision will never change. You can get our newsletters sent to your e-mail if you get that address to me at Pastor_Al@GraceMode.org, and you can communicate with us at the same address or by mail to GraceMode, 2216 West Street, Pueblo, CO 81003 – USA.

You can call us at 719-406-0627, too.

We covet your prayers, and we love you very much.



We are very glad that God surprised us with such a great gift that two months ago we could buy a house for ourselves. It came in just the right time, as the Corona virus started to eliminate most of the jobs, and church and individual meetings with people. We were able to use this quarantine time for the work at the house in order to prepare it for our moving in.



Thanks to the Lord, Covid 19 wasn't so rough in Montenegro. Nine people died because of this pandemic but the whole of normal life was shut down, as in most of the world. We still can't have regular meetings, but hopefully we will be able to have them soon. Anyway, we were broadcasting our preaching through the Internet so we could see that there were more people watching it than are usually present at the meetings. It was a great encouragement to hear other people, even some neighbors positively reacting to this initiative. We want to continue with this even when we start our regular meetings, with hope that we can reach beyond the usual attendance.

“ We know the church is not brick and stone but it's people. So we're planning to build a purpose-built church in Montenegro. ”



“ It's about being visible and transparent and to have a church building is very important for Montenegrins.. ”

Prayer points:

1. People were much more open to talk about God and eternity during this difficult period. We pray that it will stay like that, but we are afraid that as the situation gets better, people will forget about their questions around life and death.
2. Pray for our church building project, that we can have all necessary permissions and start to build soon,
3. Pray for our new neighborhood to be prepared to hear the Gospel from us.
4. Pray that we can finish work on our house soon so we don't need to spend much time on it.





- Home groups and prayer meetings
- Men's, women's, seniors', youth, children's events
- Missions conferences, global outreach focuses
- Church retreats and weekend conferences
- Missions committees, global outreach focus teams
- Christian schools, Bible colleges and seminaries
- Meetings with pastors, elders, and church staff

Czech State of Emergency ends!

For the past four Sundays, we have been able to physically meet at our church locations for Sunday services with a gradually increasing number of people, provided we wear face masks and practice social distancing.

We learned a lot during the seven weeks that the Czech churches were shut down by the government, and many of these new skills are continuing, such as live streaming of the Ládvi church service on YouTube.

People who are not yet ready to attend in person are grateful for this means of staying connected. English classes and Bible studies which we held on Zoom during the quarantine are now meeting in person again.

But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person, not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face.

(1 Thessalonians 2:17)

Home Ministry Assignment begins!

Despite a worldwide pandemic and our flights being cancelled and re-scheduled several times, we are leaving Prague on June 22, Lord willing, to begin our regularly scheduled Home Ministry Assignment, after another four fulfilling years of church-planting ministry in the Czech Republic.

Home Ministry Assignment is a time to:

- report to churches and individuals on our recently completed term of service (2016-2020) and share a vision for our next ministry term in the Czech Republic.
- personally thank supporters for their partnership.
- mobilize more workers for service in God's harvest field in the Czech Republic and around the world.
- visit TEAM's offices in North America for debriefing.
- continue ongoing education for future ministry.
- complete required medical evaluations.
- reconnect with family and friends.
- rest and be spiritually refreshed

Although planning is complicated right now, by faith we are moving forward with scheduling meetings in Canada and the United States. During the upcoming year, we are available to come to your church or home – **in person or online** – to preach or teach and to share about what God is doing in the Czech Republic and to learn what the Lord is doing where you are! Here are some possible places where we could serve you:

- Sunday services, Sunday schools and fellowships
- Midweek meetings, Bible studies and courses



Broadcasting live on YouTube!

Preaching invitations

During the quarantine, Mark has been preaching online at various places. One small church that Mark has been coaching had not been meeting at all until Mark introduced them to Zoom and preached at their first virtual church service.

The pastor of the Korean church in Prague asked Mark to preach through translation on their YouTube channel, and Mark also preached online for South City Church and Ládvi Church.

Planting even in the hardest soil

Mark and Munkhuush, the Mongolian pastor in Prague, were recently invited to Cheb in the western part of the Czech Republic, near the German border. The Czech Sudeten region is possibly the most atheistic area in the most atheistic country in Europe. Even here, the sparks of church planting are being fanned into flame.



Face masks and 2 meters apart!



Combined elders' meeting at South City Church



One virtual student (upper left) joins three on location!

David, a visionary Czech believer and medical doctor, has a desire to see not only a new Czech church planted there, but also a Mongolian church and a Vietnamese church. A sizable number of these ethnic minority groups live in Cheb. So he invited Mark and Munkhuush to come and see the potential for church planting in this under-reached region of 300,000 people. Mentoring new and potential church planters like David will continue to be a part of our ministry after we return from our upcoming Home Ministry Assignment.

Gretchen taught English and Bible classes on Zoom for seven weeks, and for the past month the class has been happily meeting in person again. The students have gotten so skilled with Zoom that if they can't come to class, they still log in so they don't miss even one week!

Mothers' Club is also meeting together once again at Ládvi Church. It was one of the activities that was not conducive to on-line gatherings, although Gretchen stayed in touch with the moms during quarantine through text messages.

Fruit from the harvest field

Martina met with the Ládvi elders at their last meeting

and expressed her desire to be baptized. She and her husband Dan are involved with the Bohnice church plant. Elise also met with the elders, and the two of them are planning to be baptized in the Vltava River on June 14th.

Tomáš and his fiancée, Karolína, first came to Ládvi Church for our Preparation for Marriage class two years ago. Last year Mark officiated at their wedding, and their first child was born at the beginning of the quarantine. Tomáš works in IT, so he has been heading up the live broadcasts and managing our YouTube channel. Tomáš will be affirmed as one of our elders in June, and the leadership of Ládvi Church will be entirely Czech.

Preparing for the next season

As we head into home assignment, a total of 18 elders, pastors, and interns will continue leading at the seven locations of our church. Pastor Tomáš Grulich will take on the role of administrative pastor while Mark is away.

Potma family news

Luke and Noemi successfully made the transition to working from home in March, and Noemi's current school semester is online as will be the fall semester. By the time we arrive, Ben will have graduated from high school (even though without a ceremony), and he will have decided which university or college offer he should accept. Elise has managed the disappointment of a lot of cancelled trips, visits and social interaction during quarantine, but is now enjoying being able to be out in Prague with friends even during school hours.

The three of us are looking forward to a church retreat with Skalka Church in the countryside and to exploring a few more places in Prague without the crowds of tourists before we depart for Canada.

Prayer Points:

1. PRAISE God for His work in people's hearts and lives through this time of uncertainty.
2. PRAISE God that church ministry has been able to continue uninterrupted during the pandemic.
3. PRAY for Martina and Elise and possibly others as they prepare for baptism in June.
4. PRAY for us as we transition from Prague to Windsor and as we re-orient to life in North America.

Planting, watering, cultivating, and rejoicing in the growth,

Mark & Gretchen, Luke, Noemi, Ben, Elise





June 22:

Empty airports, empty planes



June 21:

Farewell to Christina and the Potmas



June 21:

Baby Daniela's dedication



June 19:

Ben's graduation in Windsor



June 18:

Lively last Mothers' Club

JUNE PRAYER UPDATE

T*o complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me: the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.*

Acts 20:24

Praise the Lord that our trip from Prague to Windsor was uneventful. We didn't have any lines or delays, and now we are in mandatory quarantine for two weeks. It's probably just as well to have this quiet time at home after a very busy month in Prague. Take a look!

Our friends at Ládvi Church sent us on our way with their prayers, best wishes, refreshments, and gifts. We had similar sendoffs at Bohnice church plant (June 7), Skalka Church (June 14), TEAM Czech (June 13), South City Church, Mongolian Church, and Ládvi Church (all on June 21).

On that same day, Mark had the privilege of dedicating baby Daniela to the Lord and welcoming a new family as members of Ládvi Church.

Luke and Noemi took Ben to his high school graduation, which was held in a church parking lot. We were sorry we couldn't be back for this big milestone, but even if our flights hadn't been cancelled and changed, we would have been in quarantine anyway!

Gretchen and our TEAM co-worker Christina loved interacting with the moms and kids one last time before we both left for Home Ministry Assignment. Another missionary, Amy, will lead the club in the fall until Christina returns in January.



June 14:

Elise's baptism



June 7:

Elders commissioned at Ládvi Church



June 4:

Combined elders' meeting at South City Church



June 2:

Campfire for Gretchen's English and Bible class



May 29-31:

Skalka church retreat after the end of quarantine

Elise chose to follow Christ in baptism along with two other new believers from our church. About 65 people came to witness their steps of faith and obedience as they were baptized in the Vltava River in the center of Prague.

Mark commissioned the three Czech elders to lead Ládvi Church with God's help over the next four years. One of the elders (left) had shingles and joined us on Zoom!

Every three months up to 18 elders, pastors and interns come together from all seven locations of our church, and Mark led the last meeting before handing over leadership of the combined elders to Pastor Tomáš of Network Church while we are on our Home Ministry Assignment.

Gretchen was pleased to host her English and Bible class at our home with an end-of-year campfire complete with Czech sausages, congratulations and best wishes, and reflection on another successfully completed school year.

Skalka Church made the most of the lifting of the Czech quarantine restrictions and took off for the weekend to enjoy some fun, fellowship, fresh air, and free time together. We were glad to join them!

Please PRAY for these churches and believers as they testify to the good news of God's grace in the Czech Republic. PRAY that God would use us to do the same during our Home Ministry Assignment in North America this year.

Completing the unfinished task,

Mark & Gretchen Potma

Mark & Gretchen
Luke Noemi Ben Elise

Daniel Korcok

January 1, 1933 – May 1, 2020



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Daniel Korcok, our dear brother and member at Grace Baptist, who went to meet his Lord and Saviour at the age of 87.

He was born in Erdevic, former Yugoslavia on January 1, 1933. He was married to the

love of his life, Anna Hreck, for 56 years. They immigrated to Windsor, Ontario, in 1966. When he first arrived in Canada he worked as a carpenter at Joe's Wood Working and later was employed by SKD Manufacturing. Daniel's life with Anna involved working and enjoying time with their family and the Slovak church community. Daniel will be missed dearly by all of his siblings: Mary Fabok, John (Mary) Korcok, Ana Habuda, Luke Korcok and Kathy Korcok, and his many nieces and nephews. □

Editorial... Continues from page 3

has sent many missionaries to various places in the world, and continues to be faithful to its missionary calling; the full mission statement may be found in the imprint of *Glorious Hope*. This issue is dedicated to missionary news. Since the very beginning, this convention has protected individual workers with its prayers. Thanks to updates and news regarding their work, prayers get answered, requests and prayers of gratitude are realized. We are grateful for everyone who identifies with the words of the apostle Paul: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.... For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written: The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:16–17). Everyone can pray. Prayer is the instrument of communication that is constantly available. It still functions, free of charge, with 100% efficiency. "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." (James 5:16).

Together with the apostle Paul, we are witnesses to the gospel of God's grace. According to *Wikipedia*, grace, in theological terms, is God's dealings with humankind without consideration of their merits or faults. The gospel is the good news of God's kindness towards humankind. A witness is someone who gives a credible account of serious matters, and a person's salvation—salvation of their soul—is definitely a serious matter. And according to the Bible's written account, the final words of the Lord Jesus clearly called everyone who was with him to be active witnesses.

"He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:7–8).

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

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Editorial... Pokračování ze strany 3

Naše Československá konvence během své 111. leté existence vyslala mnoho misionářů na různá místa ve světě a stále zůstává věrná svému misijnímu poslání, jehož plné znění je uvedeno v tiráži *Slavné naděje*. Toto číslo je věnováno zprávám misionářů. Od samého počátku konvence svými modlitbami zaštituje jednotlivé pracovníky. Díky zprávám o jejich práci se stávají modlitby aktuálními, prosby a děkované modlitby konkrétními. Jsme vděční za každého, kdo se ztotožňuje se slovy apoštola Pavla: „Nestydím se za evangelium—vždyť je to Boží moc ke spasení každého, kdo věří... V něm se totiž zjevně Boží spravedlnost z víry ke víře, jak je psáno: „Spravedlivý pak bude žít z víry.“ (Římanů 1; 16–17) Modlit se může každý. Modlitba je nástroj komunikace, který je neustále po ruce. Stále funkční, bezplatný, se stoprocentní účinností. „Vroucí modlitba spravedlivého dokáže mnoho.“ (Jakub 5;16)

Spolu s apoštolem Pavlem jsme svědky evangelia o Boží milosti. Podle *Wikipedie* se milostí v teologii rozumí Boží laskavé jednání s člověkem bez zřetele na jeho zásluhy či poklesky. Evangelium je dobrá zpráva o laskavém jednání Boha s člověkem. Svědek je člověk, který podává věrohodnou výpověď o nějaké závažné věci. A záchrana člověka, jeho duše, rozhodně závažná věc je. A podle záznamu v Bibli poslední slova Pána Ježíše jasně vyzvala všechny, kteří byli v tu chvíli s ním, k aktivnímu svědetví.

Odpověděl jim: „Není vaše věc znát časy a doby, které si Otec ponechal ve své pravomoci. Přijmete ale moc Ducha svatého přicházejícího na vás a budete mými svědky... až na konec světa.“

(Skutky 1; 7–8)

Nataša Laurincová, šéfredaktorka

□

Sunday Service... Continues from page 9

ground, his mane shaved off. Why, he's only a cat after all, a voice cried out of the crowd. Muzzle him, said the witch and even as they worked about his face putting the muzzle on, one bite from his jaws could have cost two or three of them their hands, but he never moved. With him shaved and muzzled, the whole crowd surrounded him, kicking him, hitting him, spitting on him, jeering at him. Then the witch raised her arm, clutching the knife that she would have plunged into Edmond had not Aslan taken his place. Her arm fell and the Lion of Judea at great cost purchased our redemption, my redemption, your redemption.

Looking this morning at Jesus, our precious Redeemer, we have seen that we are relentlessly loved and redeemed at great cost. But there is something else. We're not finished until we mention this: redeemed from sin and bondage, we are unchained, and open to new life and freedom. I like to think, when Gomer was released and bought back and brought home, that she danced, that she rejoiced, that she celebra-

ted and was grateful to have a freedom that she thought she would never have back.

Some years ago now a team from Grace Baptist went on a mission trip to help with the English camp that the Potmas put on each summer. From the church where they work in Prague, the camp is actually about an hour's drive, at a ski resort. We went on the team and we spent a week together, a wonderful time meeting with our friends, about a hundred folks who came to the camp, wanting to learn English. So mornings were spent learning English, sitting around tables, practicing, sharing together that way. We had all our meals together. Heather and I remember sitting at a table with a couple. They were Czech and we were English. They didn't know English and we didn't know Czech, but we learned to get along. Each afternoon was free to go and explore and do some activities, and then every evening was a service of worship, creatively done. Mark loves to play the guitar and he loves to sing. And so they incorporated Beatles songs into the music

each evening and he had his group up there singing these songs. We also had a theme song for the whole week that we sang every night. And the point I want to make is that this song expresses the final overflowing joy of redemption, of being set free. It's so celebratory—it's a dancing song, a song that makes you want to move. And you know it, you've heard it, and we are going to sing it in a minute. It goes like this:

Through You the blind will see
Through You the mute will sing
Through You the dead will rise
Through You our hearts will praise
Through You the darkness flees
Through You my heart screams
I am free, Yes, I am free
I am free to run
I am free to dance
I am free to live for You
I am free to live for You
I am free, Yes, I am free, I am free

Paul says in Galatians 5:1, *For freedom Christ has set us free. Do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. Let's stand and sing "I am free."* □

Váhalas... Continues from page 15

Not all work has stopped; however, the restrictions are giving Anthony more time to proofread a translation of systematic theology. Czech does not have a solid and substantial volume of systematic theology, so this is a welcomed work. It will certainly be seminal in the future equipping of believers at the Czech Bible Institute and beyond.

In addition to editing theological works, Anthony is in the beginning stages of preparing an online course on preaching. This is an exciting new opportunity to help train leaders nationwide.

PROSTĚJOV

Our work in Prostějov has slowed down due to the pandemic, though we are hopeful that it will resume soon. Our labor there consists mainly of pre-evangelism, evangelism, and a Bible study. We have had some great opportunities to share the Gospel regularly despite the lockdown. Nevertheless, the work in Prostějov is very slow and we really need more helpers here. We hope to recruit Czech believers willing to come

and help establish a core for the church here. We also need an English-speaking single person or a married couple willing to lead ESL classes. Over the past several years, we have made many friends and acquaintances, and we have a good indication that an English class/club would do really well in providing a platform for sharing the Gospel.

FAMILY

Last year was pretty busy for the Váhala family; we have been blessed in the arrival of our 4th daughter, Esther, born in September. All of our children are growing up faster than we, as parents, would like. Our oldest, Hannah, just turned 18, Rachel will be 17, Sarah will be 15, Joshua is turning 13, Isaiah will be 10 in December, and Samuel is going to be 4.

We are planning to be on furlough beginning the middle of November, provided that by that time travel will be allowed and safe health-wise. □

Flashes from the Past



2002



2005



2007



2001



2013