

Glorious Hope Slavná naděje

Vol. 45, N° 3, October 2019

Ročník 45, číslo 3, říjen 2019

(and) O the overwhelm ng reckless
Love of God
O it chases me down fights 'til I'm found
Leaves the ninety-nine
I couldn't earn it I don't deserve it
Still You give Yourself away
O the overwhelming never-ending reckless
Love of God yeah

**The 110th Annual Czechoslovak
Baptist Convention**

Contents

Editorial – Natasha Laurinc.....	3
From the President	4
From the Executive Secretary.....	5
Reflections of the 110 th Czechoslovak Baptist Convention – Judy (Sivulka) Shoff.....	6
Thursday Service – Rev. Jamie Tiffin.....	8
The 110 th Czechoslovak Baptist Convention of USA and Canada – photo.....	12
Women Missionary Union – Rebecca Skeeter Habeck.....	14
What does a first-time delegate to the CSKBC see? – Joseph Sedivy..	15
The Beginnings of Baptists in the Czech Republic and Slovakia ...	16
Children’s Corner – Monica Lamoš	18
The Váhalas	20
Mark & Gretchen Potma	22
The 110 th Czechoslovak Baptist Convention pictures	24

Front and Back Covers: – The 110th Annual
Czechoslovak Baptist Convention



Convention photos:
Dusko Pilic

Donations

All donations should be mailed to our financial secretaries, using enclosed envelope.

USA:

Czechoslovak Baptist Convention
C/O Larry Rucker
2222 Parkers Hill Dr.
Maidens VA 23102

CANADA:

Czechoslovak Baptist Convention
C/O Henry Pojman
1305 Inglehart Dr
Burlington, ON, L7M 4X6

Make check payable to **Czechoslovak Baptist Convention or CZSKBC.**

Feel free to make a special designation on the bottom of the check:

Convention, Glorious Hope, Scholarship Fund, Bibles for
Czechoslovakia, etc.

Please do not mail checks to our main address in Detroit, MI.

Gifts for Ladies’ work—make check payable to **Czechoslovak Baptist Women’s Missionary Union.**



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 posláání 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

Volume 45, N° 3, October 2019
(USPS 009334), ISSN 0700-5202

Published quarterly by

The Czechoslovak Baptist Convention
of USA and Canada
114 Pleasantview Dr.
Mc Murray PA 15317

Periodical postage paid at McMurray, PA
and additional mailing offices

Editor-in-Chief: Natasha Laurinc
email: natasha.laurinc@gmail.com

You may send articles to above address.

Desktop publishing and art: Vit Malek

Assistant Editors: Janice Cermak, Ondrej Laurinc, Ph.D.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

Glorious Hope / Slavná naděje
P.O. Box 441516

Detroit, MI, 48244, USA.

email: info@czskbc.org

WWW.CZSKBC.ORG

Moving?

Let us know

By Mail:

CZSKBC

P. O. Box 441516

Detroit, MI, 48244

Email:

info@czskbc.org



Jesus Christ: Yesterday, Today and Forever

Always the same. Modern-day trends don't change a thing. Beloved and disdained, he has guided people for 2000 years. He enters their lives. He doesn't force his way in but waits patiently to be invited. He knocks softly on the heart, never insisting. His life on earth was an example, showing the way for everyone. Not everyone wants to follow his example. Not everyone is aware of his presence.

The touch of God's love is felt through our loved ones. There is nothing more beautiful than to be surrounded by those who love the Lord. They are recognized by the way they live and by how they affect their environment. The bible calls this the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22). These fruits accompany every person who has decided to follow Christ. *"I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."* (Phil 4:13). Yes, in his name. This requires a close connection with Christ.

☞ Continues on page 19

Ježíš Kristus včera, dnes i navěky

Stále stejný. Výstřelky moderní doby nic nemění. Milovaný i zavržený. Provází člověka 2000 let. Vstupuje do jeho života. Nikomu se nevnučuje a trpělivě čeká na pozvání. Tíše klepe na dveře srdce, nikdy nevstupuje násilím. Svým příkladným životem na této zemi ukázal směr každému člověku. Ne každý však chce jeho příklad následovat. Ne každý vnímá jeho přítomnost.

Doteky Boží lásky přicházejí skrze naše bližní. Není nic krásnějšího, než být obklopen těmi, kteří milují Hospodina. Poznají se podle toho, jak žijí, jak svou osobností působí na své okolí. Bible to nazývá ovocem Ducha Svatého. (Galatským 5;22) Toto ovoce provází život každého, kdo se rozhodl k následování Krista. *„Všecko mohu v Kristu, který mne posiluje.“* (Filipským 4:13) Ano, v Jeho jménu. To vyžaduje úzké spojení s Kristem.

☞ Pokračuje na straně 19

From the President

Dear Friends:

We have just celebrated Canadian Thanksgiving. American friends have theirs the last week in November, and other countries have various dates for this annual occasion. I enjoyed a wonderful turkey dinner with cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes and gravy, turnips and green peas. For dessert we had a choice of pumpkin or apple pie with whipped cream. Special thanks to my dear Heather for all her love and effort and skill in making this great feast for us.

The point, though, of this happy gathering with family and friends in the fall of the year is to rejoice in the Lord's goodness and bounty, remembering that He is the Awesome Creator, Faithful Sustainer and Loving Provider of the Harvest. There are other things to be thankful for, too. With all the political, national and international conflict, with worries about a possible economic downturn, with public discourse so often angry and sorely divided, a time to turn from the clamoring noise and focus on the incredible blessings all around us is therapeutic.

Scripture reminds us: "...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things." Philippians 4:8

What a powerful antidote to discouragement and potent prescription for thankfulness this is.

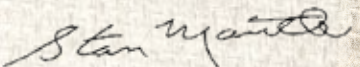
At church on Sunday we sang "Count Your Blessings" by Johnson Oatman, Jr. The words point out the pathway to joy and thanksgiving:

*"So amid the conflict, whether great or small,
Do not be discouraged, God is over all;
Count your many blessings, angels will attend.
Help and comfort give you to your journey's end.
Count your blessings, Name them one by one;
Count your blessings, See what God hath done."*

One of our rich blessings this past year was the happy Czechoslovak Baptist Convention gathering in July at Malone University in Canton, Ohio. It was our first time at this new location, and people were good-natured and patient as they learned the layout and explored the campus. There was a good spirit of cooperation as individuals worked together to get things done. Afterwards we went home refreshed by the fellowship and glad to have been together. We thank God for meeting with us and upholding us in this good work. The special community of the Czechoslovak Baptist Convention is a wonderful gift from God. If you think so too, a gift to the Convention at this time would be a great way to express thanks to God. "Where are the other nine?" Jesus wondered, when ten had been blessed and only one returned to give thanks.

Plans are underway for the **111th Annual Convention, July 9–12, 2020**, at Malone University in Canton, Ohio. Please put it on your calendar now.

Thankful for you.


□ Stan Mantle

From the Executive Secretary



The 110th Annual Czechoslovak Baptist Convention was held July 11–14, 2019. Over 80 delegates attended this year's convention, held at Malone University in Canton, Ohio. It was a new venue for all of us and a bit different setting from previous locations. It took us a day or perhaps two, but we learned our way around the new campus.

We have a long history of conventions held in the state of Ohio. Perhaps for some of us who started attending in the early 90s, it seemed that West Virginia was the only “home state” of our convention: in fact, 22 conventions were held in Philippi, WV, from 1989 to 2011. But we have been hosted at other venues as well. In preparation for the 110th convention, we prepared a presentation of all the cities and states that had hosted our convention in the last 110 years. There were a few expected facts, and quite a few unexpected. While Philippi, WV, did host many of the conventions, it was the state of Ohio that hosted most of them. A total of 25 conventions were held in the Buckeye State, with most held in the city of Cleveland. Overall, 25 different cities, in 12 different states and provinces and two countries, have hosted our convention since 1909.

In the early years, our convention would meet at a different location every year. As the membership and the number of our convention churches declined, we started using colleges and universities to host our annual convention. In 1989

CZECHOSLOVAK BAPTIST CONVENTION
110 Years
25 Host Cities
12 States and Provinces
2 Countries

our executive secretary at the time, George Sommer, arranged that Alderson Broaddus College would host our 80th convention. From 1989 to 2011, every convention but one was held at Alderson Broaddus College. Beginning in the summer of 2012, our annual conventions were held at Allegheny College in Meadville, Pennsylvania. And this past July, we met again in the state of Ohio.

Read a full report from the 110th convention on page 6. Sermon videos are available on our **YouTube channel**, accessible via our website www.czskbc.org

During our 110th convention at Canton, we asked our delegates for their opinion on the new venue, and over 80% of those that responded indicated that they would like to come back to Malone University.

With the survey results in mind, the 111th Czechoslovak Baptist convention has been scheduled for July 9–12, 2020, at Malone University in Canton, OH.

Please mark your calendar and reserve the date. Look for further updates in our upcoming issues of *Glorious Hope*, or contact us by email @ info@czskbc.org to subscribe to our quarterly newsletter.

In His Service
Darko Siracki, Executive Secretary



Subscribe to our
You Tube Channel

Reflections

of the 2019

Czechoslovak Baptist Convention

The 110th Annual Czechoslovak convention is over, and as I sit here and reminisce about the days spent there, it brings such warmth and blessing. Fellowship is a key to our Christian faith. It is the common bond of our heritage and the common desire to spread the gospel to the nations of our heritage.

This year we gathered at a new location: Malone University, in Canton, Ohio. We found it to be a beautiful spread-out campus. I think that we all adjusted well and enjoyed not only the campus but the interesting town of Canton.

The theme of the convention this year was *“Jesus Christ – the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever.”* The convention began on Thursday with the General Board and committee meetings that were held during the day.

I thank God for this devoted group of men and women who desire to see the ministry of the convention continue to reach the unreached in the countries of our heritage.

Our Thursday evening service began with President Stan Mantle welcoming everyone to the convention. The Worship Team led us in worship. (The team was originally started by the Lamos sisters and has increased beautifully over the years.) Joseph Sedivy sang a solo, accompanied by his wife Robin. This was their first time with us, and we praise the Lord for their talented contribution in music. They also blessed us by leading the choir during each of the services. Our guest speaker for the Thursday evening was Pastor Jamie Tiffin, from Grace Baptist Church in Windsor, ON. We were blessed by his message, *“World Maker.”* After the service, what could be more appropriate than to hear

the words made famous by our dear George Sommer years ago, who has been unable to be with us for the past several years: *“The ice cream is melting”*. As always, we enjoyed licking our ice cream cones, and visiting with friends old and new.

The Men’s Fellowship and Ladies’ Missionary Rally met Friday morning. This is always a refreshing time of getting to know each other better. The women heard from our mission chairman, Ruby Mikulencak, who is home after serving as a missionary with SIM, in Ghana. She shared about her journey of service over the years. Andrea Lamos-Turner led in a beautiful time of sharing among the women. I am sure that the Men’s Fellowship was also a source of blessing to the men as they enjoyed their time together.

Friday evening, Joseph Sedivy led the choir, and his wife Robin accompanied them. The Praise Team led in worship, and the message, entitled *“Sheep Chaser”* was brought to us by Pastor Steve Mattocks from First Baptist Church. It was



an honor to have him with us again, coming all the way from Meadville, PA.

Saturday morning after breakfast, the young people left for their picnic in the local state park. The English Bible study was led by Alan Dangel and the Slovak Bible study was led by Jan Franka. Following the Bible studies we met to hear the reports of the missionaries supported by the Convention. It was a thrill to know that 40% of our annual Convention budget goes directly to the missionaries.

A report was received from Jan and Anna Franka, who are currently in their pre-field ministry preparation. They are currently involved with *Radio Logos* in Slovakia.

The Vahalas are involved in pre-evangelistic ministry in the Czech Republic, which consists of a soccer ministry, Easter outreach, English camps, weekly Bible studies, church planting and the Czech Bible Institute.

The Potmas are involved in working with English camps and the South City Church in Prague, Czech Republic.

Al and Eloise Dangel continue their involvement with radio ministry reaching across Europe.

Our convention is planning a mission trip to the Czech Republic in the future. Be watching future issues of *Glorious Hope Magazine* for more information.

Greetings were also brought from the president of the Czech Baptist Union. An invitation has been extended to our Convention to attend the celebration of 100 years of partnership and cooperation between the Czech and Slovak Baptist Unions. The celebration will take place in October 2019.

The Saturday evening service was led by the Worship Team. The choir brought us another beautiful message in song. Nico Mulder brought the message, “*Son of God – Messiah*”. Afterwards, we enjoyed a time of fellowship outside, with more ice cream!



After breakfast on Sunday morning we went to our Bible studies—There was a choice of Bible study in English or in the Slovak language. Then there was a short memorial service remembering those who have left our fellowship for their glorious home above. Among those remembered were:

- Josef Hodul*, Windsor, ON
- Samuel Bovdis*, Windsor, ON
- Jovan Jakonic*, Kikinda, Serbia
- Ray Blake*, Windsor, ON
- Suchen W. Kovac*, Anchorage, Alaska
- Zuzana Lamos*, Kingsville, ON

At the beginning of the morning service, the Worship Team led in a time of praise and honor to our Glorious Redeemer, and the choir brought us another blessed message in song. The president of the convention, Pastor Stan Mantle, brought the closing message, “Precious Redeemer.”

After lunch together in the cafeteria, the goodbyes began, as the dear folks began to pack up and head for home, wherever that may be. Some come from far, some from near, and we headed for home with precious memories of our time together.

I would like to encourage those of you who read *Glorious Hope* to make a sincere effort to be a part of this blessed fellowship next year. Start planning now by setting up a special “piggy bank” so you can be with us next year. We fly from California, using our frequent flyer miles. We collect them through the year to make sure we have enough come July. And if we can make it, so can YOU!

God bless you all.

In Jesus,
Judy (Sivulka) Shoff

□

Thursday Service

Rev. Jamie Tiffin

World Maker (Genesis 1:1–31, John 1:1–3a)

*"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
(Genesis 1:1)*

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.
He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made..." (John 1:1–3a)*

I love story-telling because, like Jesus speaking in parables, sometimes story-telling allows us to take hold of the message and put the meat on it. So I go back to my roots. My wife will sometimes say to me, "Jamie, get some new material". And since you are all new to me, this is new material.

In 1993, in fact, January 7th of 1993, my wife Ruth gave birth to our firstborn daughter, firstborn of, eventually, five children. We had three girls: Alaura, Anna, and Erin, and then, lo and behold, we found out more were on route, and we were praying for that boy. Well, be careful what you pray for, ladies and gentlemen, you just may receive it—twins, boys, and they are now eighteen, so from 26 to 18. But I go back to my roots and I remember one specific evening. It was late at night. Ruth and I were living out on a farm in a mobile home that had been built on and roof-peaked. We were in a back

room and in about the middle of this mobile home was Alaura's bedroom. She was just an infant and it was the early hours of the morning, probably 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, and she started to stir and cry. It was that time for feeding. Just like you had stirred and you were ready to eat so we went over and we had some wonderful food that took care of the body, and now you're kind of crying and getting ready for some spiritual food here tonight. And what a wonderful worship team to provide that appetizer for God's messages with melody. Well, Alaura started to cry, and being a new husband and a new father, I said, "Don't worry, honey, you stay in that waterbed. (We had a waterbed back then, you remember them?) So I got that bed moving and I got up on my side of the bed. So far, so good. Now, we had two windows, one at the foot of our bed and the other one right behind us, and since it was the middle of the night,

my glasses were off, but I knew my way to navigate to the cries of my daughter. So I got out of bed and I used the window to orient myself, but then suddenly I banged into something and fell back to the waterbed. My wife almost fell out of bed with the wave I made. I shook my head a bit, I looked again at the window, got up, tried again, stumbled, and banged again. Now my daughter, who had been crying because she was hungry, was now crying in panic because something in the back room was eating her father. Terrible tense sounds and banging around and stubbing toes and sounds came out of me. But now I was determined, because I had had two attempts and at baseball you have only three strikes and you're out. So I once again sat on the edge of my bed and I looked at that window and I thought, if that's the window then I take two steps forward, turn to my left, there's the hallway a little bit to the right, and there's

Alaura's room. And with determination I got up and walked straight into my closet, tripped and fell and—we had one of those large boxes that were big enough, you know, to put your quilts in for the summer months – I ended up butt first, legs up in the back of the closet, with the clothes in front of me. My wife turned on the light. The key: she turned on the light. And she said to me those wonderful words of wisdom: “What are you doing?” And I said, “I’m getting Alaura, what does it look like?” With my feet upside down, like a turtle I was. But when she turned on the light, I looked for that window again and it had disappeared. And then I realized what had happened. On Ruth's side of the bed was a three-dimensional makeup mirror. I didn't have my glasses on, and the lights were out. Oh, there was a dim light from the moon outside going through the windows, but instead of seeing the real window that was to be my marker, that whole idea where I was going to walk towards, that wasn't the window I was looking at. I was looking at a reflection of the window behind me from the mirror because my original stance to look was off-centre. I eventually got Alaura, she got fed, she got happy, she went back to bed, I got happy, and I went back to bed. But it reminded me, I chose right, wrong or indifferent: I chose not to put on my glasses, because even with my glasses on I might have been able to detour and be able to see the reflection light versus the real light, and I could have turned on the real light. But instead I chose to walk in the dark and in the poor reflection that was in front of me, instead of the reality of what was in the light. Because of that, to this very day I am still getting a few laughs—with me, are you? Or at me? In this case, both. And that becomes an opening illustration for you and me this day. How we are to be in the world but not of it? As we gather here together, we have left society for a little time during our life this year. We have taken away some time in our cal-

endars, set it aside to come to this place out of the world and day-to-day life, to be able to experience this conference retreat, to build up, to rejoice, to gather together, and to learn, in order to go back into that world for Christ.

Now, a couple of the scriptures that were handed to me were, first of all, that first chapter in Genesis, Chapter One. I'm not going to read all 31 verses. I do believe you know the story of creation, but I want to bring those highlights to you this day. We see in Genesis how from the very beginning God put into motion all that is today, each day from the very beginning. It says “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” He put in motion the different groupings, whether the animals or the vegetation or the water separating, the land coming—he put all that into motion. And he did it in such a way that not only was it created but in that creation was the idea of procreation. Each according to its own. Seed bearing, animals, the fowl, the fish. We have all those things that God put into motion and you and I in that created moment way back then. You and I were created through that creation when God gathered the dust, the dirt and formed it into humanity. He breathed into that part of creation, and humanity became a reality. Yesterday after a funeral, as we stood around the gravesite of one of our dearly beloved, I said, “You know, we are called Earthlings. Now, when I grew up in those Star Trek days, I always thought we were called Earthlings because we inhabited the Earth. If I was in Mars, I'd be a Martian, and according to some books, my wife is from Venus. But here is the deal: we're not called Earthlings because we inhabit the Earth, but rather we are called Earthlings because we came from the earth – God created us in his own image and he breathed into us. And when you look at Genesis Chapter 13, can you not see how orderly God is? Everything is being put into motion. How do I know that? Well, when I take a look, are the

heavens still above the Earth and is the Earth below? They still are. Do we still not have day and night, morning and evening? We do. Are the waters not still separated by continents and ground, and are there not seas and oceans and rivers separating those lands? There still are, and what a beautiful Earth this is! Does the Earth not still produce the vegetation, the grass, the trees, the various vegetables and other farm products? It still does. Does the sun not shine by day and does the moon not shine during the night, even in a dimly lit room with a three-dimensional mirror? It still does. All in orderly fashion God created it into existence, and to this very day in that orderly manner we're still within this orbit, we're still within our seasons, we're still in all of what God has created. Then the world turned. It turned one day, and not because of the orderliness of God but because of the disorderliness of you and me. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God and all the orderly fashion that God created in this wonderful thing we call a lifetime. We threw a wrench into that perfect image that the perfect God created, with all of its orderliness and purposefulness. It became very, very different. Something happened to creation. We had somehow sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But this week's theme is Jesus Christ, the same as he was yesterday, the same as he is today, and forever. And we're being encouraged that in the joy of the Lord is his orderliness and perfection, and we have hope in our salvation and reconciliation even though we are still living in a fallen world. How do we make it make sense and bring back the reality of why God and all of his creation still chose you and me to be his ambassadors?

So I go to the second scripture I was given. From Genesis Chapter One and all the creation in all its orderly fashion, we go to John Chapter One, verse one: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. And the Word was with God

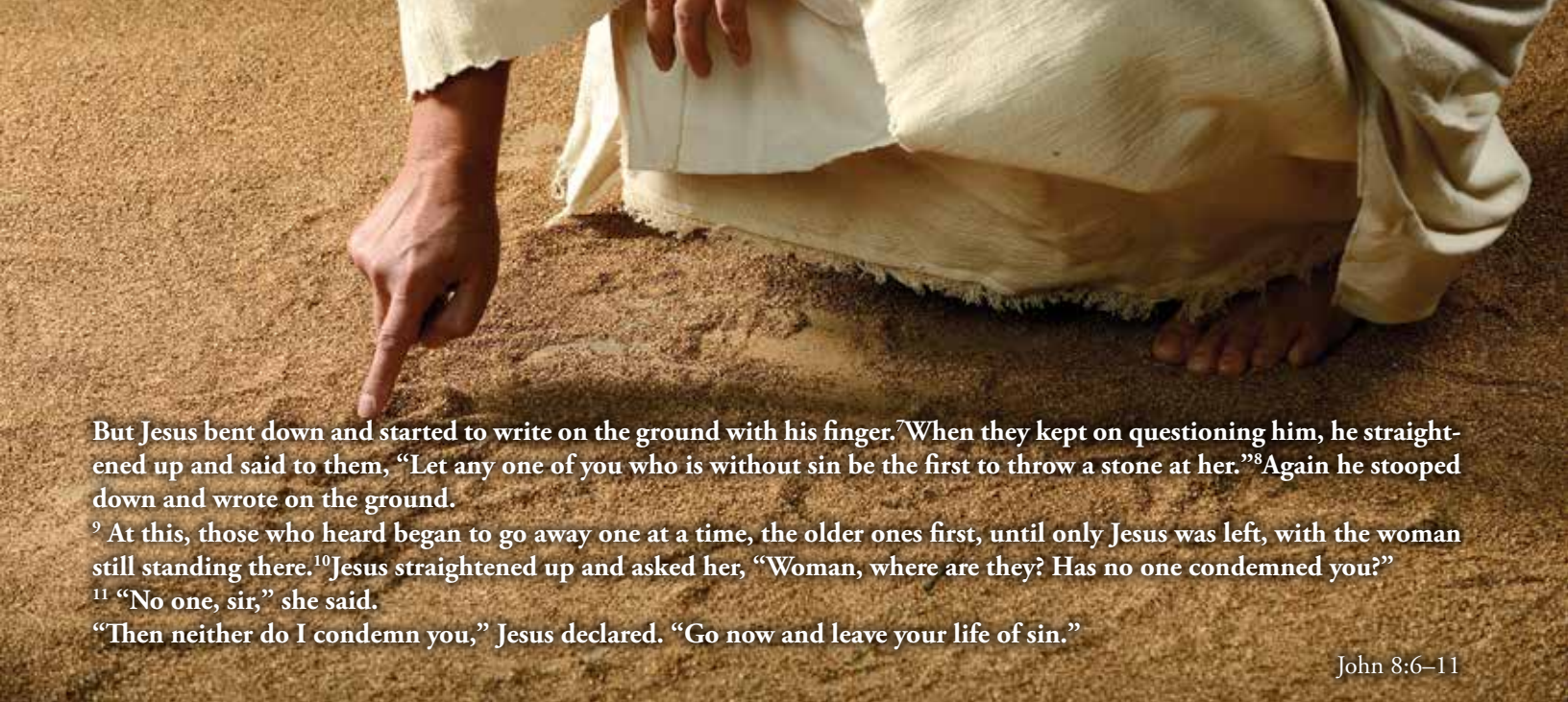
in the beginning and through him all things were made. Without him nothing was made that had been made.” So we take from that beginning that through Christ all things were created, you and I being part of that creation, and though flawed because of sin, we still have hope, because of that God who so loved the world that he became flesh and dwelt among us to model and to mentor. And I am offering you my suggestion today in the few minutes that I have to spur you on, because there are other speakers that are going to come to you and give you the chapter-by-chapter endorsements so that when we go back into the world we go back passionately, and purposefully. Back into the world we came from, big cities, little cities and from our countries of origin, to where God has brought us. But yet with purpose the Church, you and I, are also called to recreate or procreate those who have not heard, those who have not understood, who because of the fall are still fallen. You and I are called to be in the world but not of it, and to bring others back into that creative moment through redemption and reconciliation – to be repurposed, and that’s a big thing. Now when you watch shows like *This Old House*, what are they doing? They are repurposing. I come from Chatham, Ontario, Canada. It’s the car capital of Canada and we believe it’s going to be the classic car capital of the world. RM lives in Chatham—they’re the ones who help Jay Leno with all of his old cars. And all the other big stars, they all come to Chatham, Ontario, with these beat-up old things out of the junkyard and say that, well, they were called junk, but we see value in them. Some of you might have that old house and you redid the floors and brought back the essence of it. It takes time, it takes effort and it takes money, doesn’t it? But when you’re done with it, don’t you have the oohs and the ahs? Yes, you do. Now here’s the good news: that God created everything and then because of our sinfulness we made flaws in that cre-

ation, but like those people who have those old cars and those old homes and all of those old things and want to bring them back to good condition, God loves you and wants to bring you back to him. Well that’s what Jesus did with us: through the payment of God’s own Son and his blood, we have been bought and brought back into a purposefulness that was from the very beginning. And that’s why I like it: because it said, *“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.”* You see, what we needed and what we have is the fact that we lost that vision in the fall so God had to come himself and model it in form. He became man. Scripture says he became flesh and dwelt among us. And the glory of the Lord was revealed, and we were reconditioned and repurposed through the forgiveness of sins. Now, God says, go back into that flawed world, and do likewise. But how do we do it? It’s such a big task. This world is really lost and really dark and we’ve got to be very careful or it’s going to be like me and Alaura: you’re going to get up without your spiritual eyes on and with dimly-lit sinfulness, and you’re going to run into your own closets and look very foolish.

Or you can do what I should have done and I do now. I put on my glasses and I turn on the light and I go towards the noise. Now, how did that change happen? Well, because God’s light came. And that light now is the light of the world. Therefore, we must let our own light shine before men that through our good deeds God has brought glory in heaven.

So how did Jesus model that? First of all, I believed he did it with consistency. When you look at scripture in all holiness and in all righteousness, Jesus walked before God and men. In fact, the verse said Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature before God and men. And his own Father was so pleased with him. Remember when he walked into the waters of baptism to be the model and mentor? Although he did not need to

be baptized, he was baptized to show us the way. And God said, *“This is my Son, with whom I am well pleased.”* And he walked in stature not only before God but also before men: he went to Sunday school, he knew the Scriptures, He was found in the Temple asking questions. When he went into the wilderness for those forty days, what do we find? That when he was tempted three times, even though he had the authority in his own name, he could have told Satan, “Get out of here, you know you have no control over me.” But what did Jesus do, to model and mentor you and me? When he was tempted by Satan, he used three scriptures from the Old Testament, which was his Bible. The good news is, we have the Old and New Testaments together, they balance each other very well. Jesus used three scriptures to defeat the three temptations. Why? Did he need to? No. So why did he? To show us the way: that when we use God’s Word over our word, when we use his authority that he has granted us instead of who we think we are, Satan is powerless to shine his darkness on us. Jesus was completely consistent in his worship and his walk. In fact, here’s one of the scriptures I love to share: that after Jesus was arrested, falsely accused and convicted and marched through the streets and treated very poorly, he came before Pilate, who was not even of the religious world, but of the authority of the day. How do I know Jesus was consistent in his life and in his testimony? Because Pilate himself said, I find no fault in him. The charges you make, I find no substance, in his history I find no substance. He has no criminal record of bad behavior, riotous living, he has nothing that I can say deserves to be convicted. And that was on the world’s side. Jesus was consistent. So what do you and I need to do as we look back into creation and all that God created and its orderliness? How do we rekindle that, refurbish that? By realizing that while you and I exist and model and mentor in this world, we must live a



But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.⁷When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”⁸Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

⁹ At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.¹⁰Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

¹¹ “No one, sir,” she said.

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

John 8:6–11

consistent life. My wife says the only thing I'm consistent at is inconsistency. And it is usually around the dishes and the laundry. I remember saying to my wife, “Hey, I cleaned up today,” and she said, “No, you picked up.” I said, “Well, what's the difference?” She said, “If you cleaned up I wouldn't have to dust, or the load of laundry that's in the washer would have been hung up.” I guess sometimes we make our own definitions. I defined “cleaned up”, and I was satisfied that I had cleaned up, but in reality I had not. I had just moved a few magazines over here, and taken a few dishes from all over the place and piled them neatly for her to wash later. And I put my socks and shirts in the hamper, but did I clean them? Inconsistency. And you know what? When we talk about our life in Christ, maybe if we're truthful, maybe we're just picking up but not cleaning up, because we're inconsistent. We may look one way when we're around one group of people and totally different when we're around another. Jesus was never like that. So, as we look at the consistency of Christ, we must strive to live a consistent, godly life.

The second goal is our conduct. Notice that Jesus' conduct mentored and measured up to his spoken word. Remember the time that Jesus came to

a meal. The guests were sitting around. The servants had not been told to wash the guests' feet. We might say, “Why are my feet not being washed? Why am I not being served? I'm a guest in your house! Jesus could have said something similar. But Jesus didn't complain. Instead, he saw an opportunity, he saw a need and that became relevant in his conduct. As the most important guest, what did he do? He took off his outer garments, wrapped a towel around himself, and became the servant. And then he went on to say, I did not come into this world to be served but to serve. Conduct, conduct is so very, very important. Look at the story of the woman caught in adultery. Jesus said to the crowd who wanted to punish the woman, “*You without sin cast the first stone.*” And here's where the conduct comes into play. Who was the first group to leave? The seniors. The ones who had been there, done that, and had the T-shirt. The seniors are the ones who know that the only difference between us and her is she got caught and we didn't.

Then the ones following the seniors. “They're going, why are they leaving, oh yes.” Right down to the young people, who were just hoping to make it to that level, you know that level like instead of Junior Church and having to go to bed, they get to go to the ice

cream party and their life of learning. They're led, they're working towards that day, but then when everybody else that they were going to follow had left, they thought they should leave too. But then here's the conduct now, with the spotlight only on who was left. Jesus said woman, daughter. Those were terms of endearment back then. If I said “woman” to my mother or to my wife, I would usually say it as, “Hey, woman,” as I ducked, but back then those words were terms of endearment: daughter, woman, you—just between the two of us. In that intimate moment he said to her, “Where are your accusers?” And I think at that point for the first time she actually looked up. She either was burying her head in the sand or covered up in her arms waiting for the sting of that first stone, let alone the last one. You know the story. She looked up, she looked around and she said, “I don't see them.” Now here's the key point. There was one more accuser there, Jesus Christ, the one that we know is sinless, the one who could have by the law convicted her to death. But what did he do instead in his conduct? He said, “Where are your accusers?” “I don't see them.” “Then neither will I condemn you.” Mercy, second chances. You and I, we lean on those second chances that God gives us. Because we're still sinners,

☞ Continues on page 21



The 110th Czechoslovak Baptist Convention of USA and Canada

Women Missionary Union

Rebecca Skeeter Habeck



This year's Womens Missionary Union meeting was indeed a memorable time. If you were not there you missed the Holy Spirit at work among the women present.

During our time together, Andrea Tamara spoke to us from her heart. She conveyed an experience in her life that was traumatic and hurtful. She expressed her need for God's presence and guidance to bring her through this difficult time. Over time she received God's healing and peace. Praise God she is stronger in her faith, and as a mother raising

her beautiful daughter.

Andrea's transparency touched myself and others in our meeting. There was a Bible verse on each of our chairs when we gathered and sat down. As Andrea finished speaking she asked if we would read the verse that was placed on each of our chairs. She encouraged us to share something about that verse or anything personal that God whispered to us during the time she was speaking. Well what an amazing time that followed!! All of us read the Bible verse and many talked about difficult situations or events in their lives that have taken place. We all felt safe and free to talk about these things because we felt God's love and love for each other as sisters in Christ.

The verse I shared was Hebrews 10:25. "Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing, instead, let us encourage one another." The words in this verse were exactly what we were doing, during our time together, meeting and encouraging each other! A perfect ending to one of my favorite times at the convention!

□



What does a first-time delegate to the CSKBC see? Or maybe “C”?

*Christ was exalted
communion was enjoyed
commitment was evident.*

Christ was exalted in the attitudes of the delegates and in the preaching of the Word of God. I was impressed and challenged by the central emphasis on preaching at the Convention. In a world where there are countless “methods”, many of which are appropriated for use in the Church and Christian fellowship, God still blesses preaching. I Corinthians 1:18 reminds us that “...the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” The opportunity to come away together around the preaching of God’s Word was a welcome refreshment. The primary emphasis and the passionate delivery of God’s Word to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ was at once the first and most notable impression at the Convention. May the Savior always be exalted first and highest, for John the Revelator manifests for us that when the saints surround the throne, in Revelation 4 and 5, the eternal anthem of all creation is “Thou art worthy, O Lord...!” The Convention served in a finite way as a certain rehearsal for our infinite exaltation of the Lamb in eternity to come!

Communion of the saints was energizing and a source of strength. Different cultural backgrounds, variations of church polity and practice, yet a unity of Baptist belief in the authority of the Word of God and God’s simple plan of salvation were touch points of the Convention meetings as well as fellowship around the table, activities, the conduct of business, and ICE CREAM! God has blessed the Convention with a group of believers who are engaged in strengthening one another much as the apostle Paul declared to the Corinthians that “God is faithful, by Whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord” (I Corinthians 1:9), and John said, “But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (I John 1:7). The fellowship and communion at the Convention spanned the generations and backgrounds; bridged the origins and experiences of the delegates and produced a certain clear knit of heart and purpose in preserving our heritage and simultaneously committing to the continued spread of the Gospel message “into all the world”.



Commitment to service was evident and manifestly demonstrated at the Convention

through the faithful and selfless service of our Board, Secretary, staff and volunteers in caring for every aspect of the ministry and activity. The events during the convention were a clear encapsulation of the consistent, faithful service of our delegates through the weekly and even daily service of our local churches and mission work around the world. The missions presentations were a moving indication of the unwavering commitment to the Gospel through our Convention, not only in our giving and material support but perhaps more clearly through the life commitment of those who have served, are serving and who are yet to go in the future to carry the old, old story of Jesus and His love. The voluntary service and pursuit of excellence in every ministry segment of the convention—children’s programs, worship, choir, serving ice cream, organizing and administrating the business meetings and conducting excursions, among others—demonstrated the true servants’ hearts of our delegates. It was manifestly evident that our delegates have dedicated their talents to the Lord and are committed to regular exercise of such gifts in the constant edification of the body of Christ. During Convention we are privileged to enjoy the extension of these gifts and partake gladly of the “handfuls of purpose” (Ruth 2:16) that are allowed to fall graciously on us.

Conclusion: Excellent!
May Jesus Christ be Praised!

Joseph Sedivy

□

The Beginnings of Baptists

in the Czech Republic and Slovakia

During the 19th century, the lands of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Baptist work there began in the 1850s.

In 1858 Magnus Knappe, a German minister, began to travel regularly to the Broumov area and preach to the German-speaking people there. The first Czech Baptist Congregation established on March 24, 1885, in the village of Hledsebe in Central Bohemia, was called the Congregation of Christians Baptized in Faith. This work moved to Prague and continued to grow. At that time, Jindřich Novotný worked as an evangelist in Prague. He established contacts with Baptists in Poland



Magnus Knappe



The first Czech Baptist Congregation established on March 24th, 1885, in the village of Hledsebe

and soon became a pastor in the Prague church. He regularly visited other new, emerging churches, including in Slovakia.

Heinrich Meyer, a Baptist colporteur from Germany, came to Budapest in 1873. After 10 years of evangelistic work there,

he had baptized 629 German-speaking people. One of them was Johann Tatter, a 30-year-old smith from Lubica near Kežmarok, who had worked in Budapest. He was led to salvation through the ministry of Meyer, who baptized Tatter in the Danube River in 1875. Johann Tatter, the first Baptist from Slovakia, also became the first colporteur in Slovakia.

Since their inception, Baptist churches had been looking for a platform for mutual cooperation. Until 1901 there was the Austro-Hungarian Unification, the umbrella organization of German, Hungarian, Slovak, Czech and some Romanian churches. On July 22, 1899, at a conference of Czech and Slovak congregations in Vavrišovo, the "Czechoslovak Unification" was established as a base for the community of Czech and Slovak Baptists. At the conference of Czech and Slovak congregations in 1908 in Békecsaba, the name of the unification was changed to "Brother Unity", the "Brother Council" was elected, and the scope was divided into three districts:

- Mikulášský (churches Vavrišovo, Liptovský Sv. Mikuláš, Tisovec)
- Brněnský (churches Brno, Chvojnice, Stará Turá)
- Lowerland (The Church Békecsaba and its branches).



Jindřich Novotný



August Meereis,
the founder of the first Slovak Baptist
Congregation in Kežmarok



Baptist congregation house – Praha Vršovice 1886

Baptist Work in Czechoslovakia

The new republic of Czechoslovakia (October 1918) was a rather prosperous country. This helped the Baptists flourish even during the postwar economic crisis and the worldwide depression that began in 1929.

In 1914 the Baptists established a small magazine for the Baptist Union called "*Rozsieváč*" (*The Sower*). During the meeting in Vavříšovo in 1919, 15 Baptist congregations formed an association with the name The Chelčický Unity of Brethren. In 1921, the Czech and Slovak Baptists opened a seminary in Prague, with some help that was given from abroad. The Baptists in Bratislava began a mission outreach into the Jewish community in 1924. Through this ministry, they witnessed the love of Jesus Christ among the Jews. In 1926, there was the first conference of the Baptist Unity in the Czechoslovak Republic.

The 1930s brought years of terrible change. In 1933 the Nazi Party of Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany, and Czechoslovakia lost its western and northern borders. The years immediately following the Second World War and the subsequent ethnic cleansing caused many new church starts. Czechoslovakia exchanged large numbers of people with her neighbors after the war. Many Hungarians in Czechoslovakia and Slovaks in Hungary changed places. Some of these Slovak refugees were Baptists. Such new churches were made up of immigrants from Hungary and Yugoslavia.

The Communists took total control of the government in 1948, and the open persecution of believers began. In 1949, the Baptists built a camp facility on the edge of the Tatra Mountains called Račková Dolina. The building was just completed when the Communist government confiscated the property for a camp for the State, and confiscated the building

of the Baptist orphanage in Bernolákovo.

From 1949 to 1954, atheistic pressure from the government upon the Church was very powerful. Several Baptist leaders were arrested and imprisoned for their faith. Being a believer or having active believers in the family would keep a person out of college and many positions of management in the job market. Several Baptist churches were closed for varied lengths of time. Sunday schools were illegal. Each church had government paid informers in attendance. The Baptist Union came under the watchful eye of the police, and pastors became the employees of the State. In the early 1950s, the name The Chelčický Unity of Brethren Baptists was changed to The Unity of Brethren Baptists.

In the repressive period of 1952, the Communist government closed the Baptist seminary in Prague. Baptist seminary students then had to use the Evangelical Seminary (operated by the Lutheran and Reform churches) in Prague or the Lutheran Seminary in Bratislava. The government also refused permission to publish the magazine "*Rozsieváč*".

In the 1960s two regional groups (Bohemian-Moravian and Slovak) were formed. The Unity included all Baptists in the territory of Czechoslovakia.

The Communist party in 1968 recognized that radical changes were necessary to prevent major catastrophe in the country. During the time called "Prague Spring," (the Prague Spring was a period of political liberalization and mass pro-



Vinohrady church in the 1930s

test in Czechoslovakia as a Communist state after World War II) the government guaranteed freedom of speech, the press, assembly, and religion. During the Prague Spring of 1968, the Baptist youth of Bratislava I Church began a youth newsletter called "*Sonda*" (*The Probe*), and in 1969, "*Rozsieváč*" began to be published again by the Bratská jednota baptistov in Czechoslovakia.

☞ Continues on page 19

Children's Corner

The CZSKBC Kids Club met just down the hall from where the main meetings were held. Nicole Greenhow, Emily Pilić and I chose to organize mini lessons and activities based on a theme of our God being Creator, Provider, Protector, Saviour and King. We started off by learning a song from Jungle Safari VBS, "I Can Count on God". This song helped us learn that our God is big, and strong, almighty and powerful. It tells us that God should be the first in our lives for all provisions, protection, forgiveness and salvation from sin. We talked about how God created the world, everything and everyone. He created each person to be very unique and to be known by Him our creator. During our time in the classroom we played with toys, completed drawing activities, sang songs, and watched videos. Outside the classroom we went for walks around the campus, and played games in the courtyard.

Saturday morning a group of us went for an excursion to McKinley Memorial Park. We got to walk up a total of 108 steps to the top of the William McKinley Monumental Tomb. We learned about the history of this president and things that were going on during his time as the president of the United States of America. After doing some exploring at the park we found a shaded area to sit down and hear a devotional from Austin Greenhow. We shared some thoughts on how to deal with fear in our lives and how

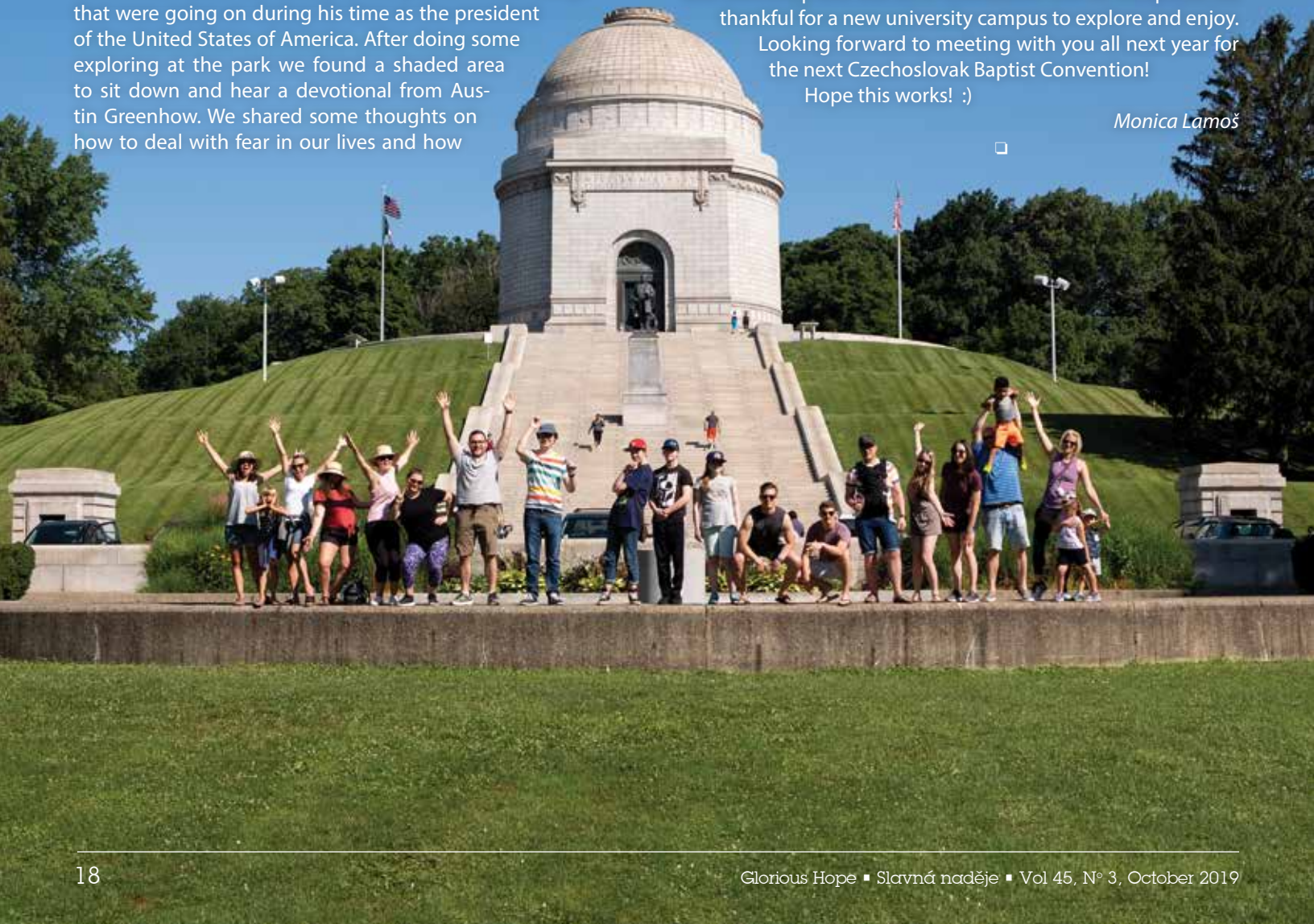


to overcome this anxious moments where fear gets the best of us. We need to trust that the same God that was faithful in the bible is still faithful today!

This summer convention is always a wonderful time to reconnect with friends and spend time together in worship and fellowship and this 2019 convention was no exception. We thank you for a new university campus to explore and enjoy. Looking forward to meeting with you all next year for the next Czechoslovak Baptist Convention!

Hope this works! :)

Monica Lamoš



Love is listed as the first of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Love was at the beginning of creation, and love was behind God's decision to save humanity. "For God so loved the world" (John 3:16). His love for man has moved the world. Therefore, the opposition, abuse and misrepresentation of the whole message of this love—God's love.

In New Testament times, people had varying perspectives on Jesus Christ. Some thought he was John the Baptist, others, that he was Elijah, and still others believed he was Jeremiah or some other prophet. People still cannot agree as to who Jesus was. This of course doesn't matter. What's important is who he is for every individual. The Lord Jesus was aware of the social atmosphere around him, and asked his disciples a simple question: "...But who say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16:15–16).

This answer expresses the entire evangelical message to humankind. The living God isn't a god of force; he preserves the free will of every human being by allowing them to tackle this message as they will. The secret lies in following, in accepting the same way of life that characterizes that of Jesus Christ. Love and peace with all that life brings, is the dominant feature of the surrendered life.

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

Láska je uvedena mezi ovocem Ducha na prvním místě. Láska stála na počátku stvoření, láska stojí za rozhodnutím Boha Otce zachránit člověka: Nebo tak Bůh miloval svět. (Jan 3;16) Jeho láska k člověku pohla světem. Proto ta opozice, zneužití a překroucení celého poselství této lásky — Boží lásky.

V novozákonní době vnímali lidé osobnost Pána Ježíše různě. Někteří ho považovali za Jana Křtitele, jiní mysleli, že to je Eliáš, další zase Jeremiáš nebo nějaký prorok. Společnost se stále nemůže sjednotit na názoru, kdo to byl Ježíš. Na tom však nezáleží. Důležité je, kým je Ježíš pro každého jednotlivce. Pán Ježíš vnímal celkovou atmosféru kolem své osoby a jednoduše se svých učedníků ptá: „A co vy? Co si o mně myslíte? Kdo myslíte, že jsem?“ A za všechny jednoznačně odpovídá Šimon Petr: „Ty jsi Mesiáš, Syn živého Boha!“ (Mat. 16:15–16)

V této odpovědi je vyjádřeno celé poselství lidstvu. Živý Bůh není Bohem násilí a ponechává svobodu každému člověku, ať se s touto informací vypořádá. Tajemství spočívá v následování, v přijetí stejného způsobu života, který charakterizuje samotného Ježíše Krista. Dominuje v něm láska a pokoj se vším, co s sebou přináší.

Natasha Laurincová, šéfredaktorka □

The Beginnings of Baptists... Continues from page 17

Then the reforms were scrapped, and in August 1968 about 600,000 troops from the neighboring Soviet bloc nations invaded Czechoslovakia. After 1970, the anti-church policy of the state escalated, and the church was under state supervision until the fall of the Communist regime in 1989. Until that time, Soviet troops occupied Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovakia split into two republics on January 1, 1993. The Unity of Brethren Baptists was divided on January 1, 1994, forming the Unity of Brethren Baptists in the Czech Republic and the Unity of Brethren Baptists in the Slovak Republic. These two bodies maintain fellowship, use the same hymn book, and publish a common magazine, the *Rozsieváč* (The Sower). There are now twenty-four Baptist churches with 1,931 church members in the Slovak Republic and forty-five Baptist churches with 2,432 church members in the Czech Republic. The Baptist Church is the only church in the Czech Republic to renounce all money from church restitution (It would have been entitled to a total of 227 million crowns).

Every Baptist is a Missionary

Baptists believe that every community of Christians, every congregation is a local church in the biblical sense. Each church is independent — independent of other churches or of any other governing body. With those who share the same beliefs,

they come together in national and international unions.

Baptists confess that before God, everyone is responsible for their own lives. The highest authority for faith and life is Jesus Christ.

Becoming a member of the Baptist Church also means becoming part of the missionary movement — every Baptist is a missionary. Mission means spreading the good news — the gospel of God's love, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life through the sacrifice of The Lord Jesus Christ.

But the mission also includes protecting the weak and the helpless, helping those in need, and spreading peace. Both social assistance and evangelization are an integral part of the mission. The Baptists also want to state that everyone in Jesus Christ can find a full life. And that is what connects North America and Europe; in other words, the Czechoslovak Baptist Convention and the Czech and Slovak Baptists. Since the beginning of Baptist work in the Czech Republic, Moravia and Slovakia, we have met the names of God's servants, which are also blended in with the history of our Czechoslovak Convention. (See *Glorious Hope* — 3/2011)

This common history is rich and blessed. It is worth remembering and continuing the missionary focus. God help us to do that.

Natasha Laurinc □

The Váhalas

The Váhalas in the Czech Republic. (Anthony and Jamie, children: Hannah, Rachel, Sarah, Joshua, Isaiah, Samuel) Our vision is to lay a biblical foundation for future generations through evangelism, church planting, and training pastors.

Much of our **evangelism** work has to be pre-evangelism. We look for ways to engage the lost and build relationship with them so they would be open to hear and discuss the Gospel. In our present context, the main connection happens through soccer. Anthony assists and coaches several teams. This national sport has allowed us to make many friends, and we truly desire to see them come to Christ. Through soccer we have connected with many people and found a way to engage the wider community. In the past three years we have organized for these folks, with the help of the local soccer club, an Easter outreach,



where over 700 unbelievers had the opportunity to hear the Gospel. Sadly, we have not seen anyone trusting Christ. We have to remind ourselves that our job is to sow, not to save.

Presently we are preparing for our first English Camp. We began to advertise for this camp during our Easter outreach and also on Facebook. Presently there are over 20 kids who signed up, and applications continue to arrive. This is a great blessing, for it is often a struggle to fill the capacity for a first-time event like this.

In an effort to **plant a church**, we host a weekly Bible study in our target city (Prostějov). Our aim is to prepare

this small group of believers to be the core for our future church plant. Aside from our Prostějov church-planting efforts, Anthony is also helping to lead another Church-planting work in Ostrava (the third-largest city in the Czech Republic), located about an hour away from us. The brothers and sisters in Ostrava have a great desire to start a healthy church, but they lack trained shepherds. Therefore, a rotation of pastors was immediately established (including Anthony) to begin a Bible study in the city. Within a month, the group grew from 9 to 20+ attendees, and it continues to expand. The plan is for these believers to attend our church in Kroměříž as well as the Bible study in Ostrava so that they could be properly disciplined before they become a church plant.

For the purpose of **training pastors** and leaders, we have also taken part in establishing a seminary, **the Czech Bible Institute** (CBI) (<http://www.cbikromeriz.cz/>) a sister seminary to EBTC in Berlin, Germany (<http://ebtc-online.org/en/ebtc/>), and part of the larger network of school TMAI. In the past Anthony has taught a number of subjects such as preaching, systematic theology, and Bible survey. Part of the vision of the institute is hosting conferences that have over the past five years impacted the Czech Republic and beyond. A number of believers from Slovakia, Poland, and Germany or Austria have also attended the Czech Bible institute.

□

fallen short of the glory of God. But Jesus said, *“Neither will I condemn you, go and sin no more.”* Conduct. And when the disciples discouraged children from approaching Jesus, he saw those children and said, *“Hinder them not.”* He welcomed them. You and I are sometimes caught in that children should be seen not heard. That’s the way I grew up. But what did Jesus do? He said hinder them not. Now these days the good news is that they’re off and they have their own speakers and it’s in story form and it’s in coloring pages and it’s in games and it’s in child care in the Christian realm so I feel good that way, just like Junior Church in Sunday school. But while they’re among us, are you going to welcome them? When they drop their drink in the cafeteria by accident because they’re young, how are you going to look at them? Down your nose, or on your knees helping them clean it up and telling them it’s okay, it’s only spilt milk. Jesus, in his conduct, said hinder them not from coming unto me. We have got to mentor and model the conduct and the consistency of Jesus Christ.

And then my final thought to you is there is consistency and there is conduct, and that’s what paints the portrait of character. Jesus Christ is the image of God, God who is invisible became visible. He put on flesh and he dwelt among us. The invisible God broke into time and space and a sinful world and his character was so attractive that when he went to speak there were so many people that he had to get into a boat. That’s one attractive speaker the people wanted to hear. I remember the story of the parable of the wise and foolish builders. You know the story. Jesus said that everyone who heard his words was like a wise man who built his house upon the rock. When the rains came down, the streams rose, and the wind blew and beat against the house, it did not fall, because it had its foundation upon the rock. But, he continued, everyone who heard his words and did not put then

into practice was like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. When the rains came down, the streams rose, and the wind blew and beat against that house, it fell with a great crash. What is the next verse after that? That the crowds were amazed at his teaching because he taught as one who had authority and not like the other teachers of the law. Jesus’ consistency and his conduct became manifest in his character. And we are to copy him. What God intended in the beginning, in creation, in all of its orderly fashion and purpose, became flawed, not because of God, but because of you and me. And then it got rekindled through Christ, and now we are to shine and burn passionately for him while we exist in the world and not of the world.

In closing, I want to tell you my two favourite Bible verses. When I was a kid, my favorite verse was John 20:29. Jesus is speaking to Thomas: *“Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”* I like that verse because in those low times of my life, at least I know I’m blessed because I believe. When all else fails, I know I’m still blessed by God because I believe. And then as I grew in wisdom and in stature, I found my name in the Bible: James, what a wonderful name. I read it and I found my second favorite verse, James 1:22: *“Be doers of the word and not merely hearers, who deceive themselves.”* Don’t merely listen to the word – as you are all listening now – but do what it says. And what does it say? That we need to live a consistent, Christ-like life, and our conduct should be kept in parallel to that, so that our conduct would paint a portrait of Jesus Christ himself in you and in me. When they see you, they should see him.

Those are my two favorite verses of all time. Now, I’m also a chaplain in a long-term care facility, people who are in the last stages of their life but still have ears to hear and hearts to receive.

And because of that opportunity, I have rekindled two other portions of Scripture. One is Psalm 23, because he still leads us in paths of righteousness for his own name’s sake. To be a good leader you must first be a good follower. He is our Shepherd and we are the Sheep. The second rekindling is that of the Lord’s Prayer, which says thy will be done in heaven and on earth thy kingdom come. And it says that if I want to be forgiven, I must learn how to forgive. That’s a portrait of Christ that we can extend to one another. God has forgiven us; how then can we not forgive one another? Be prepared to forgive others as we have been forgiven. And then it says, lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. How can we be delivered from evil? Well, the Old Testament says to lean not upon our own understanding but in all our ways to acknowledge him and he will direct our paths. That’s our walk, that’s our talk, and that’s making the most of every opportunity, which I hope I have done tonight.

Let’s pray: Father God, I thank you that from the very beginning you not only created all things, but with purpose. That whole realm of creation is still existing to this very day, and if anything went wrong, it wasn’t because of your design; it was because of our flaws. But you have now redeemed us by the blood of the Lamb. Help us now that as we have retreated from the world, we do not retreat from defeat, but in order to lick our wounds, heal, get built up, and rearm ourselves to go back and fight the good fight, the fight of faith, in a consistent, Christ-like way. May our every conversation be seasoned with grace, purpose and love, so that our conduct will go past our words and they will see in us You, the invisible God, with us as your ambassadors. May they come to an understanding through our speech, thought and deed, not for our glory, not for our fame, but for your glory. I pray this in Jesus’ name. And all God’s people said amen.

□

Mark & Gretchen Potma

A Time to Reflect

This month we are celebrating our 25th wedding anniversary! In Minneapolis on August 25th, 1994, we pledged ourselves to each other in marriage, and our lifelong adventure together began!

This month also marks 23 years of ministry in the Czech Republic for us together, and soon it will be 28 years since Mark came to Prague as the first TEAM missionary.



- Legoprojekt outreach for children in Bohnice

June:

- Karel's baptism and church membership
- Vít installed as South City Church's pastoral intern
- More visits from friends and former co-workers

July:

- Preparation and orientation for English Camp team
- Leading and serving at this summer's English Camp
- Family vacation in France, Belgium, and Holland
- Preaching at a French-speaking church in Belgium



1994



2019

Highlights of Summer

A major highlight was this summer's family English Camp with many opportunities for witnessing, ministering, and connecting.



2019 Family English Camp

There have also been many more exciting events over the past few months:

May:

- Daniel's ordination as pastor for Mongolians
- TEAM men's retreat and Skalka church retreat
- Several visits from friends, family and supporters



Mark preaching, Fabian translating into French

Mark received a gracious invitation from a church in Belgium to present the ministry of South City Church and our mission work, and to preach on Sunday, July 28th. It was encouraging for us to experience such an active and passionate body of believers in the heart of Belgium!



Campfire with Gretchen's English and Bible class

Aug:

- Teaching at Wednesday Bible studies at Ládvi
- Preaching and leading Sunday services at Ládvi
- Mentoring and coaching meetings with leaders

This Fall at a Glance

Sept:

- Mark in Windsor, Ontario, until September 9th
- Evangelism conference and Pastors' conference
- Cross-cultural leadership training in France

Oct:

- Czech church planting forum and training
- Canadian work team at South City Church
- South City Church's 15th anniversary celebration

Gretchen will continue to minister to the moms and kids at Ládvi Church on Thursday mornings. All of her Tuesday evening students are eager to continue studying English and the Bible.

Potma Family News



Luke

After four years of hard work and study, **Luke** has successfully completed his mechanical engineering studies at the University of Windsor. Luke has accepted a job offer from the company in Windsor where he did his internship. We are looking forward to a visit from Luke (August 19–31) with some fun destinations planned while he is here.



Noemi

Noemi is ready to start her 3rd year of business studies at the University of Windsor this fall. She is finishing up her first internship this summer in the university's Enrollment Management Department, where she is developing recruitment and marketing material for new and prospective students. Noemi also enjoyed ministering to missionary children at TEAM's Refresh Conference near Chicago in July.

Ben has finished Grade 11 in Prague as well as three Ontario online courses in preparation for starting Grade 12 in Canada on September 3rd. This will make for a smoother transition into Canadian university or college. Ben will be living with the same family where Luke lived five years ago. He'll be walking distance from school and from our house in Windsor



where Luke and Noemi live.

Mark and Ben will be leaving for Canada on August 27th and then Mark will return (alone) on September 9th. We will miss Ben, but he is really looking forward to life and studies in Windsor!



Elise

Elise has had a busy summer! After English Camp in July, she enjoyed bike riding in Holland during our family vacation, a few days at her friend's cottage, and then a week at a camp for missionary kids and "third culture" kids (MKs and TCKs). Elise will start 10th grade in September and plans to continue with volleyball and youth group this fall.

Prayer Points:

1. PRAISE the Lord for an exciting summer for all of us and for the many strategic ministry opportunities.
2. PRAY for God's blessing on this fall's travels, conferences, training, and the upcoming work team.
3. Please PRAY for new students to attend the existing and new English and Bible classes at Ládvi Church.
4. Please PRAY for Ben's transition to Canada and for our family being on two sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

Mark, Gretchen, Luke, Noemi, Ben, Elise

*Mark + Gretchen
Luke Noemi Ben Elise*

□



**The 110th Czechoslovak Baptist Convention
of USA and Canada** July 11-14, 2019 Canton OH

