Glorious Hope
Slavná naděje

Vol. 42, N° 4, 2016

Ročník 42, číslo 4, 2016

In the beginning was the Word…
and the Word became flesh…
and we have seen his glory…
John 1:1,14

Na počátku bylo Slovo…
To Slovo se stalo tělem…
Spatřili jsme jeho slávu…
Jan 1;1,14

Na počiatku bolo Slovo…
To Slovo sa stalo telom…
a my sme videli jeho slávu…
Ján 1;1,14

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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 poslání 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, obecenství a učení, vážit si dědictví těch, ve Spojených státech a v Kanadě, kterým leží na srdci národy, které reprezentujeme.

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Editorial

Joy and Peace in Faith

Amazing technological advancements and opportunities are changing our way of life, especially where communication is concerned. Electronic connection occurs within seconds no matter the distance. Missionaries, families, and friends can be in touch constantly. Work meetings and shopping can be done virtually. The meeting of the Convention General Board this past October utilized these options. However many thousands of kilometres distant, I was present for this meeting. To hear Stan Mantle, our Convention's president, pray for me brought tears to my eyes, tears of gratitude. These are the things that strengthen us: prayers given with gratitude for one another. It creates an uninterrupted chain reaction. The pages of this issue of Glorious Hope inspire both prayer and thanksgiving.

The upcoming Christmas season, when we are more intensely aware of the first coming of God's son to Earth, strengthens our hope, too, that Christ will surely return again, at the right time. *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope….Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost."* (Romans 15:4,13)

This is why these notions shine above Christmastime: hope, love, joy, peace. Faith causes these notions to become realities, real feelings in the heart of a person that not only believes in God, but believes God. This faith renders a person peaceful even in the midst of confusion and unrest. And so let us follow the wise men's example in Bethlehem–*they bowed down and worshipped him*. (Matt. 2:11b)

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2017!

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

❑

Radost a pokoj ve víře

Díky úžasným technickým možnostem současnosti se mění i způsob života. Zvláště co se komunikace týče. Elektronické spojení proběhne během vteřiny na jakoukoliv vzdálenost. Misijní pracovníci, rodiny, přátelé mohou být v neustálém kontaktu. Pracovní schůzky, obchodní jednání mohou probíhat virtuálně. Při setkání konvenčního výboru koncem října bylo této možnosti využito. Ačkoliv tísíce kilometrů vzdálená, byla jsem přítomna. A slyšet modlit se Stana Mantla, prezidenta naší konvence, i za mne mi vehnalo slzy do očí. Slzy vděčnosti. To je to, co nás posiluje. Modlitby se vzdáváním díků. Jeden za druhého. To má neomezenou řetězovou posloupnost. Stránky tohoto čísla Slavné naděje inspirují jak k modlitbám, tak i k vděčnosti.

Blížící se Vánoce, kdy intenzívněji vnímáme první příchod Božího Syna na Zem, nás upevňují také v naději, že se Kristus v určitý čas zase vrátí. „Všechno, co bylo v minulosti zapsáno, bylo zapsáno pro naše poučení, abychom díky vytrvalosti a povzbuzení, které je v Písmu, měli naději. Kéž vás tedy Bůh naděje naplní veškerou radostí a pokojem ve víře, tak aby vaše naděje rostla mocí Ducha svatého stále víc a víc..." slova apoštola Pavla (Římanům 15; 4,13).

Proto nad Vánocemi září tyto pojmy: naděje, láska, radost, pokoj. Víra pak způsobuje proměnu těchto pojmů ve skutečnost. Skutečné cítění v srdci člověka, který nejenže věří v Boha, ale také věří Bohu. Tato víra totiž činí člověka klidným i uprostřed zmatku a neklidu. A proto následujme příkladu mudrců v Betlémě–*padli na kolena a klaněli se mu.* (Mat. 2;11b)

Požehnané Vánoce a radostný vstup do roku 2017!

Nataša Laurincová, šéfredaktorka

❑

From the President / Stránka prezidenta

"A voice of one calling in the desert, `Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" Mark 1:3

So the gospel of Mark references the ancient words of Isaiah in explanation of the ministry of John the Baptist heralding the coming of Christ.

"...After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie." Mark 1:7

The desert seems a strange place to launch a publicity campaign, and also an unlikely route for the Lord to come by. Similarly, John was no refined diplomat sent to make a dignified announcement of the soon expected arrival of an earthly king. He got the job done, though.

"make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God." Isa 40:3b

God was coming to the wilderness. The Lord was coming to the desert. Preparations were in order. Things needed to be done to get ready.

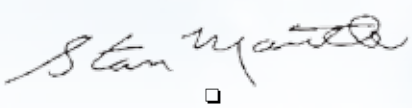
Advent 2016 is no exception.

At camp in my youth a daily ritual was cabin inspection. We prepared for it by straightening up and sweeping out our living quarters and by making an attractive pathway decorated with stones up to the entrance. What preparations are due in our lives and homes to welcome the Lord's coming among us?

Desert is an apt description: dryness, deadness, whirling winds of change. Where is the King in such times? He is coming! He is close! How sorely we need this coming, for only He can set things right. A familiar worship song exults: *"Out of Zion's hill salvation comes,"* and it is easy to imagine a great HURRAH! at the fulfillment of this, going up from God's people.

Our preparing the way for the Lord is our welcome. Happy Preparations!

Rev. Stan Mantle



❑

„Hlas volajícího na poušti: Připravte cestu pro Pána! Vyrovnejte jeho stezky!" Marek 1;3

O hlášení Kristova příchodu Janem Křtitelem v evangeliu Marka odkazuje na dávná slova Izaiáše.

„Po mně přichází někdo silnější než já! Nejsem hoden ani sehnout se a rozvázat mu řemínek sandálu." Marek 1;7

Pustina není obvyklé místo k veřejné kampani a už vůbec ne místo, kterým by procházel Pán Ježíš. Podobně ani Jan nebyl uhlazeným diplomatem, který byl poslán, aby důstojně ohlásil brzy očekávaného pozemského krále. Přesto se své úlohy zhostil.

"Vyrovnejte v pustině stezku Bohu našemu!" Iz.40;3b

Bůh přicházel do divočiny. Pán přicházel na pustinu. Konaly se přípravy. Určité věci bylo potřeba udělat.

Advent 2016 není vyjímkou.

Za mého mládí byla na táboře inspekce chatky denním rituálem. Připravovali jsme se na ni úklidem, vymetením našeho obydlí a vyzdobením přístupové cestičky až ke vchodu dekorativními kameny. Jak připravujeme své životy a domovy na příchod Pána mezi nás?

Pustina představuje suchost, lhostejnost, prudké nečekané změny.

Kde však je Král? Přichází! Je blízko! Jak velice potřebujeme tento příchod, protože jenom On může dát věci do pořádku. Známá píseň triumfuje: *"Ze Sionu přichází spasení."*, a při naplnění toho si snadno představíme veliké Hurá!, které zazní z řad Božího lidu.

Naše příprava spočívá v našem uvítání Pána. Hodně štěstí při přípravách!

Rev. Stan Mantle

přeložila *Natasha Laurincová*

❑

From the Executive Secretary

Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

"On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh."

Matthew 2:2,11

By the time you receive this issue of *Glorious Hope*, Thanksgiving weekend will be behind us and our attention will fully turn to the next big date on the calendar, December 25th. As we approach the most beautiful part of the year, may we make a point to seek *"the one who has been born king of the Jews"*. It is very easy to lose focus and get caught up in preparations and gift buying. As soon as the wise men saw the star, they made a point of seeking the Messiah, and started following it. To find His presence requires seeking, but the Lord makes it easy to find Him. There is always a "star" pointing in His direction. Once we find him and enter His presence, may we bow down and worship Him, just as the wise men did. It is my prayer that you and your family seek, find and dwell in His presence this Christmas season.

108th Czechoslovak Baptist Convention
July 6–9, 2017
Allegheny College, Meadville, PA

The General Board met on October 29, 2016, at Grace Baptist Church, Windsor, Ontario, and has chosen the following theme for the 108th Annual Convention:

The Light of the World (John 8:12)

The Light of God's Word (II Peter 1:19–21)
"And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place…" II Peter 1:19

The Light in the Face of Christ (II Corinthians 4:4–6)
"For God, who said, `Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ." II Cor. 4:6

The Armor of Light (Romans 13:12–14)
"The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light." Romans 13:12

The Light of God's People (Matthew 5:14–16)
"… let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16

We are very privileged to have a visit of the presidents of both Czech and Slovak Baptist Unions within the span of two years. Rev. Milan Kern and his wife Iva blessed us richly at the past convention. In July 2017, we are looking forward to the visit of Rev. Darko Kralik and his wife Zuska. Rev. Kralik has been the serving president of the Slovak Baptist Union since 2014.

Visit our newly redesigned website **www.czskbc.org** for updates and our tentative program. Subscribe to our quarterly Newsletter and receive the updates and PDF versions of *Glorious Hope* before printed copy is mailed.

Mark your calendars and save the date of the 108th Czechoslovak Baptist Convention: July 6–9, 2017, Allegheny College, Meadville, PA.

In His service
Darko Siracki
Executive Secretary
darkosiracki@czskbc.org
www.czskbc.org

❑

The 108th Czechoslovak Baptist Convention
July 6–9, 2017
Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania

Visit our new convention website
czskbc.org

In Meadville Again

Milan and Iva Kern

When we first attended, in 2012, the Czechoslovak Baptist Convention of USA and Canada, we thought it was for the first and the last time. But as the saying goes, "never say never!" It was very pleasant to spend time with familiar brothers and sisters, especially brothers Stan Mantle and Darko Siracki, with whom we also met briefly in Prague and Brno. Likewise we regret we couldn't meet with some (Dvoraks, Novaks, Veseli and others).

Every visit made in love is pleasant and with believers this applies twofold. It's not only about the personal visit, but about a shared experience of spiritual fellowship, whose centre is Christ. And this we truly experienced to the fullest degree during every sermon, meeting and conversation.

We greatly value the continuing interest of our fellow countrymen–brothers and sisters–in the events happening in the Czech and Slovak Republics. We very much appreciate every effort of practical help. Personally, I was able to share some information about Baptists in the Czech Republic. I also served by providing some Biblical exposition during Bible study, where considering that most people present were Slovak, I preached in the Slovak language. Although I've spent most of my life in the Czech Republic, I haven't yet forgotten how to speak Slovak. Similarly, my wife was able to address the sisters during their meeting, share some of her own testimony and bring the atmosphere of the sisters of the Czechoslovak Conference closer together.

We were very moved by the remembrance of deceased members of the convention. A name read aloud, the gong sounded, a pause; a name read, the gong sounded, a pause; . . . For us they were largely unfamiliar names; hidden behind those names are not only many memories, but hope for a future reunion in heaven.

Another remarkable thing for us is the reality of the Czechoslovak mentality within the context of the convention. Not Czech and Slovak, nor Czech-Slovak, but Czechoslovak. In it we felt the fragrance of the old brotherhood of Czechs and Slovaks, which

☞ Continues on page 17

Opět v Meadville

Milan a Iva Kernovi

Když jsme se v r. 2012 zúčastnili poprvé setkání Československé baptistické konvence USA a Kanady, domnívali jsme se, že je to poprvé a naposled. Ale říká se: „Nikdy neříkej nikdy!" Pro nás to bylo velmi milé setkání již se známými bratry a sestrami, zvláště s bratrem Stanem Mantlem a Darkem Sirackim, se kterými jsme se jen krátce také setkali v Praze a v Brně. Bylo nám však líto, že jsme se s některými nesetkali (Dvořákovi, Novákovi, Veselí a jiní).

Každé setkání konané v lásce je milé a u věřících to platí dvojnásob. Vždyť nejde jen o lidské setkání, ale jde o společné prožívání duchovního společenství, v němž je středem Kristus. A to jsme skutečně v plné míře prožívali na každém společném shromáždění, setkání a rozhovoru.

Velmi oceňujeme stálý zájem našich krajanů – bratří a sester – o dění v Česku a na Slovensku. Velmi si vážíme každé konkrétní praktické pomoci. Osobně jsem mohl sdílet aktuální informace o baptistech v Česku. Posloužil jsem také výkladem Bible na biblické hodině, kde jsem s ohledem na většinu přítomných Slováků, kázal slovensky. I když většinu života jsem prožil v Česku, slovensky jsem ještě nezapomněl. Rovněž manželka mohla oslovit sestry při jejich setkání, podělit se o osobní svědectví a také trochu přiblížit atmosféru ze sesterských česko-slovenských konferencí.

Velmi na nás zapůsobila vzpomínka na zemřelé členy konvence. Přečtené jméno, úder gongu, pauza; přečtené jméno, úder gongu, pauza;… Pro nás to byla většinou neznámá jména, ale kolik se za nimi skrývalo nejen vzpomínek, ale také naděje na budoucí setkání se v nebi.

Pozoruhodná pro nás je i skutečnost československého myšlení v rámci konvence. Ne české a slovenské, ani česko-slovenské, ale československé. Cítili jsme v tom závan sta-

☞ Pokračuje na straně 17

God Will Always Provide!

Amy Price

When we trust in God, He is always faithful. Our family experienced God's provision this past summer. As some of you may know, my husband Allen lost his job with Canadian Baptist Ministries in March when the new executive director eliminated a dozen positions, saving the organization $750,000 in salaries. Allen had been actively searching for a job every day since but no doors opened.

In late June, Allen's father called and said "Mom's cousin gave me this number to call and talk to Steve about a job opportunity." So, he called. Allen did not know it at the time, but he had called the private cell phone of the president of Kingswood University in Sussex, New Brunswick, on a Saturday afternoon. After speaking with Dr. Stephen Lennox for about 20 minutes Allen learned that they were looking for a vice president for development. Allen sent along his resume and Dr. Lennox forwarded the job summary. After a phone interview and a Skype interview, Allen let them know we were heading to New Brunswick on vacation. Two days of interviews were set for when we were there – one with each of the VPs plus a couple of other people he would be working with. Then in mid-August Allen got the call, and they offered him the position! Just as money was running out.

Kingswood University, formerly Bethany Bible College, exists to serve Jesus Christ by strengthening the local and global church through developing Christ-like servant leaders in a community that creatively combines academic excellence and practical ministry experience with intentional spiritual development. Kingswood graduates are serving around the globe in various ministry capacities such as church planters, pastors, worship leaders, missionaries, and whatever else God has in store. You can read more about Kingswood by visiting their website *www.kingswood.edu* You can also make a donation on their website if you'd like to help Allen celebrate!

God had a plan for us, and this included a move to a new province! Allen packed up and moved two weeks later while I put in my notice at work and followed a week after that. Allen flew home Labour Day weekend, we loaded up our van and a U-Haul and drove out to Sussex, New Brunswick! We had lots of help as our church family sent a team of men the day before Allen got home, and they loaded the truck for us. Thank you, King's Community Church in Oakville!

We are currently renting a townhouse on campus until our house sells in Ontario, and then we will look for a home here. It has been a great blessing to be on campus and meet the wonderful students who are studying to go into ministry. They all have a heart to serve the Lord. We experienced their generosity first hand when they came and helped us move in and when they watch our kids when we attend various events for the University.

This also was an answer to our heart prayer. We have talked about moving to New Brunswick since we got married and always said we would need to do it before our children start school so that they don't have to give up school mates, etc. Well, as it turned out, Benjamin started JK this year! God's timing even matched ours!

You never know where God will lead you, but we must always trust in the Lord and know that He has a plan for us, wherever He may lead you! May God work in all our lives and may we lean on Him in times of trials and tribulations. ❑

When Your Life Turns Upside Down

Based on a true life story

Part Three – Clutching at straws

5 – Lydie's Story

When Pavel was still doing his military service, a couple called the Rojkos came to visit us from Slovakia. They belonged to a church which put a strong emphasis on living a pure life. These friends explained to me that whenever anyone is ill, they always encourage the person to search their conscience and to ask themselves if they might have committed a personal sin, maybe so long ago that they had forgotten about it.

We prayed together and read some different verses from the Bible which speak about the connection between illness and sin. Then they led me into a general confession of everything in my life which might be in contradiction to what the Bible says. I don't know how we got onto the subject of the healer I had seen, but Brother Rojko started to look serious.

He opened up the Old Testament and explained to me that rather than using the gifts of the Holy Spirit, psychics use the power of their own souls, which they develop and train and then transmit to patients. Sometimes they are able to help people, but it is never permanent and the consequences are usually dire. The supernatural working of the human soul is in direct conflict with the work of God's spirit. It is magic that can border on witchcraft and in the Old Testament God forbade the Israelites from developing and using these intense psychic powers. In the Old Testament it was even punishable by the death penalty.

Again I confessed my sin to God in having met this man, and I asked for his cleansing through the blood of Jesus and for forgiveness. And if we confess our sins, God is so faithful and just that he forgives our sins and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. The Rojkos prayed with me and asked God to heal me.

Some time after this visit, when I was back in hospital again, one of the senior consultants met Pavel and me in the corridor. I think it was just after Pavel had finished his military service, but I'm not exactly sure. The doctor informed us that from a medical point of view there was nothing else that could be done for me. Maybe they could try some more radiation, but he said that with a shrug of his shoulders. I felt really low. After Pavel had left, I went back into my ward room, where I found myself on my own. I sat down on my bed and picked up my Bible. "Lord Jesus, is there any hope for me, any help? Please speak to me through your word." I opened the Bible in the Old Testament at the book of Jeremiah. I started to read Chapter 17, and the verse seemed to come to life and jump out at me:

This is what the LORD says:

"Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the LORD. That person will be like a bush in the wastelands; they will not see prosperity when it comes. They will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives. But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him.

They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought

and never fails to bear fruit." (Jeremiah 17:5-8)

I looked at the words with surprise. Wasn't I being like that person – putting my hope in people? In doctors, in my husband, in other Christians, in various pieces of advice and even in an imposter! Wasn't I being like the shrub in the desert?

Again and again I read the scriptures which compared God's blessing to a tree planted by flowing water, whose leaves are green. Even in drought it is not worried about anything and continues to bear fruit.

I might be living in a year of drought, but if I started to rely on Jesus and not on people, I would bear fruit, as it said in God's word.

For some reason in my mind I suddenly saw Jesus praying in Gethsemane. His life must have seemed like a wasteland and a failure, but Jesus prayed, *"Father, not my will, but yours be done."* (Matthew 26:39) I fell to my knees. I didn't think about the fact that anyone could come into the ward room at any time. I knelt down by the high hospital bed with my Bible open in front of me and gave my life to the Lord Jesus again. "Lord Jesus, not my will, but yours be done. I don't want to rely on anyone else but you. Please help me."

It was really strange – my heart was filled with a feeling of joy. Amazing, peaceful, but literally overflowing joy. I had never experienced that kind of joy before. Not when I was an attractive girl, not as a beautiful bride, not even as a mother holding my sweet

daughter. All the joy I had experienced up till then was nothing compared to the powerful and indescribable joy which was flowing through not only my mind but the whole of my being. "Yes, Lord Jesus. Not my will, but yours be done. I agree with everything that you have prepared for me." I think it must have been a glimmer of the joy which we will experience in heaven.

That evening my soul was healed. My body was still sick, but my soul started to experience something completely new: a new assurance that God not only knew what I was going through, but that he had a plan for my life. Some people might think I was just persuading myself, but it really wasn't anything to do with my mood at that time. It wasn't some kind of spiritual brainwashing or religious ecstasy. It was a permanent state, which I have been experiencing continuously since that day.

The first confirmation of my decision was a small event after the evening Bible study, when I was back home again. As a church we supported the secret transportation of Bibles written in the Cyrillic script to Ukraine. In the countries of the Soviet Union there was a real lack of Bibles. The Bibles were printed abroad, and the Brno congregation helped to smuggle them in. That Thursday a collection was taken for that purpose. I had my last fifty crowns in my purse. Pavel only had a small allowance as a soldier and I was receiving social benefits of three hundred and eighty crowns per month. I wasn't sure if we had enough money at home to buy food for the rest of the month. But then I closed my eyes and put the fifty crowns into the basket.

About an hour later I was going up the stairs to our flat when I noticed something white lying under the door. I bent down to pick it up. It was an envelope with 1500 crowns in it and on a small piece of paper was a note saying: *Please accept this as a gift from the Lord.*

I still don't know who put the envelope there. I was blown away. 1500 crowns was a lot of money for us then. It was a confirmation for me that God knew about my situation and that he would never leave me.

It might seem hard to believe, but I felt the presence of Jesus most intensively when I was at the Institute of Oncology at the hospital. The peace of Jesus was so intense that other people couldn't help noticing it. Waiting to see a doctor and having the subsequent medical treatments took a long time. There were always a lot of us in the waiting room and the atmosphere was full of fear, sadness and despair. But complete strangers often came up to me and asked, "How can you be so calm? I keep throwing up and I can hardly see what's going on around me but you are just sitting here and smiling. Where do you get your strength from? Can you give me some? I really need it.

"Strength? You won't get anything from me – I don't have any of my own strength at all. Jesus Christ is the source of my strength. He strengthens me and gives me peace. Don't ask me for strength – ask him. He died for you on the cross and we are healed through his wounds."

He not only gave me strength, but he gave me the words to say as well. Wherever I went, in various different wards, I had opportunities to tell people that we should rely on Him.

One day my doctor, Dr. Ptáčkova, called me into her surgery. She was a very experienced gynaecologist, with years of experience working in oncology. I went to see her every three months for a check-up. This time when I went into her office I could see that something was wrong. She seemed to be troubled about something, to be full of anxiety.

I looked at her, waiting to see what she would say, and she spoke quietly, "Mrs Smilkova, I'm afraid it's not good news." Her voice was shaking, which shouldn't have happened to her as a professional.

"Dr. Ptáčkova, please don't worry about me. I will be here for as long as God wants me here. When He calls me, I will go to a better place. Believe me, it will be better."

She was astonished.

We all need strength from Jesus – ill people, healthy, successful people and even doctors who treat ill people. We all need to know him in our hearts–Jesus, who said that he is the resurrection and the life, that whoever believes in him will not perish, but have everlasting life.

(John 11:25-26)

Illness loses its power over us as soon as we stop being afraid of death. And we can only stop being afraid of death when we believe that Jesus conquered death and that we are on the victor's side. Since that autumn when Pavel finished his military service, I was clear about one thing. I no longer wanted to look for help from people I knew, from pulling strings or from any kind of underhand healing. I just wanted to do God's will.

Learning to live with the diagnosis

1- Pavel's story

I finished my military service in the autumn of 1980. After graduating from university I had sent job applications to all the health facilities in Brno and the surrounding area. But in Brno I couldn't manage to get a job at all, even though my classmates, who had better political backgrounds than me, all managed to find something.

But I did get one positive response to all my applications. It was for a job in the Regional Hospital in Vyškov in the Ear, Nose and Throat department, which was the area of medicine I was interested in. I knew that it would be rather demanding to travel to Vyškov

every day, but I didn't consider turning it down for a minute.

On my first day, the director of the hospital shook my hand and sat me down in an armchair opposite his desk. He proceeded to ask me in an official tone, "Comrade, can you explain to me how your religious beliefs can stand up to your natural science education, modern scientific knowledge and the theory of evolution?"

"I don't have a problem with it," I answered, looking at him seriously through my glasses. But I didn't manage to look serious for very long before the sides of my mouth turned up into a smile, "but I can tell you one thing, Comrade Director, my faith has prepared me really well for serving my patients with care."

The director looked at me with some surprise, and after a short pause he added, "OK, we'll see how it goes. But remember one thing – I don't want any kind of religious propaganda here in the workplace. We all know who your father-in-law is. Do you understand?"

"Yes, of course."

He wrote in my career evaluation that I wasn't suitable for the function of head of department or for any other professional promotion. Thanks to that no-one offered me a place in the Communist Party, for which I have always been grateful.

I had started the job immediately after graduating. I spent the summer holidays in my new workplace and was enlisted in military service at the start of September. Now, after finishing the military service I went back to Vyškov and to our small flat in Brno. I was determined to do everything I could to make Lydie and our daughter feel good.

Lydie approached me one day with a question:

"Pavel, during the time when you were away, I was teaching English to three people: Míša Hirta, who used to go to our young people's group, Mrs. Švejdova and a colleague of hers. Do you think I should keep going with it?" Lydie had taught all three of her students when she was still teaching at the District Cultural and Educational Centre. They all had individual lessons with her, and when she had left for her maternity leave, they had started to come to our flat, while Auntie Šimánková looked after Dagmar. Mrs. Švejdová worked at the Department of Pathological Anatomy at St. Anne's hospital and her husband was Professor Jaroslav Švejda, then head of the Institute of Pathology – an excellent specialist and diagnostician from Brno, recognized all over Europe. He was one of the few professors who actually taught, and as medical students we really loved his lectures. Later, he was appointed head professor of the Research and Experimental Oncology Institute in Brno – which is now called the Masaryk Memorial Cancer Institute. The new hall is named after him.

Mrs. Švejdová had been supporting Lydie since the beginning of her illness and in fact, she had been the one who organised the first appointment at the Žluty Kopec Hospital, when no-one knew what type of illness she had. And it was her husband who had been the one to give the precise diagnosis. It is remarkable that in those days with the lack of technical resources he was able to give such an accurate diagnosis.

We decided that Lydie would continue to teach her students every week and I was glad, because Lydie really needed the stimulation that being in contact with people gave her.

"I enjoy doing it. When I teach, I forget about all my worries. During the lessons I feel completely healthy," she told me, her eyes shining.

"I am so glad. Do whatever helps you to feel better," was my reply.

As a newly qualified doctor, I had to do everything I was told to do at my workplace, so I wasn't able to do much for Lydie. I was glad that people were looking after her, although her health was still not improving.

2 – Lydie's mum tells her story

Coping with the knowledge that our youngest daughter was suffering from an incurable disease was not easy, as every mother can imagine. I would have preferred to have the disease myself rather than having to look at her suffering without being able to relieve it in any way.

My husband's work in the church was quite demanding. We had a varied life, and we had to spend a lot of time away from home. My husband had been the pastor of the Brno church for 25 years. Apart from the work in the church, he was also the president of the Czech Baptist Elders from 1969 to 1981, and then from 1981 to 1991 he was elected as the president of the Baptist Elders in then Czechoslovakia. Later on he was also the president of the Ecumenical Council of Churches. Baptists have a congregational structure, which means that every church is independent. But the individual churches are linked together as a national unit and as groups within continents – in our case the European Baptist Federation and also the Baptist World Alliance. Probably the biggest number of Baptist churches is in the USA, which was one of the reasons for the persecution of Baptist pastors in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s.

As you can imagine, my husband's position entailed having a lot of responsibilities. In the 1980s the pressure of normalisation was easing off and religious freedom was officially declared in Czechoslovakia. It would have been therefore rather unthinkable not to allow the president of the Baptist churches to participate in European and worldwide church conferences. European conferences happened every year, and the Baptist General Conference for all countries happened once every five years. Out

of all the Communist bloc countries, only the Bulgarian government didn't allow the presidents of the Baptists to travel abroad. And I suppose our government didn't want to be compared to Bulgaria.

From the start the Czech Baptists in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia belonged to the European Baptist Federation and to the Baptist World Alliance. I was the president of the Baptist Women's Association in the Czech Republic and there was a tradition that just before the Baptist General Conference there was a congress for the Baptist Women's Department. It always happened in the same place as the Conference, but just a few days earlier, which proved to be quite an advantage. The close fellowship of Christian women, with the warm atmosphere and high quality work, was always a good way to focus on and pray for the larger meeting, the General Conference. When this happened, as I was the president of the Women's Association, I always received an invitation along with my husband.

It might be worth pointing out how difficult it was in those days to get permission to travel to the West. Whenever anyone wanted to travel to a western country (including Yugoslavia) they had to get not only a visa but also a so-called exit permit – permission to travel – which had to be applied for each time. Without this permission, a passport was useless. To be able to get this permission, we had to include a letter of invitation, in which the person inviting us had to undertake to pay for the full cost of our stay abroad. In this way we were not allowed to change our money for hard currency. The decision to issue exit permits was made by local Communist Party members, and it sometimes took half a year to process.

Travelling out of the country was very complicated. We could only travel if we were invited and without our own money. Our travels around Europe were usually paid for by our son, who had emigrated in 1968 and was therefore not allowed back to our country, but he at least tried to help us in this way. When we went overseas, Christian people who were interested in the Czechoslovak church invited us and paid for us. It was a sacrifice they made in love for us. And we were totally dependent on their kindness.

The trip to the Baptist General Conference in Toronto in 1980 was particularly hard for me. Lydie was going through some awful chemo and radiation therapy, and she was changing in front of our eyes. She needed me. But I had to go – we were serving the Lord.

We were welcomed warmly to Toronto. Toronto is a city full of Czechoslovak immigrants who moved there either after 1945 or around 1968-69 before the borders closed completely. They knew a lot about Czechoslovakia and the Toronto ladies welcomed us with a big cake. They tried to write something in Czech to make us feel at home. It was supposed to say Welcome to the World Baptist Congress, but as the confectioner had probably not used Czech for a long time, she made a mistake and wrote Welcome to the Worldly Baptist Congress. My husband found that very funny and when we got back home, he loved to tell that story in all our churches.

I didn't enjoy the conference much, though. My thoughts were back home with Lydie. My husband was invited to tour around some different churches in Canada, but I stayed in Toronto and got ready to go back home again. I didn't feel well and kept myself to myself. I went for walks in the park so I could pray on my own, as that was the only thing that gave me peace and helped me to feel better.

But the ladies in the church noticed that something wasn't quite right and they invited me to some smaller meetings. At one of these meetings I couldn't hold it in any longer and I told them everything. As often happens, we try to be brave in front of our husbands and family, but with complete strangers we can relax and open up.

I told them the whole story, not only that my daughter was ill, and not only that I had no idea how long she would live and how scared I was for her. I also admitted a weakness that I wouldn't have told anyone back at home:

"I know it's silly, and that I shouldn't think like this, but I just can't imagine how I will react when I see my daughter, who always had lovely long hair, completely bald. I don't know how I'll manage it," I whispered.

For a while there was complete silence. Some of the women wiped their eyes. I could really feel that these mothers from a foreign country and a completely different culture understood me and were feeling my pain.

When I calmed down a bit, they started to pray with me. Before I left, one of them brought me two wigs which she gave me as a present.

I didn't enjoy the journey home much. When I got back to Brno, I saw Lydie waiting for me on the railway station platform, wearing a headscarf. At that time, even old people didn't wear headscarves any more, and it wrenched my heart. But the kindness of those ladies in Toronto had travelled with me in my suitcase, and at home I opened it up and got out the two wigs. Lydie put them on straight away and started trying them out in different positions, and we ended up laughing together.

In the autumn of 1980, when Pavel had already finished his military service but Lydie's health wasn't getting any better, my husband and I were coming back from a short trip abroad and we had stopped over in Prague for the Czechoslovak Baptist Confer-

☞ Continues on page 16

Když se život obrátí na ruby

Skutečný životní příběh

Část třetí – Tonoucí se stébla chytá

5 – Vypráví Lydie

Ještě dřív, než se Pavel vrátil z vojny, k nám přijeli manželé Rojkovi ze Slovenska. Patří do společenství křesťanů, které velmi dbá na čistotu života. Přátelé mi vyprávěli, že při každém onemocnění nejprve hluboce zpytují svědomí, jestli důvodem není nějaký osobní, třeba i dávno zapomenutý hřích.

Modlili jsme se, četli jsme různá místa z Bible, která mluví o souvislosti nemoci a hříchu, a pak mě vedli ke generálnímu, dalo by se říci životnímu vyznání všeho, co by v mém životě mohlo být v rozporu s Biblí. Nevím už, jak došla řeč také na onoho léčitele, ale bratr Rojko zvážněl. Otevřel Písmo ve Starém zákoně a vysvětlil mi, že senzibilové nepoužívají dary Ducha svatého, ale naopak sílu své vlastní lidské duše, kterou rozvíjejí, trénují a pak ji přenášejí na pacienty. Někomu to na čas i pomůže, ale nikdy to není natrvalo a důsledky bývají hrozivé. Nadpřirozené působení lidské duše je v přímém rozporu s působením Božího Ducha. Je to magie, která může hraničit až s čarodějnictvím, a Pán Bůh už ve Starém zákoně zakázal Izraelcům tyto intenzivní duševní síly rozvíjet a používat. Ve Starém zákoně za to byl dokonce trest smrti.

Znovu jsem tedy setkání s tímto člověkem vyznala jako hřích a prosila jsem za očištění Kristovou krví a odpuštění. Protože jestliže doznáváme své hříchy, Bůh je tak věrný a spravedlivý, že nám hříchy odpouští a očišťuje nás od každé nepravosti. Rojkovi se modlili se mnou a prosili za mé uzdravení.

Někdy po této návštěvě, při mém dalším pobytu v nemocnici, nás s Pavlem na nemocniční chodbě potkal pan primář. Mám dojem, že to bylo těsně poté, co se Pavel vrátil z vojny domů, ale to už nevím přesně. Pan primář nám dal najevo, že z lékařského hlediska byla vyzkoušena všechna dostupná léčba. Snad další ozařování, ale to už nadhodil jen tak s pokrčením ramen. Bylo mi úzko. Když jsem se s Pavlem rozloučila, vrátila jsem se na pokoj, který byl v tu chvíli prázdný. Posadila jsem se na svou postel a sáhla po Bibli. „Pane Ježíši, je pro mne ještě nějaká naděje, je někde nějaká pomoc? Promluv ke mně, prosím, promluv ke mně skrze své slovo.“ Otevřela jsem Bibli ve Starém zákoně v knize proroka Jeremiáše. Začala jsem číst 17. kapitolu, a tu jakoby verše na papíře mé Bible doslova ožily a mluvily:

„Toto praví Hospodin: Proklet buď muž, který doufá v člověka a opírá se o pouhé tělo a srdcem se odvrací od Hospodina. Bude jako jalovec v pustině, který neokusí přicházející dobro. Bude přebývat ve vyprahlém kraji, v poušti, v zemi solných plání, kde nelze bydlet.

Požehnán buď muž, který doufá v Hospodina, který důvěřuje Hospodinu. Bude jako strom zasazený u vody; své kořeny zapustil u vodního toku, nezakusí přicházející žár. Jeho listí je zelené, v roce sucha se ničeho neobává, nepřestává nést plody.“

Překvapeně jsem na ta slova hleděla. Nejsem já ten člověk, ta žena, která doufá v lidi? V lékaře, v manžela, v bratry a sestry, v různé lidské rady, a dokonce i v šarlatána? Nejsem snad já takový jalovec v pustině?

Znovu a znovu jsem si četla verše, které připodobňovaly Boží požehnání ke stromu zasazenému u tekoucí vody. Jeho listí je zelené. Ani v roce sucha se ničeho neobává a nepřestává nést plody.

Ano, možná žiji v roce sucha, ale začnu-li konečně spoléhat na Pána Ježíše a ne na lidi, ponesu ovoce, protože Boží slovo to říká.

Nevím ani, proč jsem najednou vnitřním zrakem uviděla Pána Ježíše modlícího se v Getsemanské zahradě. I jeho život musel v té chvíli vypadat jako totální prohra, pustina, naprosté fiasko, ale Pán Ježíš se modlil: *„Otče, ne má, ale Tvoje vůle ať se stane.“*

Vrhla jsem se na kolena. Nepřemýšlela jsem o tom, že do pokoje může kdokoliv vstoupit. Klečela jsem u vysoké nemocniční postele, před sebou rozevřenou Bibli, a znovu jsem celý svůj život odevzdávala Pánu Ježíši.

„Ne má, ale Tvoje vůle ať se stane, Pane Ježíši! Nechci už spoléhat na nikoho jiného než na Tebe. Opravdu už jen na Tebe. Pomáhej mi, prosím, abych to dokázala.“

A bylo to zvláštní. Mé srdce zaplavila radost. Úžasná, pokojná, ale zároveň doslova překypující radost. Taková radost, jakou jsem do té doby nikdy nezažila. Ani jako vyhledávaná, hezká dívka, ani jako krásná a zamilovaná nevěsta, dokonce ani jako maminka držící v náručí vytoužené miminko. Všechny ty radosti, které jsem dosud znala, byly maličké v porovnání s mocnou a nepopsatelnou radostí, která prostupovala nejen mou mysl, ale i srdce a všechno, co ve mně bylo. „Ano, Pane Ježíši, ne má,

ale Tvoje vůle ať se stane. Souhlasím, souhlasím se vším, co máš pro mě připravené."

Byl to zřejmě záblesk radosti, která nás čeká v nebi.

Ten večer byla uzdravena moje duše. Tělo bylo stále ještě nemocné, ale duše začínala prožívat něco úplně nového. Dosud nepoznanou jistotu, že Pán Bůh o mně nejen ví, ale má i s mým životem jasný plán. Někdo může říci, že jsem si něco vsugerovala, ale nebylo tomu tak. Nešlo o chvilkovou náladu, o jakési duchovní pominutí smyslů v náboženské extázi. Byl to trvalý stav, který prožívám dodnes.

Prvním potvrzením mého rozhodnutí byla malá epizoda po večerní biblické hodině, když už jsem zase byla doma. Jako sbor jsme finančně podporovali tajné převážení Biblí psaných azbukou na Ukrajinu. V zemích Sovětského svazu byla o Bible veliká nouze. Bible se tiskly v zahraničí, ale brněnské protestantské církve se podílely na jejich pašování. Ten čtvrtek určili bratři sbírku právě na tento účel. Měla jsem v peněžence poslední padesátikorunu. Pavel jako voják měl jen kapesné a já jsem dostávala sociální příspěvek tři sta osmdesát korun měsíčně. Váhala jsem. Mám doma dost jídla, abychom vydrželi do další výplaty? Ale pak jsem zavřela oči a padesátikorunu jsem hodila do košíčku.

Asi za hodinu jsem vyšla po schodech k našemu bytu a už zdálky jsem si všimla něčeho bílého, co leželo mezi prahem a dveřmi. Sehnula jsem se k zemi.

Byla to dopisní obálka, v ní patnáct set korun a na ústřižku papíru na stroji napsáno: Toto přijměte jako dar od našeho Pána.

Dodnes nevím, kdo tam obálku dal. Zatajil se mi dech. Patnáct stovek pro nás představovalo spoustu peněz. Ano, Pán Bůh o mně ví všechno — a On mě opravdu neopustí.

Možná se to bude zdát zvláštní, ale nejsilněji jsem vnímala přítomnost Pána Ježíše, když jsem přicházela do onkologického ústavu na Žlutý kopec. Ježíšův klid mě prostupoval tak intenzivně, že to asi i druzí lidé vnímali a viděli. Čekání na vyšetření i následné léčebné procedury se vleklo. Sedělo nás v čekárně vždycky několik a atmosféra byla nabitá strachem, smutkem, ba přímo zoufalstvím. Naprosto cizí ženy, pacientky, za mnou přicházely a říkaly:

„Jak je možné, že jste tak klidná? Já zvracím, sotva vidím tu kopuli betatronu venku, a vy si tu tak klidně sedíte a usmíváte se. Co to máte za sílu? Předejte mi ji. Já ji z vás musím načerpat."

„Sílu? Ze mě nic nenačerpáte. Nemám žádnou vlastní sílu. To Pán Ježíš je zdrojem mé síly. Posiluje mě a dává mi pokoj. O sílu nemůžete prosit mě, o sílu musíte prosit Pána Ježíše. On za nás zemřel na kříži a jeho ranami jsme uzdraveni."

Dával mi nejen sílu, dával mi i slova. Kam jsem se dostala, na kterékoliv oddělení, všude jsem měla příležitost někomu říci, že je to On — Pán Ježíš — na koho máme spoléhat.

Jednou mě zavolali do ordinace mé ošetřující lékařky, paní doktorky Ptáčkové. Byla to velmi zkušená gynekoložka, léta pracující na onkologii. Chodila jsem k ní na kontrolu každé tři měsíce. Sotva jsem vešla tentokrát, viděla jsem, že lékařka není ve formě. Skoro jakoby se trápila, jakoby ji přemohla nějaká úzkost.

Zvědavě jsem se na ni podívala a ona řekla tiše:

„Paní Smilková, není to dobré," a zadrhl se jí hlas, což by se profesionálce stát nemělo.

„Ale paní doktorko, netrapte se kvůli mně. Dokud mě tu bude Pán Bůh chtít mít, tak tu budu. No, a až mě odvolá, půjdu na lepší. Věřte mi. Na lepší."

„Paní Smilková..." odtušila lékařka s úžasem.

Ano, nejenom nemocní pacienti, ale i zdraví, úspěšní lidé, dokonce i lékaři léčící nemocné, všichni potřebujeme mít sílu od Pána Ježíše. Všichni ho potřebujeme znát ve svém srdci. Ježíše, který řekl, že je vzkříšení a život a že každý, kdo v něho věří, i kdyby zemřel, bude žít. Nemoc nad námi ztratí svou moc, jakmile se přestaneme bát smrti. A smrti se můžeme přestat bát jen tehdy, když uvěříme, že Pán Ježíš nad smrtí zvítězil a my stojíme na straně jeho vítězství.

Od toho podzimu, kdy se vrátil Pavel z vojny, jsem měla v jedné věci jasno. Už nechci hledat známosti, protekce ani všelijaká pokoutní uzdravení. Už chci jen pinit Boží vůli.

Učíme se žít s diagnózou

1- Vypráví Pavel

Z vojny jsem se vrátil na podzim v roce 1980. Ještě předtím, hned po ukončení vysoké školy, jsem obeslal všechna zdravotnická zařízení v Brně a v okolí s žádosti o místo. V Brně se pro mě nenašlo vůbec nic, přestože moji spolužáci s patřičným kádrovým posudkem v Brně místo sehnali.

Na všechny mé žádosti přišla jediná kladná odpověď. Bylo to místo v okresní nemocnici ve Vyškově na krčním, ušním a nosním oddělení, což byl obor, kterému jsem se chtěl věnovat. Věděl jsem, že dojíždět denně do Vyškova, obzvlášť při službách, nebude příjemné, ale ani mě nenapadlo to místo odmítnout.

První den mě přijal ředitel nemocnice. Sotva mi potřásl rukou a posadil mě do křesla proti svému ředitelskému stolu, pronesl se vší oficialitou:

"Soudruhu doktore, vysvětlete mi, jak se vaše náboženské smýšlení může shodovat s přírodovědným vzděláním, s moderními poznatky vědy a s vývojovou teorií?"

„Já s tím nemám žádný problém," pokrčil jsem rameny a podíval jsem se na něho vážně přes své brýle. Ale pak jsem nevydržel a maličko, jen koutkem úst, jsem se usmál.

"Ale vím určitě, soudruhu řediteli,

že mě moje víra dobře připravila na to, abych pečlivě sloužil pacientům."

Ředitel se na mě překvapeně zadíval a po malé odmlce dodal: „Dobrá, uvidíme. Ale jedno si zapamatujte hned ode dneška. Nechci na pracovišti žádnou náboženskou propagandu. Ani mezi pacienty, ani mezi personálem. My dobře víme, kdo je váš tchán. Rozumíte mi?"

„Ano, rozumím a chápu."

Do kádrového posudku mi napsal, že nejsem vhodný pro řídící funkci ani jiný profesní postup. Díky tomu mi nikdy nikdo nenabízel ani místo v KSČ, za což jsem byl a dodnes jsem opravdu vděčný.

Do vyškovské nemocnice mě tedy přijali hned po promoci. Prázdniny jsem strávil na novém pracovišti a začátkem září jsem narukoval.

Nyní, po vojně, jsem se vrátil zpět do Vyškova i do našeho malého bytu v Brně. Byl jsem pevně rozhodnut udělat všechno proto, aby se Lydie i naše dcerka cítily co nejlépe.

„Pavle, po celou dobu, cos tu nebyl, jsem učila tři lidi angličtinu. Míšu H., co k nám chodíval do sboru, ještě když studoval medicínu, jeho kamarádku a paní Švejdovou. Mám v tom pokračovat?"

Všechny tři Lydie učila ještě na OKVS. Měli takzvanou individuálku — individuální studium. Když zůstala na mateřské dovolené, začali chodit k nám, zatímco Dagmarku hlídala tetička Šimánková. Paní Švejdová pracovala v patologickém ústavu při Fakultní nemocnici u sv. Anny a jejím manželem byl profesor Jaroslav Švejda, tehdy přednosta patologického ústavu — vynikající brněnský odborník a diagnostik, uznávaný nejen v Evropě, ale dokonce i v Praze. Jako jeden z mála profesorů skutečně přednášel a my, studenti lékařské fakulty, jsme jeho přednášky opravdu milovali. Později byl profesor Švejda jmenován přednostou Výzkumného a experimentálního onkologického ústavu v Brně — dnes Masarykova onkologického ústavu. Nový pavilon se jmenuje po něm.

Paní Švejdová s Lydií její onemocnění od začátku nesla. A byla to vlastně ona, kdo zorganizoval první vyšetření na Žlutém kopci, když se ještě přesně nevědělo, jakého původu onemocnění je.

A právě profesor Švejda, její manžel, stanovil pravou a naprosto správnou diagnózu.

Dohodli jsme se, že studenti budou dál chodit za Lydií každý týden, a já jsem byl rád, protože Lydie potřebovala být v kontaktu s ostatními lidmi co nejvíce.

„Mě to baví. Když učím, na všechno zapomenu, všechny potíže ze mne spadnou. V hodině se cítím úplně zdravá," říkávala s rozzářenýma očima.

„Výborně. Co ti, Lydie, pomáhá, to dělej."

Jako lékař — začátečník, který na svém pracovišti musel vykonávat všechno, co mu přikázali, a pro Lydii samotnou zpočátku nemohl udělat skoro nic, jsem měl dobrý pocit, že z lidského hlediska je o ni postaráno. Nicméně její zdravotní stav se nelepšil.

2- Vypráví Lýdiina maminka

Vyrovnat se s poznáním, že naše nejmladší dcera onemocněla nevyléčitelnou chorobou, nebylo jednoduché. Každá matka tohle zná. Raději by sama na sebe vzala nemoc dítěte, než se muset dívat na jeho utrpení, které nemůže ničím zmírnit.

Navíc zapojení mého manžela v církvi na nás kladlo vysoké nároky. Byl to pestrý život, ale zároveň hodně náročný na čas mimo domov. Můj manžel byl pětadvacet let kazatelem brněnského sboru. Kromě kazatelské služby v Brně však byl od roku 1969 do roku 1981 zvoleným předsedou České rady starších BJB a od roku 1981 až do roku 1991 zvoleným předsedou Ústřední rady starších BJB v celé tehdejší ČSSR, později ČSFR. Poté se stal na nějakou dobu i předsedou Ekumenické rady církví. Baptisté mají kongregační strukturu. To znamená, že každý sbor je samostatný. Ale jednotlivé sbory jsou sdruženy do národních jednot, do kontinentálních seskupení — což je v našem případě Evropská baptistická federace — a do Světového svazu baptistů. Snad nejvíce baptistických sborů je v USA, což byl v padesátých létech 20. století v Československu jeden z hlavních důvodů tvrdého pronásledování baptistických kazatelů.

Manželovo postavení tedy obnášelo mnoho povinností. V osmdesátých letech už poněkud polevil počáteční normalizační tlak a Československo oficiálně prohlašovalo, že je u nás náboženská svoboda. Proto nebylo dost dobře možné, aby hlavní představitel církve nedostával povolení zúčastňovat se evropských a celosvětových církevních zasedání. Evropské konference probíhaly každý rok, zatímco celosvětový kongres baptistů byl svoláván jednou za pět let.

Ze všech zemí socialistického bloku nedovolovala pouze bulharská vláda představitelům své baptistické církve vycestovat do zahraničí. A k Bulharsku se zřejmě naše vláda připodobňovat nechtěla. Od svého vzniku patřila BJB v Čechách, na Moravě i na Slovensku do baptistické federace i do Světového svazu baptistů.

Já jsem byla předsedkyní Odboru sester BJB v České republice, a patřilo k dobré tradici, že Světovému baptistickému kongresu většinou předcházel Kongres odboru sester. Konal se vždy ve stejném městě, jen s několikadenním předstihem. To se ukazovalo velmi výhodné. Užší společenství sesterského sejití, se svou hřejivou atmosférou i kvalitní pracovní náplní, bylo vždy výbornou přípravou k soustředění a ztišení pro velká shromáždění, následující při světovém kongresu. V těchto případech jsem jako předsedkyně českého sesterského odboru dostávala pozvání spolu s manželem.

Snad by v dnešní době zcela

svobodného cestování stálo za připomenutí, jak složité bylo tehdy dostat povolení k výjezdu na Západ.

Kdokoliv chtěl vycestovat na jakkoliv krátkou dobu do západních zemí (včetně Jugoslávie), musel kromě víza požádat i o takzvanou jednorázovou výjezdní doložku — povolení k vycestování. Bez tohoto povolení mu nebyl platný pas vůbec k ničemu. K žádosti o povolení k vycestování jsme přikládali zvací dopis, ve kterém se zvoucí hostitel musel zavázat, že uhradí veškeré náklady pobytu svého hosta. Tím pádem jsme neměli nárok vyměnit si peníze za valuty. O přidělení výjezdní doložky rozhodoval mimo jiné také uliční výbor KSČ v místě bydliště a vyřízení takové žádosti trvalo i půl roku.

Vycestovat bylo velmi složité. Vyjížděli jsme jen na pozvání, a to znamenalo bez vlastních valut. Pokud jsme jeli do zámoří, zvali nás lidé, kteří se o československé křesťany zajímali a kteří nám celý pobyt platili. Byla to jejich laskavá oběť. A my jsme byli zase zcela závislí na jejich dobrotivosti.

Cesta na Světový baptistický kongres do Toronta v roce 1980 byla pro mne mimořádně těžká. Lydie prodělávala nejhorší chemoterapie a ozáření a měnila se nám před očima. Potřebovala mě. Nedalo se však nic dělat. Sloužili jsme Bohu — služba je služba.

V Torontu nás přivítali s velkou vstřícností. Toronto je město mnoha československých emigrantů, přistěhovalých jak po osmačtyřicátém roce, tak po roce 1968 a 1969, než se hranice úplně uzavřely. O Československu se tu hodně vědělo i mluvilo, a torontské sestry nás vítaly velkým dortem. Aby nám udělaly radost, napsaly na něj český nápis. Měl znít: Vítejte na Světovém baptistickém kongresu, ale jak už cukrářka zřejmě dávno češtinu nepoužívala, spletla se a napsala: Vítejte na Světském baptistickém kongresu. To mého manžela opravdu pobavilo, a když jsme se vrátili, dával tuto historku k dobru ve všech našich sborech.

Já jsem si však kongres příliš neužila. Myšlenkami jsem byla stále doma, u Lydie. Manžela ještě pozvali na turné po jiných sborech v Kanadě, kdežto já jsem zůstala v Torontu a chystala se na návrat domů. Nebylo mi dobře a nevyhledávala jsem příliš společnost. Chodívala jsem spíš do parku, abych se sama mohla modlit, protože to jediné mi přinášelo klid a úlevu.

Ale sestry ve sboru si všimly, že není něco úplně v pořádku, a zvaly mě na různá menší setkání. Při jednom takovém sesterském posezení jsem to nevydržela a se vším jsem se svěřila. Jak už to bývá, když se člověk snaží být před manželem a před rodinou hodně statečný, před úplně cizími lidmi najednou povolí a řekne všechno.

I já jsem tehdy vše pověděla. Nejenom to, jak moc mám nemocnou dceru, nejen to, že netuším, jestli vůbec bude žít a jak se o ni bojím. Přiznala jsem i slabost, kterou bych doma před nikým nevyslovila:

„Já vím, že je to tak hloupé, že bych na nic takového neměla ani pomyslet, ale... já si vůbec nedovedu představit, jak se zachovám, až uvidím tu svoji holčičku, která vždycky nosila krásné dlouhé vlasy, až ji uvidím holohlavou. Já opravdu nevím, jak to zvládnu," zašeptala jsem.

Chvíli bylo naprosté ticho. Některé ženy si utíraly oči. Mlčely jsme. Ale cítila jsem, že mi tyto matky z cizí země a z úplně jiné kultury rozumí a soucítí se mnou.

Až jsem se trochu uklidnila, začaly se se mnou modlit. Než jsem odjížděla, přinesla mi jedna z nich jako dárek dvě paruky.

Cesta domů nebyla příjemná, a když jsem přijela do Brna na nádraží a Lydie mě čekala na peróně v šátku — v době, kdy v Brně nechodily v šátku ani osmdesátileté stařenky— znovu se mi sevřelo srdce. Ale láska torontských sester jela se mnou v kufru. Takže jsem ho doma otevřela a vytáhla obě paruky. Lydie si je okamžitě začala nasazovat na hlavu zezadu i zpředu a dokonce jsme se i zasmály.

Na podzim v osmdesátém roce, když už byl Pavel z vojny doma, ale Lydiin zdravotní stav se vůbec nelepšil, jsme se s manželem opět vraceli z nějaké kratší zahraniční cesty a zároveň jsme se ještě

stavili v Praze na naší celostátní baptistické konferenci. Lydie říká, že to bylo asi čtrnáct dnů poté, co objevila v Bibli v knize proroka Jeramiáše varování před spoléháním na člověka a výzvu k úplnému spolehnutí se na Hospodina.

V Praze jsme nastoupili na hlavním nádraží do rychlíku na Brno, který byl téměř poloprázdný. Neobsadili jsme prázdné kupé. Měli jsme ve zvyku vždy k němu přisednout. Můj manžel měl nenásilný evangelizační dar a hromadné dopravní prostředky velmi rád používal k tomu, že s někým zapředl hovor o Bohu. Proto jsme vyhledali kupé se dvěma pány. Zaujalo mne, že jeden z nich čte Jih proti Severu v anglickém originálu. Já jsem mluvila dobře německy, ale angličtinu jsem se průběžně stále učila. Věděla jsem, že u nás není jednoduché sehnat nějakou kvalitní literaturu v originálu.

Nevydržela jsem a zeptala jsem se pána, kde takovou knihu koupil, ale dřív než se mohla rozvinout konverzace, rozevřeli dveře tři civilisté, legitimovali nás a naše doklady nám nevrátili. Všichni čtyři jsme museli vystoupit do uličky a tam půl hodiny stát, než se kontroloři odkudsi vrátili zpět. Nikdy jsme se nedozvěděli, o co šlo, ale ve vnitrostátním rychlíku supícím z Prahy do Brna nebyl k pasové ani celní kontrole důvod.

Tato půlhodina však způsobila, že my čtyři jsme se najednou jakoby ocitli na stejné lodi. Dokud jsme stáli v uličce bez dokladů, všichni jsme mlčeli, ale jakmile nám doklady předali a směli jsme se vrátit zpět do kupé a zavřít za sebou dveře, nastala rušná debata.

Můj manžel se představil a představil i mne. Měl velmi pěkné vystupování a dovedl rychle získat důvěru cizích

☞ Pokračuje na straně 16

Když se život obrátí na ruby... Pokračování ze strany 15

lidí. Pán, který četl anglický román v originálu, se také představil. Byl to doktor Nevyjel a tvrdil o sobě, že býval osobním lékařem prezidenta Svobody. Asi to byla pravda, protože měl dost informací o tom, jak to ve státě vypadá. Nevím už přesně, kdy k tomu došlo, ale mezi řečí se manžel svěřil, jak vážně máme nemocnou dceru a jak beznadějně se situace jeví.

„Vy máte přece v Brně významného odborníka na histiocytózu. Docenta Dušana Rovenského v dětské nemocnici. Je přednostou dermatovenerologického oddělení. Vzácný člověk. Já se s ním dobře znám. Troufám si dokonce říci, že je to můj přítel. Určitě vím, že jeho léčebný postup zaznamenal u dětských pacientů řadu úspěchů."

„Ale naše dcera není dětský pacient. Je to mladá, vdaná žena, matka malé holčičky," připojila jsem se.

„To nevylučuje možnost konzultovat s ním léčebný postup," nedal se pan doktor Nevyjel. Než jsme dojeli do Brna, navrhl, abychom se na něj odvolali a docenta Rovenského určitě navštívili.

„Já mu zavolám, řeknu mu o vás. Rozhodně ho požádejte o konzultaci."

„Co myslíš, tatínku, má to smysl?" zeptala jsem se, když jsme z nádraží v Brně odjížděli tramvají číslo jedna k naší ulici. Viděla jsem, že oba myslíme na stejnou věc.

Můj manžel pokrčil rameny.

„Víš, Evičko, Pán Bůh má různé cesty. A bylo by škoda některou minout." ❑

When Your Life Turns Upside Down... Continues from page 11

ence. Lydie says that it was about two weeks after she had found the warning in Jeremiah about leaning on people and the challenge to look only to the Lord.

At the main station in Prague we got onto the express train to Brno, which was half empty. We didn't get into an empty compartment, though. We always liked to find someone to sit with. My husband had a very natural gift of evangelising and he liked to use the opportunity of travelling by public transport to speak to someone about God. So we went into a compartment with two men sitting there. I was interested to see that one of them was reading Gone with the Wind in English. I spoke good German but I was also learning English, and it wasn't easy to find some quality literature in the original language.

I had to quench my curiosity, so I asked the man where he had bought his book, but before he could answer, three civilians barged into our compartment and asked for our ID cards, which they then didn't give back. All four of us had to get out into the corridor and stand there for half an hour before they gave us our cards back again. We never found out what it was all about, but on a national train from Prague to Brno there was no reason to have a passport or customs control. Anyway, that half hour meant that the four of us suddenly had something in common. While we had been standing in the corridor, none of us had spoken, but as soon as we got back into the compartment and closed the doors, we started to talk.

My husband introduced himself and me. He came across as a very trustworthy person, and people we didn't know often started to open up to him. The man who had been reading the book in English also introduced himself. His name was Dr. Nevyjel, and he said that he had been the personal doctor of President Svoboda. It was probably true, as he knew a lot of information about what was going on in our country. I don't know how we got onto the subject, but during the conversation my husband told him that our daughter was very ill and that there didn't seem to be much hope for her.

"In Brno you've got a renowned specialist in histiocytosis – Associate Professor Dušan Rovensky, who works in the children's hospital. He is the head of the department of dermatology and venereal diseases. He's a wonderful man and a good friend of mine. I know that his methods of treatment have been very effective among young patients."

"But our daughter isn't a child. She's a young married woman with a daughter," I explained.

"That doesn't mean she can't go for a consultation with him about her treatment," Dr. Nevyjel insisted. Before we arrived in Brno, he had decided that we definitely had to go to see Dr. Rovensky and mention that he had sent us there.

"I'll give him a call and tell him about you. You should definitely ask him for a consultation."

"What do you think, darling, is it worth it?" I asked, as tram number 1 pulled away from the station in the direction of where we lived. I knew we were both thinking about the same thing.

My husband looked at me, "You know, Eva, I think that God has different ways of working. And it would be a pity to miss out on one of them."

❑

In Meadville Again... Continues from page 6

together were liberated from the hand of other nations. However the new generation, as in the Czech Republic and in Slovakia, doesn't live in memories past, but takes life, as a nation as well, pragmatically.

We are grateful for the fellowship during the conference in Meadville. We also enjoyed our trip to Naples with the Sommers, and delighted in their kind hospitality. Great memories and gratitude for our brothers and sisters of the Convention remain with us.

Translated by *Elizabeth Jane Fields*

❑

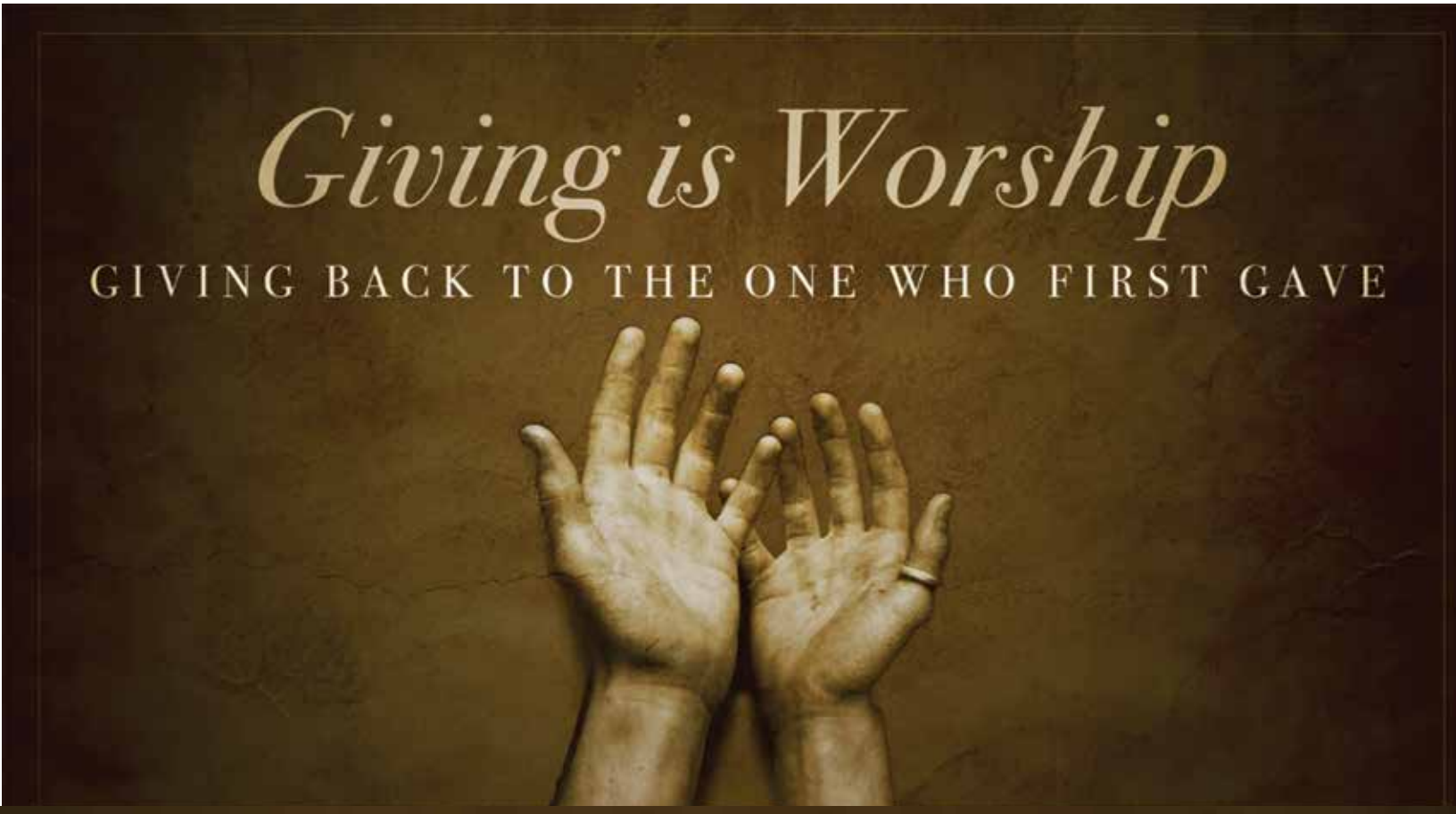
Opět v Meadville... Pokračování ze strany 6

rého bratrství Čechů a Slováků, kteří se společně vymaňovali z područí jiných národů. Avšak nová generace jak v Česku, tak i na Slovensku ze starých vzpomínek již nežije, ale bere život, i ten národní, pragmaticky.

Jsme vděčni za společné obecenství na konferenci v Meadville. Se Sommerovými jsme si také užili cestu se do Neaples a těšili se jejich milému pohostinství. Zůstávají nám milé vzpomínky a vděčnost za bratry a sestry z konvence.

Milan a Iva Kernovi

❑



Over a century ago, the founders of our Convention started the 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.

Your financial support will help us continue our financial commitments and offset our annual deficit of almost $36,000. Good stewardship calls us to increase our giving to the Convention so that its work and witness can continue to future generations. Thankfully, the generosity of those who came before us has provided funds which cover the gap between annual income & annual expenses but this cannot continue indefinitely. Faithfulness to God & those who came before calls us surely to do our part to renew & expand the legacy we received. Freely we have received. Gratefully & generously let us give.

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 to future generations.

Your contributions are tax deductible and will be receipted before the 2016 tax deadline. ❑

Charles Spurgeon's Devotion

Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor. *2 Corinthians 8:9*

The Lord Jesus was eternally rich, glorious, and exalted, but "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor." Just as a rich saint cananot have true oneness with his poor brothers unless he ministers to their needs from his substance, the same is true of the body's head and its members. In other words, it would have been impossible for our Divine Lord to have fellowship with us unless He gave of His own abundant wealth and became poor to make us rich. If He had remained upon His throne of glory and we had continued in the ruins of mankind's fall without receiving His salvation, communion would have been impossible for both sides. Except through God's covenant of grace, it is as impossible for fallen man to communicate with God as it is to have "harmony … between Christ and Belial" (2 Cor. 6:15).

Thus, in order for communion to be provided, it was necessary for our rich Brother to bestow His estate upon His poor relatives, and because our righteous Savior gave His sinful brothers of His own perfection, we who are the poor and guilty have received "from the fullness of his grace … one blessing after another," (John 1:16). The result of this giving and receiving, with One descending from the heights of heaven and others ascending from the depths of earth, is the ability to embrace one another in genuine heartfelt fellowship. Our poverty must be enriched by Christ, in whom are found infinite treasures, before we can experience true communion. And our guilt must lose itself in Christ's imputed and imparted righteousness before our soul can walk in fellowship and purity. Jesus must clothe His people in His own garments or He cannot allow them to enter His palace in heaven, and He must wash them in His own blood or else they will remain too defiled for the embrace of His fellowship.

O believer, "this is love" (1 John 4:10)! "For your sakes [the Lord Jesus] became poor" that He might lift you up into communion with Himself. ❑

Taken from *"Look Unto Me"*
The Devotions of Charles Spurgeon by Jim Reimann
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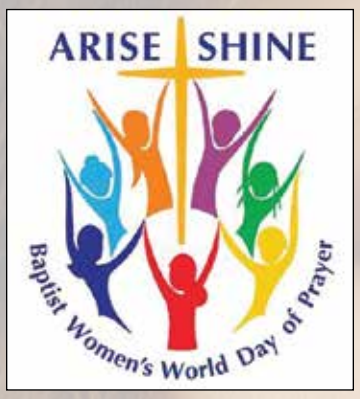
2016 Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer



„Arise, shine; for your light has come!" Isaiah 60:1

The Baptist Women's International Day of Prayer is celebrated each year on the first Monday in November. The 2016 Baptist Women's World Day of Prayer program continues with the five- year series of studies based on the theme „ARISE, SHINE...When we rise up, He shines through COMMUNITY". It is a look at how we ARISE to meet the needs of our communities and how we SHINE the love of Christ into the hearts and lives of those around us.

The Day of Prayer is a blessed demonstration of the community shared by Baptist women across the world. There are two essential active ingredients to every Day of Prayer experience: praying and giving. Prayer is the lifeblood that courses through the veins of the believer in Christ. Through it, we receive hope, guidance, assurance and peace as we communicate with God. We are dependent upon it. As we unite with our Baptist sisters across the world, we are committing to upholding and supporting one another in prayer, for we know that nothing is accomplished without it and great and mighty things come into being because of it.

Arise and Shine for the Glory of God has risen upon you
Arise and let your light shine, shine
This is the day the glorious day that the Lord has made
We will rejoice and be glad indeed...

(Theme song composers: Tshepo Legora, Tumelo Mashiane and Davis Phala)

The Baptist Women's International Day of Prayer leads on to the time of Advent, a period of spiritual preparation for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. We celebrate Advent by thanking God not only for Christ's first coming to Earth as a baby, but also for His presence among us every day through the Holy Spirit. It is a time of joyful anticipation of His final coming at the end of time. The themes most often used for the four weeks of Advent are Hope, Joy, Love and Peace. Because Christ came the first time, we can live with hope, joy, love and peace, till He comes again.

The hope we have in Jesus Christ Brings joy into our heart;
And when we know the love of God, His peace He will impart.

Natasha Laurinc

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2016 Women's Department Executive Board
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Change of Mind

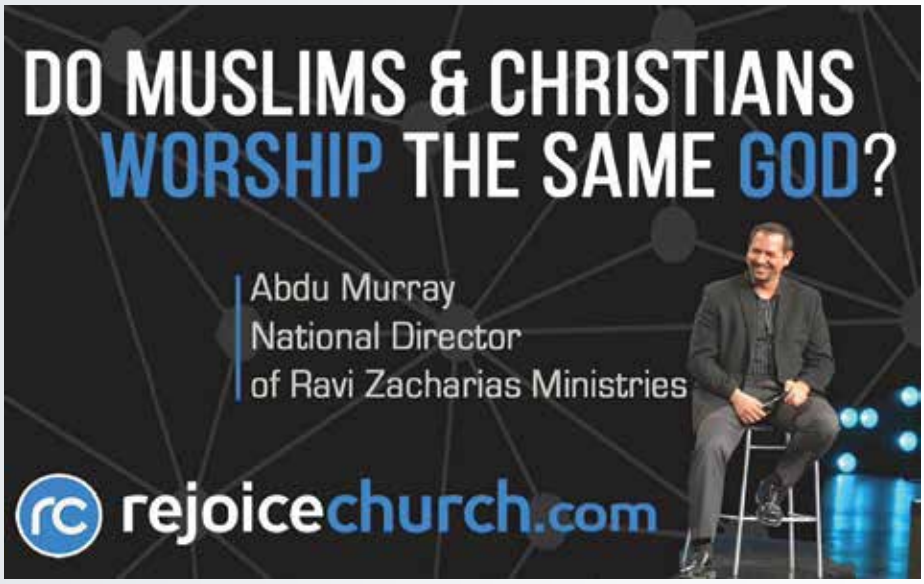
Submitted by **Peter Kupisz**

Why do you believe that Christianity is true?" That was the question that Abdu Murray would ask Christians as he grew up in the USA. Starting in middle school, Abdu was passionate about Islam and sought to convert those around him to his religion. About ninety percent of the time, the response he received was something like, "Well, I guess it's because I was raised Christian." He would then respond by asking, "Do you really think that's a good reason to base your eternal destiny on?" Many times that, and subsequent questions, would put enough doubts into people's hearts that a vacuum would be created; and into that vacuum Abdu would insert Islam.

One day Abdu met two "annoying" Christians who didn't respond like everyone else. These Christians – Dave and Peter – were annoying because they actually had responses to his challenges. Time after time, they would return to talk with him and when they didn't know how to respond, they would seek out the answers. Eventually, in his determination to silence them, Abdu got a Bible and started reading it. He was absolutely certain that it was corrupt and couldn't be trusted; but then he read Luke 3:8, where John the Baptist challenges those who were trusting in their ancestry for their salvation: "And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‚We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham." Suddenly Abdu realized that although he had asked many other people why they believed, he had never really considered it himself. He was trusting his own Islamic authorities and the traditions he had received without critically evaluating them. This cracked a door open in Abdu's mind and he slowly started evaluating all religions, including his own, to see which one was true.

As Abdu studied, learned and thought, he started to realize that Christianity had much more going for it than he had been willing to admit. Eventually he became intellectually convinced that the gospel was true but his heart wasn't willing to budge. As he considered why he felt this way, he realized that he did not want to pay the price of converting. Nevertheless God's Spirit continued to work, and today Abdu is a follower of Jesus. As a result, he has become passionate to tell others about the life, death and resurrection of his Saviour.

Abdu Murray is North American Director with Ravi Zacharias International Ministries. For most of his life, Abdu was a proud Muslim who studied the Qur'an and Islam. After a nine-year investigation into the historical, philosophical, and scientific underpinnings of the major world religions and views, Abdu discovered that the historic Christian faith alone can answer the questions of the mind and the longings of the heart. Abdu is the Scholar in Residence of Christian Thought and Apologetics at the Josh McDowell Institute of Oklahoma Wesleyan University. He lives in the Detroit area with his wife and their three children.



Peter has recently joined P2C (Power to Change) staff with a focus on apologetics (i.e. addressing intellectual objections to Christianity) through online outreach and on-campus work. Power to Change is one of the larger Christian ministries in Canada. Peter completed his M.A. in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics at Talbot Seminary in 2005; and he completed his M.A. in the History and Philosophy of Science at the University of Toronto in 2008. He is based in Guelph, Ontario.

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Children's Corner

The Birth of Jesus

The story about the birth of Jesus teaches us many things.

We learn about being pleasing to God from Mary. When we live a life that is pleasing to God and others, God can use us in wonderful ways.

Joseph teaches us that when we live a righteous life, God will help us in times of difficulty and show us the way. The long and tiring journey to Bethlehem and the manger teaches us how God will always keep His promises, and that we have hope and assurance in Jesus.

The angel's announcement to the shepherds gives us good news. Use the code below to find out what the angel said to the shepherds.

And finally, the visit of the wise men shows us that it is natural and expected to worship our Lord and Savior.

Let's remember to put Jesus first, and worship Him during this time of the year. ❑

THE ANGEL'S ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE SHEPHERDS

** Use the code to find out what the Angel said to the Shepherds.

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"...in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed because you have obeyed my voice."

Genesis 22:18

Praise the Lord with us for a good transition back to the Czech Republic during this past month! We are enjoying our new home in the 8th district of Prague, and we are beginning to meet some of our new neighbors. Two couples from the nearby Ládví church live within walking distance!

The needs around us continue to be great, but the opportunities are even greater! Eighty percent of Czechs are atheist and non-religious, 10% are Catholic, and less than half of one percent are evangelical believers. We believe that planting healthy indigenous churches is the best way to reach the Czech Republic for Christ, and in this letter we will show you seven ways that God is building His church.

1. Ládví church plant

The Ládví church began in 2013, and with a small but dedicated core of believers, we are reaching out to one of the least reached, least churched, and least evangelized parts of Prague: North City, home to over 100,000 people in high-density apartment complexes. During the summer the Ládví church offered a Bible study based on the Fruit of the Spirit with an average of 17 people participating! We are grateful that new and mature believers have been added to our fellowship, as the process of discipling and training occurs continually.

2. Prosek outreach

Beginning in September, we began a new outreach in a meeting room of a Chinese restaurant in Prosek, the neighborhood east of Ládví, and a good group of people is coming to the "Christianity Explored" course, covering the basics of the Christian faith through the gospel of Mark. One of the participants, Svatava, saw the sign for the course, came and on the very first week told us that she wanted to be baptized. She had recently seen the Jesus Film, and prayed at the end to receive Christ as her Savior. Now she wants to grow in her new-found Christian faith and join our local fellowship.

3. Bohnice outreach

Another outreach work has begun this month to the west of Ládví, in the Bohnice neighborhood. Meeting in a private meeting room of a pizzeria, we are offering a 6-week evangelistic course called *MyLife Workshop* based on discovering who we are, how God has made us, and what his amazing plan is for our lives. One participant was invited by her friend from the Ládví church who was just baptized in July. She was moved to tears as she was given the opportunity to share about her own life.

Since the northern districts are so large and spread out, our vision is to reach out to the east (Prosek with 37,000 people) and west (Bohnice with 30,000 people) of the Ládví church plant in order to share the Gospel in those neighborhoods. Then we can invite them for spiritual growth and discipleship, including preparation for baptism and regular Sunday services at the Ládví church, located in the heart of "North City".

4. M4 church-planter training

M4 stands for *Master, Mission, Multiplication, and Movement*, based on Christ's Great Commission to his disciples in Matthew 28:18-20. From 2012–2014, eighteen church-planting teams were trained over four weekends and coached while ministering in the places where God had called them to plant churches. Today, 17 of these churches are continuing on and growing. In 2015, a new round of church-planter training began, this time with 12 church-planting teams. Each team is assigned a coach who walks with them for two years of their church-planting process. Mark is the coach of the young and enthusiastic team pictured here, which is planting a church in the large industrial city of Ostrava.

☞ Continues on next page

Ruby Mikulencak

I just returned from being in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, formerly known as Ivory Coast, and I marvel at God's graciousness in giving me this opportunity to serve Him once again in West Africa. I thank Him once again for His faithfulness and grace. This morning as I read and spent time with the Lord, my heart was stirred with these thoughts. I pray that the Lord stir each of you as you ponder over them.

Psalm 106:21 -*They forgot the God who saved them who had done such great things in Egypt.*

How ungrateful we are at times! In the past we have seen God answer prayers, comfort us in sorrow, guide us through difficulties, heal us in sickness and many other wonderful things.

Of course the greatest thing He did for us was dying on the Cross for our sins to restore us to the longed-for restored relationship we all can have with God our Creator and Maker.

It is very easy to be tempted to think that God has forgotten us or to wonder if He still loves us. It is so easy to think, "Lord, what have you done for me lately?" In the midst of trials, hurt and uncertainty, it is so easy to think God has forgotten us.

Let us not forgot the God who has saved us!! Let us remember all the good things He has done for us. Let us continue on this journey of trusting when we do not understand. Let us remember that "He who called you is faithful"...to the end!

Even if there was nothing else God did for us for the rest of our lives, may He help us not to forget the God who saved us and to love and serve Him all the days of our lives.

Ruby Mikulencak

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The Potmas... Continues from page 22

5. Network Praha church plant

Another of the 12 church-planting teams present was the Network Praha church plant led by Tomáš Grulich. Network Praha is creating a metropolitan fellowship in the center of Prague and reaching out to young singles and couples who are attracted to the urban lifestyle. The core team is now large enough to divide into two discipleship cells, as they focus on creative outreach, life-on-life discipleship, and raising up future leaders.

6. Mongolian church in Prague

The elders of our church have recommended Daniel (Munkhuush), the leader of the Mongolian church in Prague, for the pastoral internship program beginning in January. Mark will be supervising his internship, which will last about two to three years. The Mongolian believers are very grateful for the arrival of Servy and Maria Pardo and their boys. Servy and Maria are currently learning Czech, as the Mongolian they learned five years ago in Mongolia is returning to active use. Our family is enjoying living just a short walk from the Pardos.

7. South City Church

A baptism is planned for November 13th, with new believers from South City Church and Ládví being prepared for baptism. The work team from Canada did an amazing job getting the building ready for inspection by the city, and more teams are planning to come in the spring. Our church is also still working on paying off all of our interest-free loans from various Czech churches.

We have a new pastor and his family at the Skalka church! We are looking forward to ministering with Jiří over the next several years. Pray for Mark as he helps Jiří transition into his new ministry responsibilities and life in Prague. Jiří is replacing Petr Šedý, who is now the pastor at the CB church in Kutná Hora. Praise the Lord that Ben and Elise are adjusting well to their new schools, and Noemi is making the most of her educational and employment opportunities in Prague. Thank you for your prayers for Luke as he has begun his second year at university and takes care of our house in Windsor.

With gratitude to God for you,

Mark, Gretchen, Luke, Noemi, Ben, Elise

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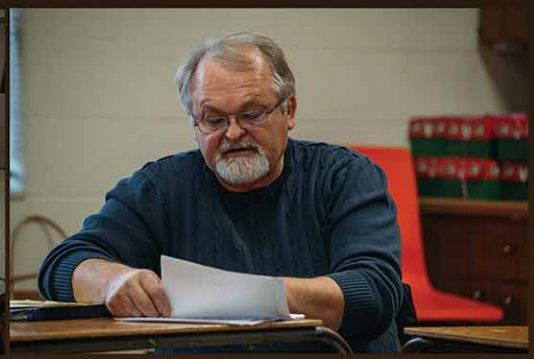
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