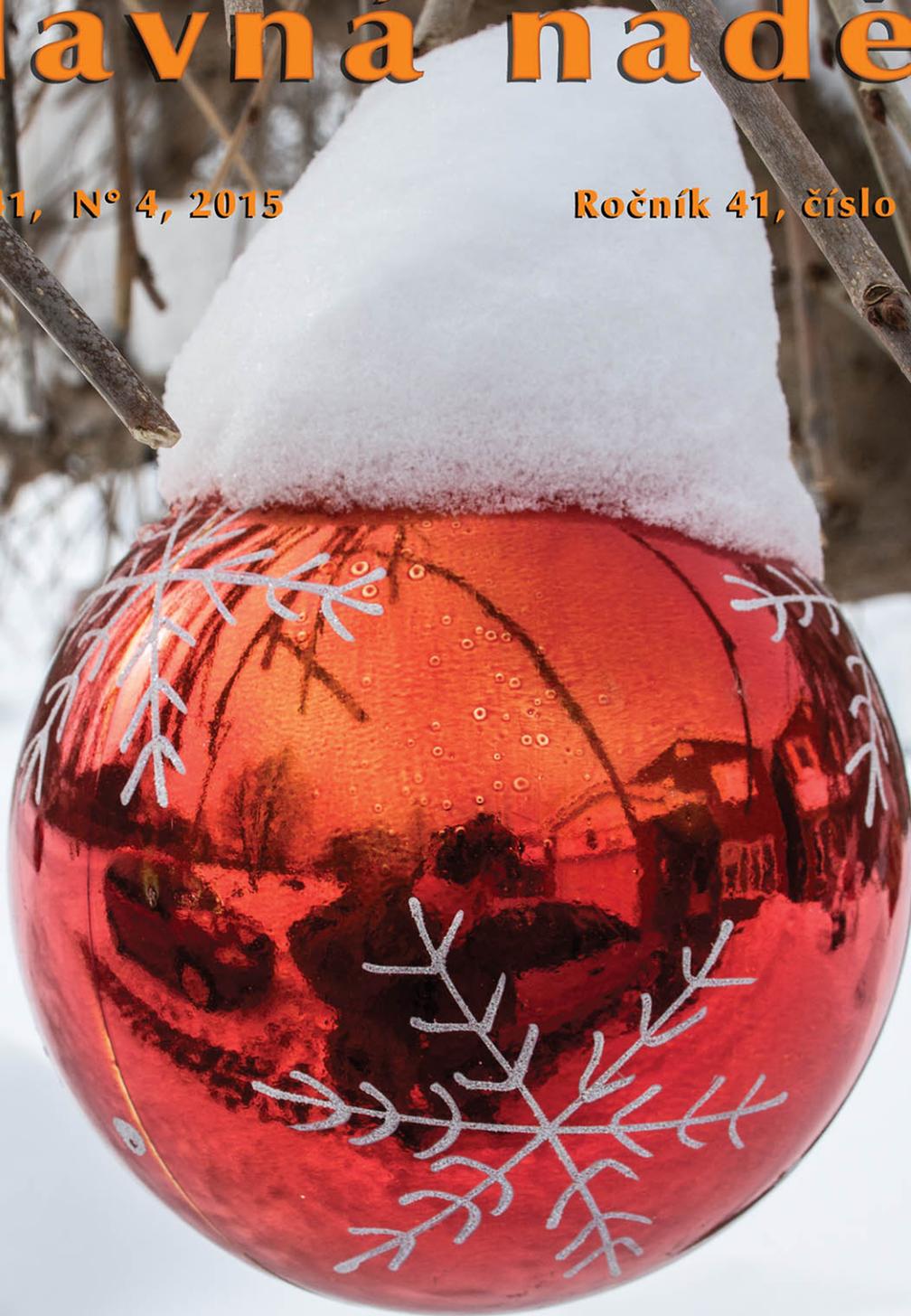


Glorious Hope Slavná naděje

Vol. 41, N° 4, 2015

Ročník 41, číslo 4, 2015



"...a Savior has been born to you, He is Christ the Lord", Luke 2:11

"...narodil se vám dnes Spasitel, jenž jest Kristus Pán", Lukáš 2:11

"... narodil sa vám dnes Spasitel', ktorý je Kristus Pán", Lukáš 2:11

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Convention photos: Dusko Pilic

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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 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.

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Why do we celebrate Christmas?

Why do we celebrate Christmas? Maybe we don't think very much about the answer to this question. Christmas is simply a part of our lives right from birth. If we delve into the origin of this holiday, we must travel to ancient times, encounter mythologies and pagan traditions. We discover that the earliest recorded celebrations of Christmas date back to sometime in the fourth century. The church has been known to celebrate it since perhaps the seventh century. The gradual shaping and development of society changed the way this holiday was observed. Countless works of art of every kind, including classical and purely folk musical compositions developed around this holiday. Christmas still dazzles us with its beauty, imaginativeness and execution. Like a silver thread, the fact of Christ's birth has weaved its way through it all: *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.* (Luke 2:11).

Wikipedia states that *"In the 20th and 21st Centuries, Christmas has been seen by many nations mainly as a holiday of peace, family time and love, which people celebrate together regardless of religious beliefs."* I was born in the 20th century, and so far we are only 15 years into the 21st century. In the country of my birth I witnessed the effort authorities put into the removal of Christmas from the heart of the nation. They did not succeed. The message of Christ's birth leaked through thanks to literature, the visual arts, sculpture and music. Christmas carols in particular, that magical folk art form, carried the message of Christmas in a peaceable, natural way. During my youth we didn't hear them

☞ Continues on page 15

Proč slavím Vánoce?

Nad otázkou *Proč slavíme Vánoce?* možná ani moc nepřemýšlíme. Vánoce jsou prostě součástí našeho života hned od narození. Pokud začneme pátrat po původu Vánoc, dostaneme se až do dob starodávných, setkáme se s mytologií i s pohanskými tradicemi. Dozvíme se, že záznamy oslav Vánoc pocházejí někdy ze 4. století. Církev je slaví snad od 7. století. S postupným vývojem a formováním společnosti se měnil i způsob oslav tohoto svátku. Vzniklo o něm nepřeberné množství uměleckých děl všeho druhu, různých kompozicí odborných i čistě lidových. Vánoce nás stále oslňují svou krásou, nápaditostí i provedením. Jako stříbrná nitka se nimi proplétá skutečnost Kristova narození: *„Narodil se vám dnes Spasitel, jenž jest Kristus Pán.“* (Lukáš 2;11)

Wikipedie uvádí, že *„Ve 20. a 21. století jsou Vánoce v mnoha zemích vnímány převážně jako svátky pokoje, rodiny a lásky, který lidé slaví společně bez ohledu na své náboženské přesvědčení.“* Narodila jsem se ve 20. století, z 21. století záhy uplyne 15 let. V mé vlasti jsem byla svědkem snahy autorit odstranit Vánoce ze života národa. Nepodařilo se. Zvěst o narození Pána Ježíše prosakovala díky literatuře, výtvarnému umění, sochařství a hudby. Zvláště vánoční koledy, kouzelná tvář lidové tvorby, šířily nenásilně a přirozeně poselství Vánoc. V době mého mládí jsme je však v rozhlase neslyšeli, o to více jsme si je na mládežnických schůzkách zpívali. Po příchodu do nové vlasti, Kanady, kde mi všechno české bylo tak vzácné, jsem se s nadšením připojila k vánočním koncertům českých a slovenských koled, které každým rokem organizoval bratr kazatel Miloš Šolc ml. během svého působení v Torontě. Tuto tradici jsme pořádali přes dvacet let. Nikdy nezapomenu na úžasnou atmosféru, kdy v plném kostele z úst slovenských i českých

☞ Pokračuje na straně 15



Annual concert of Czech and Slovak carols in Czechoslovak Baptist Church –1995. Conductors Natasha Laurinc (left) and John Alac Jr.



The Biblical revelation is full of travel and movement. It begins in a lovely garden and ends in a beautiful city, and in between there are miles and miles of journey.

This is especially true when you focus on the Christmas story. Mary and Joseph travelling to Bethlehem immediately comes to mind. It is not hard to add to this, though, as we recall Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth, the shepherds' night-time trek in response to the angels' announcement: "...a Savior has been born to you, He Is Christ the Lord", the magis' search for the new-born King heralded by the star in the east, and the flight of Joseph and Mary and the baby Jesus to Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod. Of course the unimaginable journey of the Son of God from the realms of glory to the womb of Mary on the Mission to save and redeem fallen humanity is the heart of Christmas.

Each recurring Christmas season we find ourselves with quickening pace scurrying about on many errands. Events, visits, responsibilities see us coming and going, often at a furious pace. Those who are wise will take some time, like Mary, to reflect and ponder the meaning of Jesus' journey from heaven to earth.

It is significant that the first followers of the Christ who came from heaven to earth on a Mission for our salvation were soon making missionary journeys themselves, in fulfillment of Jesus' proclamation:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

Our Convention mission statement begins: *"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..."* We have invitations from two churches, Šumperk in the Czech Republic and Hurbanovo in Slovakia, to come and help them this summer share the good news of Jesus Christ with their neighbours (see Mission Trips info included in this issue).

So among your December meditations, I ask you to seriously consider making a journey next summer on one of these trips. Here is a worthy challenge to our Convention and to ourselves personally: to live up to our profession, to accept the cost, set aside the

Continues on page 15

Biblická zjevení jsou plná pohybu a cestovního ruchu. Začínají v krásné zahradě a končí v nádherném městě s mnoha dlouhými cestami uprostřed.

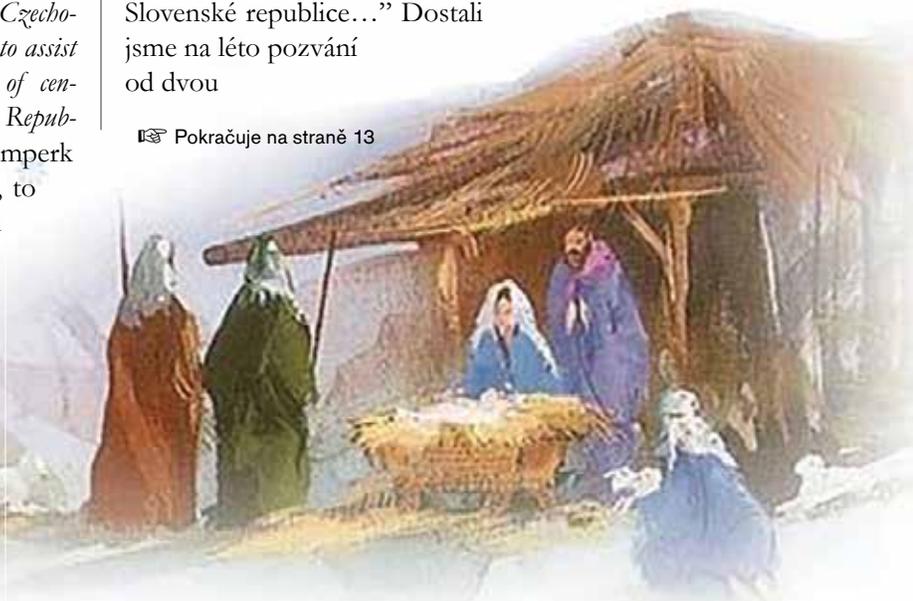
Toto zvláště platí o vánočních událostech. Okamžitě se nám vybaví putování Marie a Josefa do Betléma. Hned si také představíme návštěvu Marie u její sestřičky Alžběty, noční pout' pastýřů, když jim anděl oznámil: "...narodil se vám dnes Spasitel, jenž jest Kristus Pán", dále pátrání mudrců po nově narozeném králi, jež oznamovala hvězda od východu, a útěk Josefa a Marie s novorozencem do Egypta, aby unikli Herodovu hněvu. Ano, představa cesty Božího Syna s nebeské slávy do Mariina lůna za účelem zachránit a vykoupit padlé lidstvo, je centrem Vánoc.

Každé vánoční období se nacházíme ve stále větším shonu. Události, návštěvy, povinnosti se mnohdy odvíjí v šíleném tempu. Ti moudřejší si udělají čas, tak jako Marie, popřemýšlet a uvažovat o významu Ježíšovy cesty z nebe na zem.

Důležité je, že první následovníci Krista, jež sestoupili z nebe na zem s posláním nás zachránit, záhy podnikali misijní cesty, a tak naplňovali Ježíšovu výzvu: *"Přijmete ale moc Ducha svatého přicházejícího na vás a budete mými svědky v Jeruzalémě, v celém Judsku, v Samarii a až na konec světa."* Skutky 1;8

Misijní poslání naší konvence začíná slovy: "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..." Dostali jsme na léto pozvání od dvou

Pokračuje na straně 13



For the first time since 2010, the Mid-year Meeting of the General Board was held in the Greater Toronto Area. Sixteen board members attended the meeting on Saturday, November 7, 2015, at the Prague Restaurant in Scarborough, Ontario. Several members connected to the meeting via internet.



Mid-year Meeting of the General Board

It has been a few years since the Czechoslovak Baptist Church in Toronto ceased to exist. Members integrated with local English-speaking churches. However, many members of this former congregation continued attending our convention. Eight current members of the General Board attended this church in the past, and for this reason we occasionally organize our Mid-year Meeting in the Toronto area.

We are happy to report that the 107th Annual Convention is set for July 7–10, 2016, at Allegheny College in Meadville, PA.

The General Board has chosen the following theme for this convention:

THEREFORE GO! (Matthew 28:19)

Thurs. July 7: **Letting Go** (Genesis 12:1–9, Mark 10:28–30)

Fri. July 8: **Planting and Watering** (Psalm 126:6, I Corinthians 3:5–8)

Sat. July 9: **In The Form of A Servant** (Philippians 2:5–7a, Romans 13:12–14)

Sun. July 10: **Holding Out the Word of Life** (Philippians 2:14–16)



Mid-year Meeting of the General Board was held in the Greater Toronto Area on Saturday, November 7, 2015, at the Prague Restaurant in Scarborough, Ontario.

We hope that you will mark your calendar and join us July 7–10, 2016. Several special guests will be invited for our 107th annual gathering, so please look for updates in the upcoming issues of *Glorious Hope* and make sure you subscribe to our quarterly newsletter.

You can subscribe on our website www.czskbc.org or by email: info@czskbc.org

In His service

Darko Siracki

Executive Secretary, Czechoslovak Baptist Convention

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Christmas Fire and Burning Acorns

Robert Dvorak



Christmas in the family Dvorak was a spectacle of decoration and celebration in the days of my childhood. I do not know where this extraordinary fascination came from. The parents of my parents surely observed the season, but not anywhere near to the degree of extravagance practiced in our home.

Our preparations for Christmas got underway every year not in the month of December when dad brought down from the attic cartons of ornaments and lights. Nor did it begin with shopping binges the Friday following (American) Thanksgiving Day. For us things began to crank up the last Saturday in September. That was when my father packed us into the Hudson or the Nash (whichever he might happen to be driving that particular year) for an all-day trip to our summer place at Cedar Lake, Indiana, about an hour and a half's drive from Chicago. Dad's announced reason for this day-long trip so late in the season was the cleanup of leaves and brush around the property before bad weather set in. Mom and we kids knew, however, there were underlying motives. The cottage lot boasted quite an impressive stand of large oaks. Acorns came

raining down from those trees in the early fall. And acorns, when thrown into a fire, convert into a very showy "snap, crackle, and pop," sort of an amplified version of what happens when milk is added to a bowl of Kellogg's Rice Krispies.

My dad liked that sound, and he had this notion that we should rake up as many acorns as we could on that long Saturday afternoon in September, shovel them into large paper grocery bags, carry them to the spacious trunk of the Hudson/Nash, and haul the entire catch home for storage in the garage until CHRISTMAS! Then on Christmas Eve he would lay a fire in the living room fireplace, and from roughly 4:00 or 5:00 in the afternoon until much later that night, handful after handful of these oak nuts got tossed into the flames. There they made their little explosions – music to dad's ears and a delight to children's clapping hands.

I have never met anyone else who practiced this particular custom of his. These many years later I wonder what explanation my dad would have offered to explain the origin of his ritual. I only know for sure that for him there was a definite Christmas connection. So I am left to spin my own yarn.

This has crossed my mind. It could be that the root of the matter lies in what happened in our family late every Christmas Eve as the clock got closer to midnight. With all the

dishes of the massive turkey dinner earlier that night washed and returned to their cabinets, with all the Christmas wrappings from a huge array of distributed gifts folded up for reuse next year, with the kids starting to grow sleepy in the winding down of a long, celebrative day, we all got into overcoats and boots and walked the two-and-a-half-block distance from our front door to the Oak Park Avenue Baptist Church in Berwyn, Illinois. There each Christmas Eve the most beautiful service of the year took place—candlelit, music-filled, large sanctuary Christmas tree shining, people tender toward one another in the pews, minister greeting every worshipper with open arms, the ‘great hymn for Christmas day’ (“O Come, All Ye Faithful”) promptly sung at 12:00 a.m. All of this, of course, anchored in the beloved story from Luke 2 about Jesus Christ born! About God of the ages, Maker of all that exists, only begotten Son of the Heavenly Father, Brother to every child of God, freshly born in a back-country barn of Judea, minus blankets, layette, and stuffed toys; no crib rails, sanitized diapers, or soft pacifiers!

Any newborn requires a ton of care. What if the load of responsibility is complicated by exposure to the bite of a cool winter evening and uncleanness of large hovering animals constantly grunting and worse? Under those circumstances, might not a carefully laid hearth fire be greatly welcomed by everyone present? Could not burning acorns – shooting like stars and popping like corn – bring delight to an infant’s eyes? Is it possible that my dad, wishing to enter the story of what went on in that barn, was bringing his own personal gift – a fire burning away, and amusing acorns doing their trick?

Dad might have been onto something! In the Christmas story a very vulnerable Jesus Christ is brought to our attention. Like any child in the earliest hours of infancy, he survived by what others nearby were doing for him. He had to be looked after, tended, and protected. His parents did that, but also visitors from Judean hillsides and perhaps other places. They came to look in and do what they could to support. They stood by him. They encouraged, nurtured, and loved as best they could.

We are so used to soaking up all that God in Jesus Christ does for us that we may miss what we may be able to bring into His life. It is true he is the Great Giver, while we are the humble receivers.

But we may have become so accustomed to focusing on what Jesus does for us that we have ignored what we might be able to do to bring joy to Him.

How do we do that? Well, just one instance at the moment. Which of us can ever forget that penetrating remark of His, “Insofar as you have done it [a favor] unto one of the least of these my brothers, you have done it unto me.” Plain language that says it is possible to help the Lord, make a difference to Him. That’s the way I read it.

So, entering imaginatively into the story of Christmas and its well born child, my dad built a fire for warmth through a Bethlehem nighttime and threw in a little acorn fireworks to celebrate His safe birthing. Maybe at least the hint of a smile on Jesus’ face? I’ll tell you this: my dad and Christ, though separated physically by geography and era, were good friends for quite a long time thereafter.



Vánoční oheň a hořící žaludy

Robert Dvorak



Za mého dětství se Vánoce u Dvořáků slavily s okázalou výzdobou. Ani nevím, odkud tato zvláštní fascinace vzešla. Rodiče mých rodičů jistě tyto svátky slavili, ale určitě ne takovým extravagantním způsobem, jako se slavili u nás doma.

Přípravy na Vánoce u nás nezačínaly až v prosinci, kdy tatínek snesl z půdy krabice s ozdobami a světélky. Ani s nákupní horečkou počínající hned v pátek po Děkuvzdání (americký svátek, třetí čtvrtek v listopadu, pozn. překl.). U nás to propukalo poslední sobotu v září. To nás otec naložil do auta Hudson nebo Nash (podle toho, čím právě ten rok jezdil) a vyrazili jsme na celý den na naši chatu u Cedrového jezera v Indianě, zhruba hodinu a půl cesty od Chicaga. Tatínek

zdůvodnil tuto dlouhou cestu na konci sezóny tím, že je potřeba pohrabat listí a celý pozemek uklidit před tím, než přijde špatné počasí. Maminka a my děti jsme však o jeho motivaci věděli své. Na pozemku kolem chaty se hrdě tyčily velké impozantní duby. Brzy na podzim z těchto stromů žaludy přímo pršely. A když se žaludy hodí do ohně, promění se ve velmi efektní “prásk, třesk a buch”, jako když nalijete mléko na rýžové hrudky Kellogg’s Rice Krispies v misce, jenom v silnější verzi.

Tatínkovi se ten zvuk líbil a myslel si, že bychom měli, v to dlouhé sobotní zářijové odpoledne, nahrabat co nejvíce žaludů, naplnit jimi velké nákupní papírové pytle, naložit je do prostorného kufru auta Hudson/Nash a dopravit celý ten úlovek domů do garáže k uskladnění až do VÁNOC! Na Štědrý den v obýváku v krbu zapálil oheň a přibližně od 4.00 nebo od 5.00 hodin odpoledne

až do pozdní noci, hrst po hrsti tyto dubové žaludy byly vhažovány do plamenů. Tam potom praskaly – hudba tatínkovu uchu a potěšení dětským tleskajícím dlaním.

Nikdy jsem nikoho se stejným zvykem nepotkal. Rád bych věděl, po tolika letech, jak by asi tatínek tento rituál vysvětlil. Vím však jistě, že v jeho případě to mělo jednoznačně návaznost na Vánoce. A tak se mohu jenom domýšlet.

Napadlo mne toto. Možná kořeny spočívají v tom, co se u nás každý Štědrý večer těsně před půlnocí odehrávalo. Po umytí a úklidu nádobí po bohaté krocaní večeri, se všemi vánočními papíry z dáreků, pečlivě poskládanými pro další využití v příštím roce, s ospalými dětmi zmoženými dlouhým slavnostním dnem, oblékli jsme se všichni do kabátů a vysokých bot a vypravili se do baptistického sboru na ulici Dubového parku v Berwynu vzdáleném přes dva bloky od našich dvěř. Na Štědrý večer tam probíhalo to nejkrásnější shromáždění z celého roku – rozsvícené svíčky, znějící hudba, veliký rozzářený vánoční stromeček, v lavicích lidé vzájemně se zahrnující něžností, kazatel vítající každého přichozícího s otevřenou náručí, a nádherná štědrovečerní píseň („Ó křesťané všichni“, *Adeste fideles*, pozn. překl.) zpívaná přesně o půlnoci. Pochopitelně to všechno bylo zasazeno do milého příběhu o narození Ježíše Krista podle Lukáše, druhé kapitoly. Bůh věků, Tvůrce všeho, co existuje, jednorozený Syn Nebeského Otce, Bratr každého Božího dítěte, právě narozený v judské stáji, bez příkrývek, novorozenec výbavičky, plišáků, postýlky, dezinfikovaných plenek nebo jemných cumlíků!

Každý novorozenec si vyžaduje spoustu péče. Co teprve, když břímě zodpovědnosti zkomplikuje nebezpečí omrzlin chladné zimy nebo všudypřítomná nečistota neustále hýkajících či bučících zvířet anebo ještě něco horšího. Neuvítal by každý, kdo tam byl v těchto

podmínkách, opatrně rozdělaný oheň? Nepotěšily by děťátko hořící kaštany – vystřelující jako hvězdy a pukající jako zrnka kukuřice? Je možné, že by tak můj tatínek, s přáním vstoupit do příběhu odvíjejícím se ve stáji, přinášel svůj vlastní dárek – plápolající oheň s žaludy a zábavnou podívanou?

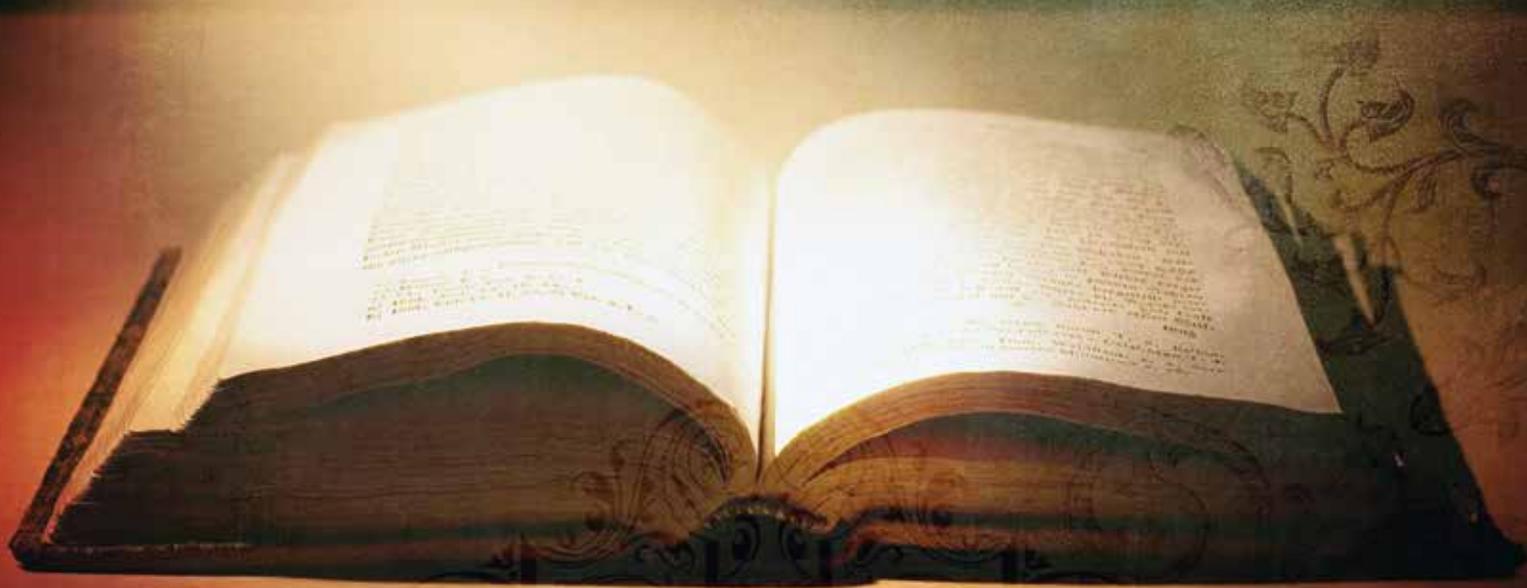
Tatínek tím mohl ještě něco sledovat! Vánoční příběh nás upozorňuje na křehkost Ježíše Krista. Jako každé dítě přežil díky tomu, co pro něho blízcí udělali hned po narození. Bylo potřeba se o něho starat, chránit ho a opatrovat. To všechno jeho rodiče dělali, ale spolu s nimi také ti, kdo jej z Judského pohoří, a možná i z jiných míst, navštívili. Přišli se podívat a pomoci s tím, co bylo potřeba. Zastali se ho. Povzbuzovali, pečovali a projevovali lásku, jak jen nejlépe mohli.

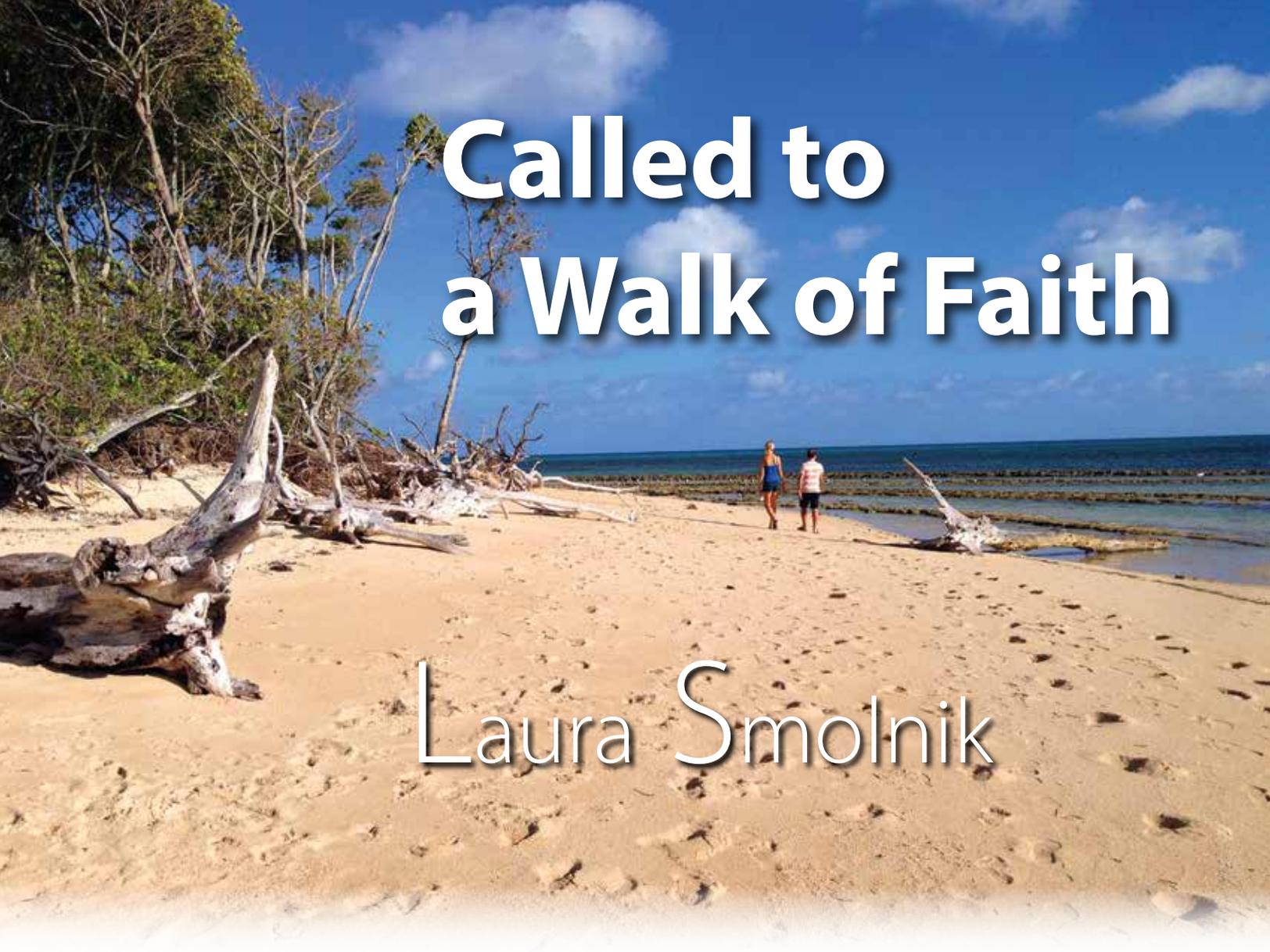
Jsmo tak pohlcováni tím vším, co pro nás Pán Bůh v Ježíši Kristu dělá, že nám uniká to, jakým přínosem bychom mohli být pro Něho my. Je pravda, že On je Velký Dárce, a my pokorně přijímáme. Ale možná jsme si zvykli až moc vnímat, co Ježíš dělá, a uniká nám, čím bychom Jej mohli potěšit my.

Jakým způsobem můžeme pomoci? Prostě využívat jednotlivých příležitostí. Kdo by si z nás nepamatoval důležitou připomínku: “To, co jste učinili jednomu z nejmenších, mně jste učinili.” Jednoduše řečeno, je možné Pánu pomáhat, moc to pro Něj znamená. A tak to chápu já.

Takže můj tatínek nápaditě vstoupil do vánočního příběhu o urozeném dítěti, rozdělal oheň, aby prohrál betlémskou noc a ohňostrojem malých žaludů oslavil jeho zrození. Že by se Ježíš pousmál? Řeknu vám toto: Můj tatínek a Kristus, ač fyzicky rozděleni geografí a dobou, byli pak hodně dlouho dobrými přáteli.

přeložila *Nataša Laurincová*





Called to a Walk of Faith

Laura Smolnik

What does that mean?

When I was a young Christian, walking by faith sounded so exciting. It sounded like something I wanted to do, full of mystery, fun, excitement and amazing possibilities, and it also sounded optional. Thirty-four years later, I know that it is so much more, so much harder than it sounds and yet so essential if I am going to experience a joy-filled Christian life. Why is faith so important? What does it do for me?

Let's look at a couple of passages.

Hebrews 10:36 – 11:6

For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

For yet in a very little while,

He who is coming will come, and will not delay.

But my righteous one shall live by faith:

And if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.

But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul. Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the

conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible. By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks. By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death: *and he was not found because god took him up*: for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God. And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

2 Corinthians 5:7

For we walk by faith, not by sight.

What does faith do for me?

1. Faith leads me out of my comfort zones.

If the life of faith was going to be easy, we would have no need of endurance (Hebrews 10:36). We need endurance in tough situations. The life of faith has a tendency to test

us to our limits. And that is good. But it is uncomfortable. For faith to grow it must be stretched. Just like any muscle it must go beyond its position of comfort to grow. Faith that sticks within the limits of what I know and am comfortable with is really no faith at all. It doesn't require us to lean on God if we already know that we can do this or cope with it. It is when I am required to go beyond where I can rely on my own capabilities that I can experience what it means to depend on God. Having four children has provided me with plenty of opportunities to leave my comfort zone. Just so you would understand me, I am, at heart, someone who loves safety. I would have loved to wrap up all four of my babies in cotton wool and gently steer them through all the dangers of childhood to the "safe" haven of adulthood. But God has provided me with countless opportunities to let go of my comfort, and my "control" and simply trust Him. The truth is I cannot keep them safe anyway. Only He can. God keeps me on my toes in this area. To illustrate, imagine this scene which happened just recently. We were sightseeing in Chicago and decided to go on a walk around Michigan Lake. It's a beautiful lake but also very deep. Walking around that lake with my lively little four-year-old daughter, I would have felt best if we had walked about half a mile from the water's edge. I sometimes live life like that. I want to stay within the "safe" zone and minimize any risks to me or my loved ones. But faith invites me to walk close to the edge and to enjoy what I cannot see from that safe distance. It allows me the freedom of trusting God to catch me if I should stumble and fall and to experience His sufficiency and provision where my own resources fail. God does not want any of us to live life out of fear and self-protection. He wants us to trust that He can and will protect. Every time I have stepped out of my comfort zones, I have experienced blessings that I wouldn't otherwise, and I have stepped out to find that I am in fact standing on solid ground – the solid ground of an obedient walk. Hebrews 11: 8–9: *"By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance: and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents...."* To leave a comfort zone means to become uncomfortable! There is nothing very comfortable about living in tents and being the local foreigner. We don't like not being comfortable. But we don't need to be afraid of being uncomfortable. We need to see it as an opportunity, an invitation to experience Christ's sufficiency. Back to the lake.... I could have grabbed Mia's hand and dragged her around the lake at a safe distance from the water (isn't this how some of us live our lives—anxiously controlling what we fear?) but God was gently nudging me and reminding me (again!) that I should trust and let go. Believe me, that's not easy for me and it was pretty uncomfortable and I was glad when we finished that part of our walk and moved away from the

lake. But I am also glad that I didn't allow fear to control me and allowed God to be the One protecting my little girl. And of course Mia had so much more fun skipping up and down and enjoying the view from the edge of the lake. Faith doesn't mean that we will always be comfortable. It means that we are trusting in something greater than ourselves and that in the midst of our discomfort we can have peace. Peace that enables us to endure and that allows our hearts to take courage. *"Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord."* (Psalm 27:14)

2. Faith leads me into the unknown.

Abraham *"went out, not knowing where he was going."* Hebrews 11:8

The "beauty" of the life of faith is that God is always surprising us. Just when we think that we know what it is all about, where we are and where we are going, God steps in, removes our props and changes our landscape. How does He do this? A change in our circumstances perhaps, or our health, or our relationships. Generally something very unexpected comes our way and throws us off balance for a time until we re-discover God in our lives and re-discover that He never changes and never shifts. He is eternally the same. *"Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change"* (Psalm 46:2). For me, one of those changes came in the shape of dizziness last September. I literally lost my balance and suddenly everything about life felt different, out of whack. Often we don't realize to what extent we lean on the physical realities or securities in our lives until God touches one of them and we find ourselves leaning on thin air. Why does God do that? Why doesn't He leave us in our safe little worlds of reasonable health, reasonable financial security and predictable relationships? Could it be that He is teaching us that compared to the security we have in Him these things are an illusion? 2 Corinthians 4:18 says this: *The things which are seen are temporal but the things which are not seen are eternal.* Temporal means they are passing away. On the other hand the eternal things are the permanent reality. How we tend to get these two things mixed up! This world is not our home but each one of us, while things are going well, tends to get far too settled in and forget that our destination is still ahead of us. We get busy living our lives and leave little time for God in our lives. It is God by His grace who reminds us not to get too settled in, by shaking up our worlds now and again.

Of all the things that I have ever feared might happen to me, dizziness was NEVER on the list (more evidence that worrying is useless!). Dizziness came as an interruption into my busy life of mothering, managing our home and ministry. For a time it put a stop to everything except the most essential things. It brought seemingly endless hours of sitting in doctors' surgeries, waiting for appointments, waiting for tests and waiting for results. It brought many questions and

 Continues on next page

for a long time no answers. I had unexpectedly entered the unknown. God was taking me to a new place and I didn't really want to go there. I just wanted to learn my lesson quickly and get back on track with my life. But the lesson has also been in the length of the problem. It has been in the not knowing the answers because it has taught me patience and it has taught me trust where I had no patience and no understanding of what was happening. Dizziness continued month after month and even now is a regular feature of my life but now, almost a year on, I am much calmer and much more patient about it than when it first began. And I am thankful for the unexpected blessings which came through this experience. God has me in school so that I can learn to trust Him instead of leaning on my own understanding. I am a fretter, a worrier by nature, but Psalm 37 (v8) tells us not to fret because fretting leads to evildoing. Yep, that's true. I've tried that one out often enough. But the antidote to fretting is trusting. I have learnt to love this passage over the last year: *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body, and refreshment to your bones."* Proverbs 3:5–8. I have learnt that I have to allow God's Word to counsel me out of wrong thinking patterns that lead to evil and learn right thinking, "faith" thinking. But it all begins with trust, with putting our trust in the right place – not in ourselves but in God. It is tremendously freeing to give up our self-reliance and our questions and to trust in a God whose presence, knowledge and power are infinite and who cares for me; to realize that there is nowhere I can go where He will not be, there is nothing in my future which He doesn't know about and there is no circumstance where He is not in ultimate control (see Psalm 139 for a great exposition of this). And nothing can thwart God's plan for my life.

3. Faith gives me a different perspective on suffering.

Faith doesn't always remove the problem but it always enables us to look at it differently. While we focus on the problem it becomes overwhelming to us and traps us. Faith frees us to see the good in the situation and teaches us how to deal with it in constructive ways instead of being just blocked by it.

From September to December I was very much focused on my dizziness. Everything revolved around it (forgive the

*For we walk by faith,
not by sight.*

2 Corinthians 5:7



pun). My day, my conversation focused on how I was feeling; I was by turns fearful, angry, self-pitying, defeated and exhausted – mostly all of these things at the same time! I just wanted it to be *over*. Did I suffer less by being so focused on my problem? Of course not! I made the load twice as heavy. But I had to deal with my fear, which was blocking my perspective. I had to return to faith in God's sovereignty, His goodness and His love before I could get things in proper perspective. I was full of negative emotion and all I wanted was God to heal my body. But my priorities were not His. He wanted me to deal with my fear and lack of trust first. Whenever I have a problem that is too big for me to handle, I have a tendency to throw a great big pity party for myself in an attempt to get God to answer my demands, to manipulate Him into responding to me. But guess what – God *never* falls for it! God does not bless self-pity and *He will not be manipulated* by it or by any amount of griping or complaining. God is *not* pleased when we doubt His goodness (this is at the core of self-pity) but He is pleased by our trust. He is pleased when we trust Him in the middle of our trouble. *"Without faith it is impossible to please Him,"* (Hebrews 11:6). Self-pity is like a black filter on our vision which blinds us to all that is good in our situation and makes everything gloomier, greyer, heavier and harder. Worse than that, it is a lie which denies God's character and goodness and puts our hurts on the throne. Conversely, faith removes this filter and shines hope into our situation. The moment we turn from hopelessness even to a small seed of faith, God is there, graciously strengthening and confirming it and enabling us to walk by that faith. But we must take that initial step.

☞ Continues on page 15

A Family Celebration

On July 25th we had a family celebration. We were officially celebrating the 80th birthdays of our parents, Bernie and Libby Racinsky. Mom turned 80 on May 23, and Dad on September 21—although he usually celebrates on September 28, as that is what his birth certificate says and it helps to make him feel younger! We also ‘unofficially’ celebrated Miriam’s 50th birthday, which took place on July 23.

We were thankful to have all four children present: Mark (Dale), James (Ruth), Miriam, and Tim (Glenda). Also eight of the nine grandchildren were present: Mike (Sara), Mitchell, Sarah, Holly, Joseph, Lydia, Isaac, and Anna. Unfortunately, the oldest grandchild, Brianne, was not able to attend, as she currently resides in Victoria, BC. It was also very special to have one great-grandchild almost present, as Mike and Sara are expecting a new arrival in January, 2016. The picture-taker is a special friend of Sarah, Josh.

The family went on a relaxing cruise of the Grand River near Hamilton, Ontario. We then spent some time in the afternoon looking over some special albums of memories (pictures and thoughts from family) that were put together by Ruth and the families. Finally, we visited an all-you-can-eat buffet in Mennonite country and made the most of it!

It was a great time of celebrating the years that God has given to Mom and Dad and His faithfulness to us as a family.

We have much to be thankful for!

Tim Racinsky



Stránka prezidenta... Pokračování ze strany 4

sborů, ze Šumperku z České republiky a z Hurbanova ze Slovenska, abychom jim pomohli sdílet se se zvěstí o Ježíši Kristu s bližními (informace o misijní cestě naleznete v tomto čísle).

A tak během vašeho prosincového rozjímání přemýšlejte vážně nad možností zúčastnit se příští léto jedné z těchto cest. Je to dobrá výzva jak pro naši konvenci, tak i pro jednotlivce: zachovat se tak, jak se na naši profesi sluší, souhlasit s náklady,

zajistit si volno a cestu uskutečnit. Ať už slavíme Vánoce letos jakkoli, zúčastnit se zájezdu za účelem šíření radostné zprávy, kterou nám přinesl Ježíš, bude jistě dar, který Dítě–Kristus přijme s úsměvem.

Požehnané vánoční cestování, přátelé. Těším se v příštím roce na naši společnou pout’ za misii.

přeložila *Nataša Laurincová*

What will your legacy be?



OVER A CENTURY AGO, THE FOUNDERS OF OUR CONVENTION STARTED WORK AMONG CZECH AND SLOVAK IMMIGRANTS TO NORTH AMERICA. The work grew and expanded to include annual conventions, magazine publication and missions support. Today that support assists the Czech and Slovak Baptist Unions as well as missionaries in both of these countries. However, with decreased immigration to North America from Eastern Europe and the connection of third-generation Czechs and Slovaks in Canada and the US to their cultural heritage significantly diminished, we face the

challenge of carrying on the mission of our Convention in future generations.

Your financial support will help us continue our financial support of the Czech and Slovak Baptist Unions and missionaries in these countries.

By including the Czechoslovak Baptist Convention in your will, trust, retirement account or life policy, you can help continue the spreading of the gospel in the lands of the Czech and Slovak Republics (as the Lord waits) to future generations.

Imagine the difference your support could make.

- Please send me information on the Czechoslovak Baptist Convention.
- Please send me information on your support of the Czech and Slovak Baptist Unions.
- I have included the Czechoslovak Baptist Convention in my will, trust or beneficiary designation.
- I would like to support the mission of the Czechoslovak Baptist Convention:
 - One-time Repeating, (postdated checks)
 - \$25 \$50 \$100 \$200 Other: _____

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Editorial... Continues from page 3

broadcast which just made us sing them all the more at our youth groups. After immigrating to my new home in Canada where I cherished everything Czech, I threw myself enthusiastically into the annual concert of Czech and Slovak carols that Pastor brother Milos Solc jr. organized while he worked in Toronto. We held this tradition for twenty years. I will never forget the incredible atmosphere, when, from the mouths of a church full of Czech and Slovaks resounded carols proclaiming salvation to all people. And the shining eyes of children singing of Christ's birth, reminded me of the shimmering stars in the sky when angels proclaimed to the shepherd's what happened that night in Bethlehem...

Yes, Christmas reveals God's love for man, brings his peace and strengthens family relations. It doesn't matter how Christmas is celebrated or what traditions are upheld. What is important is to be sure that Jesus was born in my heart, in yours and in the hearts of our loved ones. That is the only way to spread God's love, joy, peace, gratitude, goodness...

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him will not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

That is why I celebrate Christmas.

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



Editorial... Pokračování ze strany 3

krajanů zněly koledy zvěstující spasení všemu lidstvu. A zářící oči dětí, zpívajících o narození Krista, připomínaly třpytivé hvězdy na obloze, když andělé zvěstovali pastýřům, co se stalo tu noc v Betlémě...

Ano, Vánoce zjevují Boží lásku k člověku, přinášejí Boží pokoj, upevňují rodinné vztahy. Nezáleží na tom, jakým způsobem nebo kterými zvyky se Vánoce připomínají. Důležité je být si jistý, jestli se Ježíš narodil v srdci, v mém, ve tvém, v srdci našich bližních. Jedině tak se bude šířit Boží láska, radost, pokoj, vděčnost, dobrota...

„Neboť tak Bůh miloval svět, že dal svého jediného Syna, aby žádný, kdo v něho věří, nezahynul, ale měl život věčný.“ (Jan 3:16)

Proto slavím Vánoce.

Nataša Laurincová, šéfredaktorka

From the President... Continues from page 4

time and do it. However else we celebrate Christmas this year, going on a trip with a team to share the Good News that Jesus came to bring is a gift the Christ Child would surely smile on receiving.

Blessed Christmas travels, my friends. Looking forward to journeying with you on mission in the year ahead.

Stan Mantle

Called to a Walk of Faith... Continues from page 12

And when we do, it's as if someone has flicked a switch in a darkened room and our dark circumstances are flooded with light.

Therefore...

4. Faith teaches me to have a thankful and not a complaining heart.

These two things are mutually exclusive.

Complaining, I cannot thank.

Thanking, I cannot complain.

Most of us have a tendency to murmur like the Israelites. What were they like? Over and over God provided for them, rescued and blessed them. And their response? Over and over they complained and doubted God's goodness. I am the same. How often have I experienced God's provision, strengthening and help? But the very next time a crisis comes, I will find myself doubting again whether He will come through this time.

So what is the remedy?

The remedy is remembering with thankfulness, remembering His faithful provision and absolute sufficiency in every situation and leaning on His unchanging nature.

So much more could be said about faith. We can learn about faith, but to learn faith as a lifestyle takes a lifetime. Will you accept God's invitation to a faith lifestyle and will you give it your lifetime? Will you accept His invitation to live a life with these challenges and these assurances?

Perhaps you could consider these questions:

1. What have been some of the faith-testing circumstances in your life?
2. Is God beckoning you out of your comfort zone in any area? Where?
3. Where have you been avoiding things, clinging to false securities because of fear?
4. Where do you tend to rely on yourself or your own understanding more than on the Lord?
5. Our faith grows in direct proportion to how well we know Him from His Word. How are you feeding your faith in Him?
6. How can knowing and trusting God's character change your perspective on your own suffering and ease the discomfort of it?

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PROGRAM 8: LAODICEA

TIME: 240 MIN

KRAJINA SIEDMICH ZBOROV

PRIPOJTE SA K MART DE HANOVI A JIMMY DE YOUNGOVI NA ICH VÝPRAVE PO KRAJINE SIEDMICH ZBOROV, O KTOREJ HOVORÍ POSLEDNÁ BIBLICKÁ KNIHA ZJAVENIE JÁNA. V TEJTO OSEMDELNEJ SÉRII SA DOZVIETE, ŽE VERIACI ĽUDIA KEDYSI ČELILI PODOBNÝM ŤAŽKOSTIAM, AKÝM ČELIA AJ DNEŠNÍ KREŠŤANIA.

1. VÍŤAZI

2. EFEZ

3. SMYRNA

4. PERGAMON

5. TYATÍRA

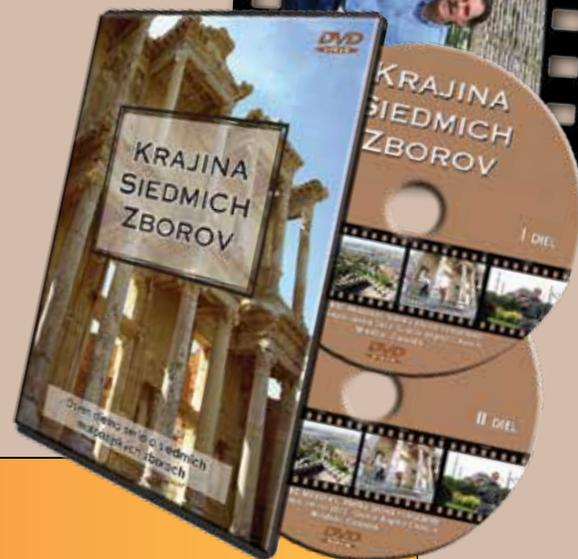
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Pastor Jan Franka

Konference mládeže v Chebu

Letošní setkání baptistické mládeže proběhlo v Chebu od 28. 10. do 1. 11. a zúčastnilo se ho okolo 300 mládežníků z většiny sborů. Konferenci připravovala Rada Odboru mládeže ve spolupráci s oběma chebskými sbory. Na vedení chval se podílely hudební skupinky z Aše, Chebu a Brna, o hlavní program se rozdělili čtyři bratři z obou sborů. Program dále doplnilo 13 seminářů, workshopy, sportovní programy nebo možnost výletu a poznávání města. Novinkou byly malé skupinky, které se scházely každý den odpoledne a ve kterých byla možnost se více poznat, sdílet a diskutovat nad otázkami k hlavním programům.

Jan Jackanič
vedoucí Odboru mládeže BJB

Baptist Youth Conference in the Czech Republic

This year's Baptist Youth Conference in the Czech Republic was held in the town of Cheb from October 28th to November 1st, and had around 300 youth participating from major congregations. The conference was prepared by the Youth Department of the Baptist Union. Leading the worship were music groups from Aš, Cheb and Brno, and the main program was split between four brothers from both Cheb congregations. The program further included 13 seminars, workshops, and athletic events, as well as opportunities to visit and get to know the city. New this year was the gathering every afternoon of small groups, which provided an opportunity to get better acquainted and talk about the main themes of the conference programs.

Jan Jackanič
Director of the Youth Department of the Baptist Union
Translated by *Elizabeth Jane Fields*



Foto: Vašek Růžička, Viktor Jelínek

Jesus, Our Superhero By Wil Lane

Great stories have great plots, characters, conflicts, climaxes, resolutions, and endings. These are the things that draw us in, and we begin to ask questions like, “Will the guy get the girl?” “Will the hero save the day?” “Will evil really defeat good?”

These are the questions that build suspense and drive us to our local theaters and cinemas, bookstores and libraries to get answers to our unanswered questions.

So I dare to ask this question: “Why do we not get this excited about reading our Bibles?”

What if I told you that Superman is a rip-off; and that the original superhero that represented hope, not only to a nation but to the whole world, came wrapped in swaddling clothes and was lying in a manger?

Like all great superheroes, Jesus wasn't from here.

Through incarnation, God wrapped Himself in flesh; He stepped out of eternity into time, divinely and supernaturally embedded Himself via the Holy Spirit into the womb of a young woman by the name of Mary, and was birthed in the little town of Bethlehem in a stable with a feeding trough for a bed. But superheroes usually come from humble beginnings anyway.

Like all great superheroes, Jesus had theme music. (At least we imagine the angels singing.)

In the second chapter of Luke, around verse 13, it records that a multitude of angels were saying, “*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will to all men.*”

Like all great superheroes, Jesus had enemies.

Jesus' birth alone was a threat to the Roman government because prophecy declared Him to be the king of the Jews. The Pharisees didn't like him and sought to have Him killed because he was challenging their strict interpretation of the Law; and Satan, Jesus' ultimate enemy, wanted to destroy Him. If Jesus completed the mission of living a life without sin, He would prove that God's grace is sufficient.

Like all great superheroes, Jesus had sidekicks.

Jesus had “The Twelve,” and his whole purpose was to disciple them, teach them, and equip them to teach everyone else about the grace of God.

Like all great superheroes, Jesus was put in a tight situation.

Jesus was falsely accused, arrested, beaten, and crucified for all to see. Surely, this is it! But as with all great superheroes, this is part of the plan...

This Christmas let us all remember that we serve a Savior who was born to die, that Jesus came to set us free from sin. And on Christmas morning, when you're with your family opening gifts, remember that God loves us so much that He gave His only begotten son, that if we believed on Him, we would not perish but receive the gift of eternal life.

Oh Yeah...

Like all great superheroes, Jesus won the battle – through His death, burial, and resurrection. And He is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Don't you just love happy endings?



Mini Update

Greetings Beloved,

Since our time at the convention in 2014, a lot has happened. We have been through a season of tremendous loss, but God is faithful. Currently, Shay and I are serving in education. I am teaching high school chemistry, and Shay is serving as the principal's clerk at a local school here in Dallas, Texas.

We became foster parents in February of 2015 and are excited to announce that we have been approved to adopt our son “Peanut”. Pray for us as we continue to minister to couples through marriage preparation courses as well as what ministry looks like on a fulltime basis.

We love you and miss you all. You have always been on our hearts and in our thoughts. We hope to make the 2016 Convention to see everyone and fellowship once again. May the Lord bless you and keep you is our prayer.

Wil and Shay Lane

Our Baby Has a Baby Jovan and Zvezdana Vlasic



We have heard from several grandparents, “You love your children, but you love even more your grandchildren.”

We would respectfully say, “Sure,” but were not completely convinced that is how it is. Then it happened. A grandchild entered our lives and the whole world has changed. Yes, you love your children and you will do anything for them, but your love for a grandchild is something special; it is amazing, wonderful, and fills you with unending gratefulness to God for that little bundle of you, and makes you smile by just thinking about the baby. You remember when your child was a little baby. Now your baby has a new baby. Our God is amazing—He knows how to give us the best possible gifts.

We spent a whole day and more than half a night in the hospital waiting room. The chairs were all right but not comfortable enough for such an extended time. Did we complain about the hardness of the chairs? Of course not. The sweet anticipation of something beautiful that was going to happen was going on and on through our minds, and we were happy. When we finally saw the baby, we completely forgot about the chairs. The joy of witnessing a new life was so intense and overwhelming that everything else was not important. It reminds me of our heavenly father and the joy that we all experience when somebody becomes a follower of Christ. That person is like a newborn baby. We are excited because there is a new life. Maybe we had to wait for somebody to make the decision. We do not like waiting; we want every-

thing NOW. Paul said: “*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.*” Is our timing always the same as God’s timing? No, it is not. We need to do our part in bringing people to Jesus Christ, but it is God’s work to give the growth. He will do it at the right time—His time. When you see the result of someone becoming a born-again person in Jesus Christ, you will forget the waiting in uncomfortable chairs.

We are all God’s children. He is our heavenly father, and our children are also God’s babies. He gave them to us as a beautiful gift and we have to make a decision about how to bring them up. We will do our best to provide all they need to grow up and be healthy. There is nothing wrong in giving our children what they need for their physical growth. Babies need food, they need shelter, clothing, And good education is important. We will try to make sure they go to the best schools. Some people even start a college fund for a new-born baby. There is nothing wrong with doing all that. If you are able to give them the best they can have while they are little, do it. But do not forget a very important part of their lives—eternity. The good life is nice, but all we have on the earth

➤ Continues on page 23



Ethan & Kristina, with baby Sofia Grace Peterson



“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, ...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”
Hebrews 12:1

Back in North America

Whew—we made it! After several action-packed and nerve-racking days and weeks, we finished up our 4th four-year term of ministry in the Czech Republic, and have now begun our one-year Home Ministry Assignment in North America. In the short time that we have been back, we’ve already begun to re-connect with friends, family, and churches. We hope we can see you, too!

English Camp “Together”

One of our last ministry opportunities, after we had packed up and moved out of the house that had been our home in Prague for the past four years, was to help kick



Teen program at English Camp

off our church’s Family English Camp. With over 150 participants of all ages, including a wonderful team of American, Dutch, and Czech volunteers, the camp was a huge blessing and a successful outreach. We heard later that four people put their faith in Christ during the week – two children, one teenager, and one adult. We don’t have any further information about them, but we know that our church family will seek to help them grow in their faith.

What is “REAP”?

After a few brief days with family in Ontario, we took part in TEAM’s “Re-entry, Encouragement and Preparation” conference, or REAP. This year over 250 participants attended, including missionaries returning from their areas of service, appointees ready to go to the nations, home office staff, and church partners. We were encouraged to have two couples from our sending churches with us for a simultaneous conference for church partners. TEAM also provided excellent programs for children and teens, so Luke, Noemi, Ben, and Elise had a great time with other MKs and their group leaders. Field trips to local attractions were a big hit.

A great cloud of witnesses

This year’s REAP coincided with the 125th anniversary of TEAM as a mission organization. Fredrik Franson was the first missionary sent out by Moody Church in Chicago. He led thousands of people to Christ, planted many new churches around the world, and established sixteen mission sending organizations, including “The Swedish Alliance Mission,” now known



Disciple-making roundtable at REAP

as TEAM. October 14, 1890, is known as the “birthday” of TEAM, when Franson launched a missionary training class in New York, which resulted in 35 missionaries sent to China in January 1891.

This year also marks 600 years since the death of John Hus on July 6th, 1415. John Hus preached at Bethlehem Chapel in Prague, where he called for church



John Hus

reform and a return to the authority of the Word of God. He was tried for heresy and sentenced to death by burning at the stake at the Council of Constance. His reformation teaching prepared the way for the Protestant Reformation, and 100 years after Hus's death, 90% of the Czech lands adhered to the Four Articles of Prague demanded by his followers in 1420:

- 1) freedom to preach the Word of God;
- 2) remembrance of communion with both bread and wine;
- 3) no secular power for the clergy; and
- 4) equal punishment for all under the law.

Running with endurance

Much of Mark's work over the past four years was to coach and mentor a new generation of church leaders. Although it is difficult for us to leave the ministry in Prague for a year, we are confident that the work will continue in the hands of competent and trained leaders and missionary co-workers in the five ministry locations of our church.

Daniel Šrámek Pastoral Intern South City Church		<i>Daniel is a full-time IT project manager who leads the local elders and preaches half the time.</i>
Petr Šedý Associate Pastor Skalka Church		<i>Petr is the newly-ordained pastor of the Skalka church and helps to lead the Ládvi church plant.</i>
Petr Viček Outreach worker Ládvi church plant		<i>Petr is a Gideon and evangelist who gives out Bibles at Ládvi and leads many of our outreach events.</i>
Daniel Turmunkh Elder and leader Mongolian church		<i>Daniel works full time at a sushi restaurant and leads the Mongolian fellowship and outreach in Prague.</i>
Tomáš Grulich Church Planter Network Praha church plant		<i>Tomáš is leading a new discipleship cell church plant in Prague's city center for the younger generation.</i>

The race set before us



Our seven "R's" of Home Ministry Assignment are to report, reconnect, raise, research, rally, rest and represent. Over the next year, we will be doing all seven and a whole lot more. From our "home base," 3216 Curry Avenue

in Windsor, the next few months will take us to places such as Guelph, Toronto, Arkona, Oshawa, Minneapolis, Hopkins, and New Hope, to name a few. Please let us know if you would like us to come your way, or if you would like to stop

by in Windsor for a visit. We have purchased a home, not just for us to live in this year, but also for our future home ministry assignments and a place for our grown children to live while they continue their post-secondary studies in Canada.

Summer in Minnesota



We are enjoying a few weeks with Gretchen's side of the family and our friends here in Minneapolis, as well as reporting at churches and small groups and with individual supporters. We are also gearing up for our fall ministry schedule, including preparing a video and other literature that we hope to be able to share with you soon. And before we know it, school will be starting for Luke at the University of Windsor, and for Noemi (Grade 12), Ben (Grade 8) and Elise (Grade 6), at Maranatha Christian School in Windsor.

Prayer Points:

PRAISE God for a fruitful four-year term of ministry, and please PRAY for a successful home ministry assignment for us over this next school year.

PRAISE God with us for TEAM's 125 years of remarkable ministry around the world. PRAY for the returning missionaries who were encouraged at REAP, and for those just leaving for ministry for the first time.

PRAISE God for the legacy and sacrifice of many Christian leaders from the past, and please PRAY for the leaders and congregations that we have been working with in Prague – Daniel at South City Church, Petr at Skalka, Petr at Ládvi, Daniel at the Mongolian church, and Tomáš at Network Praha, especially during our year-long absence.

Please PRAY that we may "set aside every weight and sin which clings so closely," and that we may "run with endurance the race that is set before us."

Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith,
Mark, Gretchen, Luke, Noemi, Ben, Elise

*Mark & Gretchen
 Luke Noemi Ben Elise*



The big news I have is that I am returning to West Africa this month. Over three months ago I was asked by SIM to consider filling in for a year in the West Africa Office. The Director, Dr. Bako, is going on a year's furlough so I will be acting director until he returns next September. There are a number of reasons not to consider this option. First of all,

I will be living in Abidjan, the capital of Côte d'Ivoire. You can see from the map below that Abidjan and Accra are close, but in Abidjan they speak French and I do not know French. I am grateful that all of my work will be in English, but all my other surroundings will be in French so please pray I can pick up some basic French as I begin this new role.



Newsflash:

For almost four months I have experienced right shoulder pain and on August 3rd, the doctor told me that I had a rotator cuff tear and needed surgery to repair it. This news was not anticipated but the Lord encouraged me with Isaiah 55:8 – “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD.” The surgery is not difficult but the recovery time is long – eight to twelve weeks.

In the beginning, one of the options was the possibility of doing this leadership job remotely from the States. But in the end, we decided it would be better to actually live in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, where the West Africa Office is located.

When it was discovered I needed surgery, it was decided I could still take over as director on September 1st by using emails, skype and other computer technologies, until I can travel to Abidjan. The plan is to have surgery on August 21st, do the rehab for several months, and arrive in Cote d'Ivoire sometime in November.



Sweet fellowship at the Czechoslovak Baptist Convention



Our time in Canada - Lake Louise and the Athabasca glacier on the Columbia Icefields

In many ways this move does not seem practical or sensible. It certainly is not convenient and it may even be a bit unreasonable, but I do not want to miss an opportunity to know and trust God more. As I walk through this open door of opportunity, I will continue to need your love, financial and prayer support. It is going to be a challenge but with God's help, through your prayers, together we can anticipate His working on our behalf.

Prayer Requests:

Pray with me that the Lord will enable me to help move the West Africa Office forward so that more West Africans will be able to obey the call of God to serve Him cross-culturally.

Pray I will be able to pick up enough French to live in the French speaking city of Abidjan. I will do all of my work in English, but getting around and shopping will be a challenge because it will all be in French.

Spending time with family and friends.



This is my 93 year old Aunt Mary, a faithful supporter



Our Baby Has a Baby... Continues from page 19

one day will be gone. Our children can have the best toys on the market, the most beautiful clothes, they can live in very beautiful homes—but if they do not know who God is, where will they be in eternity?

We do not have enough time to do all we need to do, and so we tend to forget our priorities. Parents, and also grandparents, do not forget that your primary job is to make sure that your children and grandchildren know the Lord. Who else will do it? The school system? The teachers' primary job is to teach our children math and language skills, art and science. Will the church do it? The church will help, but keep in mind that we spend in our church only a few hours every week. We have our children all day every day. Find the time and then take the time to talk to your children about God, pray with them, bring them to church whenever there is something going on there that will benefit them. If you are on fire for the Lord, it is quite likely that your children will

We do not have enough time to do all we need to do, and so we tend to forget our priorities. Parents, and also grandparents, do not forget that your primary job is to make sure that your children and grandchildren know the Lord.

do the same. Did you know that children follow our examples much more easily than listening to what we tell them? Make sure that God has the first place in your hearts and your homes. This is the biggest and most important gift you can give your children.

It is so wonderful that we have God in our lives and that we know Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. It is our wish and hope that all our children and grandchildren will be with us in eternity. Let us do what we can to help our babies to make the right decisions.

May the Lord bless our lives as we go on sharing His love with everybody we know, especially our children and grandchildren.

Ever grateful to God,

Grandpa and Grandma

"And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."

Mat.2:10

"Když tu hvězdu spatřili, zmocnila se jich nesmírná radost!"

Mat. 2; 10

"Ked' uzreli hviezdu, zaradovali sa veľkou radosťou."

Mat. 2; 10

