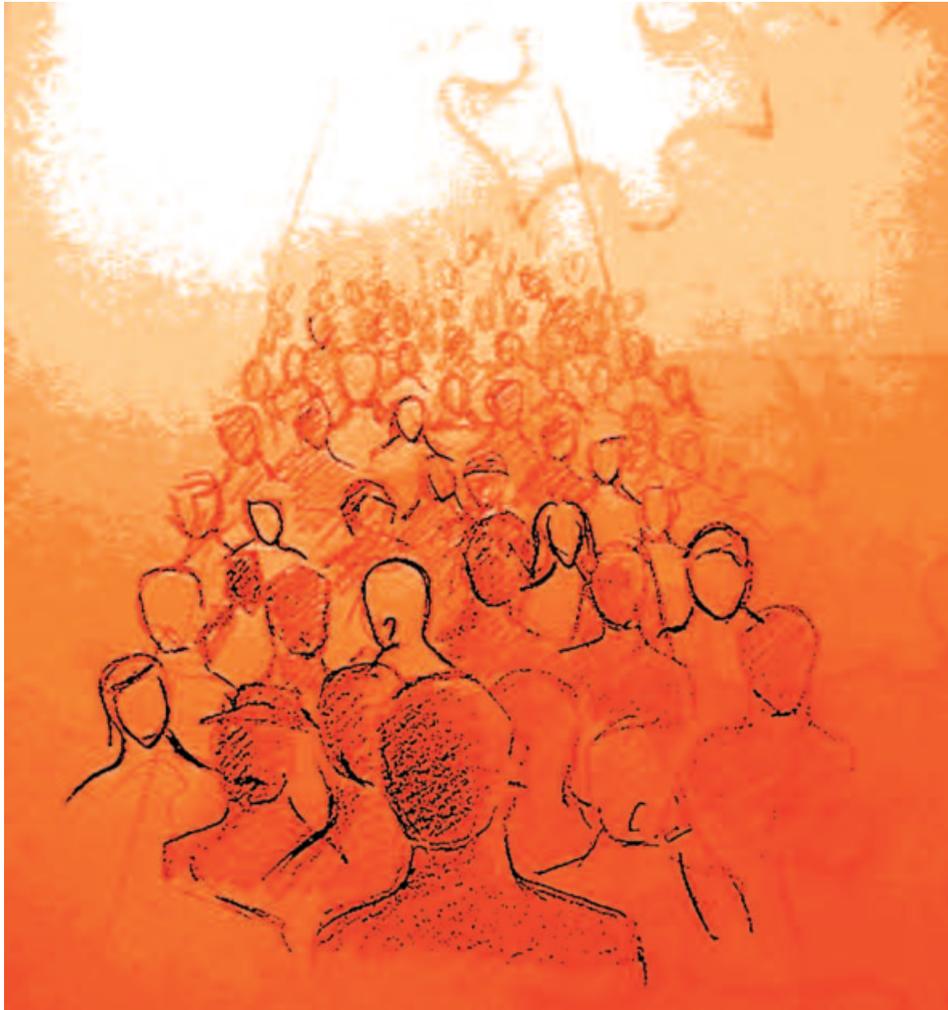
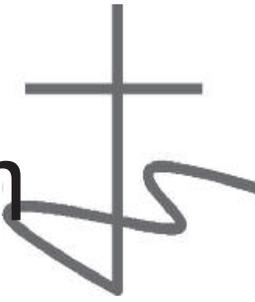


# Central European Missiological Forum

Central European Centre for Mission Studies 2011



Z. Jurechová: **CECMS - What Are We Heading Towards?**

P. Bargár: **The Missionary Practice of the Czech and Slovak Churches**

K.-H. Ryu: **Inter-Cultural Common Worship in the Prague Kobylišy Church**

P. Černý: **Missionary Practice of the Gospel in the Secular Environment of the Czech Republic**

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Front cover art by Gabriela Bajdichová

# Editorial

Welcome to the new issue of *Central European Missiological Forum*. *Central European Missiological Forum* is published annually by the Central European Centre for Mission Studies in Prague (CECMS; for more information about the Centre, see the website [www.missioncentre.eu](http://www.missioncentre.eu)). It represents a selection of articles published throughout a year in another journal of CECMS, a quarterly called *Misiologické info*. In *Misiologické info*, the articles originally appeared either in Czech or Slovak. However, one of our goals in the Centre is also to let people around the world know about what is going on in the field of missiology in the Czech/Slovak context. That is the reason why we publish *Central European Missiological Forum*.

You might have come across *Central European Missiological Forum* in the past. However, both design and “genre” have changed since. It used to be published as an A4-format bulletin which brought news on mission issues in the Czech and Slovak context and, especially, the activities of CECMS. The current *Central European Missiological Forum* is more of a review or journal than bulletin; it brings studies, articles, reflections and book reviews from the discipline of missiology as well as illustrations from Christianity-inspired visual arts etc. Nevertheless, it still seeks to focus, first and foremost, on the Czech and Slovak context and the activities of CECMS.

The present issue of *Central European Missiological Forum* can serve as an example of this strategy. In the opening article, Zuzana Jurechová introduces CECMS and its history, current work, and the vision for the future. The studies by Pavol Bargár and Kwang-hyun Ryu, two of the CECMS researchers, offer an illustration of the research topics we are dealing with at the Centre.

In 2010–2011, CECMS conducted a major research project on “Church and its context”. We organized two conferences, in Prague and in Bratislava, as part of the project. The contributions by Zuzana Jurechová and Viktória Šoltéssová reflect on the two conferences. Another outcome of the project was an edited volume on crisis situations in the Czech-Slovak context after 1989, published in two language versions (Czech-Slovak and English). This volume is reviewed by Maroš Šefranko; you will find the book review in this issue as well.

The three remaining articles were written by our associates and colleagues Pavel Černý, Jaroslav Kratka and Iva Pellarová and discuss some of the topics CECMS has been involved with in the long term, namely the gospel in dialogue with culture and society, the dimensions of evangelism, and Roma mission respectively.

Last but not least, we are glad and grateful that Slovak visual artist Jana Zaujecová was so kind as to grant us permission to reproduce the photos of some of her works in *Central European Missiological Forum*. They certainly represent an integral part of the journal. You will also find Zaujecová’s artistic profile in the issue.

We hope you will enjoy the new *Central European Missiological Forum*. Thank you very much for your continual support and prayers for CECMS and we are looking forward to hearing your feedback. Have an enjoyable and profitable read!

*On behalf of the editorial board, Pavol Bargár*

# CECMS—What Are We Heading Towards?

Zuzana Jurechová

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In the Autumn of 2004, three pastors of various Protestant denominations met together and shared not only their dissatisfaction with the current situation of Christian mission in the Czech (and Slovak) Republic, but also the enthusiasm for helping to improve the situation and for heading towards more effective spreading of the Gospel in our society. From this meeting stemmed the vision of founding such an organization, which would not be burdened with the practical and administrative work of a congregation, but which would still be close to people and society. Moreover, it should have enough "human capacity" to lead its own research projects.

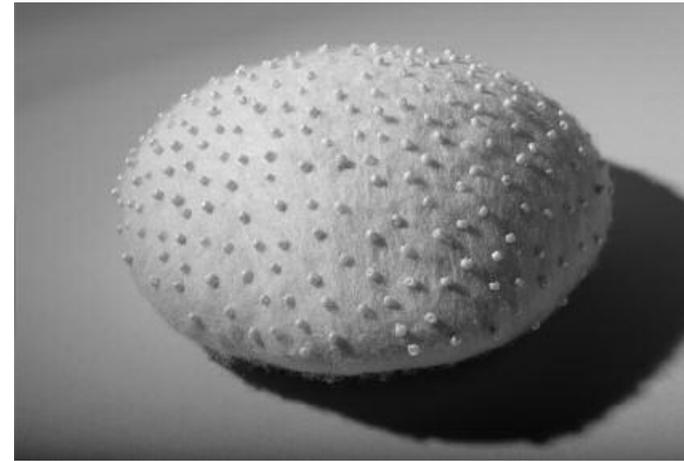
The vision took shape in the foundation of a mission research centre, based on the three main principles: (1) reflection of pastoral work from a missiological perspective, (2) theological research focused on mission and missiology, (3) education in missiology, i.e. the pursuit of training programs for church workers and church representatives. The vision took its concrete form in 2006, when – thanks to generous donators – a research centre for mission and missiology in the context of the Central-European region was founded under the name *Central European Centre for Mission Studies* (CECMS).

In the next four years, the centre has been growing in the terms of articulation of the initial vision, searching for collaborators in the area of missiology and gaining general knowledge in the field of mission. Because of the language barrier among various Central European countries, the CECMS started operating within the two regions interrelated through history and language—the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In 2007, an international conference on education in missiology at universities took place, which highlighted the fact that the academic ground lacks lectures on missiology. The effort aimed at putting an end to this shortage followed in a short time. The first initiative took form of the Slovak translation of a fundamental work in world missiology—*Transforming Mission* by David J. Bosch—which was published in 2008 under the name *Dynamika kresťanskej misie*.

Soon after, the CECMS started working on a large research project entitled "The Church and its Context". This project focused on academic studies of crisis situations in the Czech and Slovak society after 1989, which are burdening contemporary people and which also demand responses from the churches. The project involved two lesser conferences, where the most alarming issues were discussed by researchers of many academic disciplines and pastors from various churches.

In the meantime, we also started publishing the quarterly *Misiologické info* (in Czech and Slovak language), which has grown into a semi-academic journal for both laymen and theologians. Its purpose is to bring information about mission activities within the Czech and Slovak region, and also activities from without. In *Misiologické info*, we are trying to introduce the concrete mission work and inspirational ideas, academic reviews, and also illustrations and other pieces by Christian artists, which—beside the fact they represent a visually pleasant aesthetic element of the journal—may serve as a great example of the alternative way of spreading of Christian values.

An offer of courses and seminars organized by the CECMS is also in the phase of satisfactory growth. After several study days and seminars on missiology at theological faculties in Prague and Bratislava, we



*The Virtue Series. PURITY. Stone, sheep fleece felt, beads.*

*"Between you and me, there's the only certainty - purity." (Daniel Hevier)*

*Photo by Jozef Česla*

continue with a seminar program "Perspectives of Mission", which will be, this time, more flexible in the terms of organization and time, so that it will be accessible not only to the students of theology, but also to lay church workers and interested students of various scientific disciplines.

This year we are planning to coordinate a new original research project on "Ethics of Mission". The project will focus on the issue of ethical compromises in the area of Christian mission. We would also like to complete a contact network of mission workers in the Czech and Slovak Republic and to organize their meeting with the purpose of their mutual enrichment and inspiration.

Among our challenges, which seem the most difficult to face, belongs searching for a genuine feedback from people, who practice mission in their everyday lives, which could provide us with necessary impulses and suggestions for our future work. Our aim is to pursue research on such issues, which would really help to *move* things in a good direction, in connection with the real world in which the churches live and work, and not only to satisfy the academic community and scholarly public. Therefore we are in the process of the intense search for new collaborators to develop our research possibilities, and we also attempt to introduce the results of our work to foreign countries in order to spread the general knowledge about the Czech and Slovak mission thought in the world.

We are also looking for people, who would be willing to communicate, genuinely reflect on their mission thought and contemporary church practice, and share their experience through our Centre. Our aim is to become a Christian platform, which would mediate the contact between mission activities in the Czech and Slovak Republic and mission in the world. We are willing to learn from foreign mission approaches and contexts, as well as to bring information about the life of the churches in our countries, about their needs, but also about their specific mission thought, which—as we strongly believe—can serve as a source of inspiration for many others. The CECMS currently employs two part-time working theologians and one pastor, who works as a volunteer. In regard to the fact that the CECMS devotes itself to the area which is utterly uncharted in the Czech and Slovak context, it is not always easy, as every "pioneer" beginning.

However, our passion and faith that what we do has its meaning and value fills us with energy to develop our organization. We are thankful for your feedbacks on our work, for your attention to our activities, and, last but not least, for your prayers.

# The Missionary Practice of the Czech and Slovak Churches in the Perspective of Crisis Situations Typical for their Context

Pavol Bargár

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## Introduction

The message carried and the work done by the church is always inevitably shaped by its context—i.e. its time, place, culture and other conditions. This simple but fundamental presumption led the Central European Centre for Mission Studies (CECMS) to launch the research project "The Church and its Context".

The whole project was divided into two main parts, each of them dealing with one of the issues contained in the project title: (1) "Church" and (2) "Context". The "Church" part gathered information about missionary activities of particular churches assembled in the Ecumenical Council of Churches (ECC) both in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.<sup>1</sup> The research took account of information published on the web site of each particular church, church congregation or organization founded and directed by church representatives (e.g. civil associations, purpose organizations etc.). All information was assembled in a document, which was then sent to contact addresses of all subjects involved in the research. The churches thus had an opportunity to correct, change, comment or add new information. This part of the project aimed basically at two targets: (1) to collect information about diverse forms of missionary work of Christian churches and its practical implementations, (2) to enable wider public to access this information with the purpose of increasing the public general knowledge of missionary activities of Christian ecumenical churches. The authors of the project are of the opinion that this approach can help to improve cooperation between churches devoted to the same or similar kind of missionary activity. Our aim was thus to create the network of contacts of individuals or groups who are putting various forms of Christian mission into practice and who would be ready and willing to share their experience with others.

The most important output of the second part of the project is the collective monograph *Crisis situations in the Czecho-Slovak context after 1989*.<sup>2</sup> The issue of the "context" is, naturally, very broad and it was thus necessary to define it in a more specific way for research purposes. We worked in the heuristic framework of crisis situations emerging often in the Czech and Slovak society since the ground-breaking year of 1989. Zuzana Jurechová, one of the coordinators of the project and editors of the publication, notes: "The crises in fact often uncover the individual threads of context relating to each other—the ones that work correctly, but most of all the ones that were damaged and torn, the ones those crises stemmed

1/ The research took into account not only the member churches of the ECC in both countries, but also "observers" and "affiliated" churches, with one exception only: we did not involve the Federation of Jewish Communities in Czech Republic (FJC CZ, affiliated to the ECC in the Czech Republic), as only Christian churches were subject to the research. Whenever we speak about the Christian churches in this article, we mean Christian churches that are members, observers or affiliates of ECC in the Czech Republic and Slovakia with this one exception.

2/ Cf. JURECHOVÁ, Z. – BARGÁR, P. (eds.), *Crisis Situations in the Czecho-Slovak Context after 1989*. Prague: SCMS 2011. Issued in Czech-Slovak and English version.

from."<sup>3</sup> The research focused on the cooperation of various academic disciplines and many human and social scientists were involved. The monograph consists of academic texts written from the perspective of theology, sociology, philosophy, economy, pedagogy, psychology, political science and cultural and religious studies. Their aim is to deal with various aspects of crisis situations and thus to sketch a plastic picture of the contemporary Czech and Slovak society with its problems and trends. The authors wanted to offer their reflections of such social changes and phenomena, which in the recent twenty years impacted the society as a whole and which are thought to be the common source of crisis situations in the Czech Republic and Slovakia,<sup>4</sup> and provide the Czech and Slovak churches with this material to help them understand the conditions and the environment where they try to follow and fulfil their quests.

The following study is an attempt to connect both parts of the project "The Church and its Context" and show their interrelation. This means to interpret the data provided by the research on church missionary work in the light of the information about society given in the monograph. The key question of this study can be formulated as follows: Do the Czech and Slovak churches answer appropriately to the challenges brought by crisis situations in the context of contemporary society? And if so, how does it shape their missionary work? However, we would like to avoid any evaluation of the church missionary work, which would seem too hasty and daring at the moment. The study rather wants to explore, whether there can be found a "group intersection", and whether churches in general respond to the contemporary crisis situations with their missionary work in any way.

The methodology of the study is built upon our presumption that there can be recognized several basic types of crisis situations, as they were defined by the studies in the monograph. The types are related to the following: (1) society, (2) economics/consumerism, (3) family/children, (4) personality/identity. This division serves us as a framework for easier classification of the assembled research data. The provisional aim of the study is to show, whether and in which way the Czech and Slovak churches engage in missionary work in the particular groups of crisis situations. We should also be able to track correspondences and differences between the Czech and Slovak churches, as the study aims to follow both contexts in parallel.

## Society

In the monograph *Crisis Situations in the Czecho-Slovak Context after 1989* the issue "society" was treated mainly in the studies of political scientist Juraj Laššuth,<sup>5</sup> sociologist Markéta Sedláčková,<sup>6</sup> philosopher Václav Němec,<sup>7</sup> sociologist Ľubomír German<sup>8</sup> and scholar of religion Věra Tydlitátová.<sup>9</sup>

In their articles, several issues relevant for missiology can be clearly distinguished. They are above all:

3/ Quoted from JURECHOVÁ, Z., "Preface". In Jurechová – Bargár (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8, here p. 7.

4/ Cf. the rear cover of Jurechová – Bargár (eds.), *op. cit.*

5/ LAŠŠUTH, J. "A Brave New World?". In Jurechová –Bargár (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 37-55.

6/ SEDLÁČKOVÁ, M. "Trust and Democracy in the Czech Society." In Jurechová –Bargár (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 56-68.

7/ NĚMEC, V. "The Crisis of Czech Democracy as a Crisis of Institutions." In Jurechová –Bargár (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 69-81.

8/ GERMAN, L. "The White-Collar Crime as a Factor in Crisis Situations in Everyday Life." In Jurechová –Bargár (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 82-92.

9/ TYDLITÁTOVÁ, V. "Revival of Religious Anti-Judaism in the Post-Modern Spectrums of Ideologies." In Jurechová –Bargár (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 166-173.

- Civic engagement of churches and citizens
- Dealing with otherness
- Constructive reaction to crises (economical, political, humanitarian etc.)
- Struggle against economical criminality (corruption)
- Inter-religious/Inter-cultural dialogue

In the following lines we bring an overview of relevant missionary activities of the Czech and Slovak churches and we will try to find out, whether the activities meet the abovementioned issues.

On the basis of the analysis of the gathered information we can formulate the pre-supposition that the Czech churches do not perceive civic engagement as one of their primary missionary quests. Still there are several mentionable activities in this area, albeit rudimentary. In the terms of social and civic justice (e.g. immigration, unemployment, homelessness, socially excluded groups etc.) the most engaged churches are the Roman-Catholic Church (RCC CZ)<sup>10</sup>, the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) and the Czechoslovak Hussite Church (CHC CZ). Nevertheless it should be specified that the high level of engagement of the RCC CZ stems mostly from the engagement of the RCC at the global level (i.e. in the world) rather than at the particular level of the Czech environment. In contrast, civic engagement of the ECCB is not centrally-planned and all the missionary activities are stemming from the interest of particular congregations or individuals and thus every action is taken *ad hoc*. Civic engagement is also mentioned in the program of Moravian Church (MC), which defines its quest as "working not to increase the number of church members but to change the society".<sup>11</sup> This is a very specific missiological attitude, which is also unique among churches organized in the Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Czech Republic (ECC CZ). Nevertheless, the real steps taken in order to put the program into practice remain rather modest. As an example of civic engagement we can mention the advisory centre AGAPÉ, focusing on legal, citizen and crisis advisory.<sup>12</sup> One of the projects of the Evangelical Methodist Church (EMC CZ) at its congregation at Slaný-Kladno is also providing free legal advisory to people in need.<sup>13</sup> Civic engagement undoubtedly also includes the engagement in the field of ecology. Here, the (Free) Evangelical Brethren Church (EBC CZ) and the Eastern Orthodox Church (EOC CZ) are in lead with their initiatives A Rocha,<sup>14</sup> or the Eastern Orthodox Academy at Vilemov<sup>15</sup>, which care for encouraging the dialogue about protection of nature and environment between churches and society.

The situation of the churches in Slovakia is very similar. Simply said, civic engagement is not a priority even for the Slovak churches. But as in the Czech Republic, we can also find several singular attempts and initiatives here. The Slovak Baptist Union (SBU SR) focuses on struggle against poverty. But this is, again, rather an initiative of world Baptist missionary organizations (the "Together Against Poverty" project), in which SBU SR participates and helps with coordination of their activities (e. g. collections for children's homes in Bolivia or support of the worldwide humanitarian organization Baptist World Aid).<sup>16</sup> The Evan-

gelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia (ECAC SK) approaches the field of social justice in its project "The Gospel to Roma houses".<sup>17</sup>

The Roman-Catholic Church (RCC SK) systematically helps immigrants<sup>18</sup> and victims of the human trafficking<sup>19</sup> through its Charity project. Some of the Roman-Catholic monastic orders and communities also engage in the struggle for social justice (e.g. Society of Jesus<sup>20</sup> or Sisters of Social Service<sup>21</sup>), that help the poor, homeless or refugees. There are many congregations of various churches helping homeless people, most notably e.g. the congregation of the Evangelical Methodist Church (EMC SK) in Bratislava.<sup>22</sup> The Society of St. Gorazd of the Old-Catholic Church in Slovakia (OCC SK) provides education in the field of civic engagement.<sup>23</sup> Chevra, an organization under the auspices of the Apostolic Church (AC SK), focuses on preventive educational programs in order to overcome social Anti-Semitism.<sup>24</sup> The category of civic engagement also includes prevention in the field of human healthcare. It is provided mainly by congregations of the Seventh-day Adventist Church (SDAC SK), which are founding their so-called "health clubs". Coordination, consulting and education in these "health clubs" are in Slovakia provided by a medical organization called "Life and Health".<sup>25</sup>

Dealing with otherness or acceptance of that what comes from the outside belongs among the issues rather neglected in the context of the Czech churches. This inexperience with otherness has, of course, its historical roots.<sup>26</sup> Among the churches assembled in the ECC CZ, the best experience and results in dealing with otherness has probably the ECCB CZ, which tries to appeal to the need of helping immigrants as well as the Romani minority in the Czech Republic through its Advisory Department for Evangelization and Mission (POEM).<sup>27</sup> But as we have noted before, these attempts are initiated mainly by individuals (e.g. organization of demonstrations against xenophobia and racism). A more systematic and organized approach can be seen at the Diaconia of the ECCB (e.g. in its program focused on help to foreigners).<sup>28</sup>

17/ For the current news on this project see <http://www.ecav.sk/?p=RM> (9/27/2011).

18/ See <http://www.charita.sk/stranky/pomoc-utecencom> (9/27/2011).

19/ See <http://www.charita.sk/stranky/pomoc-obetiam-obchodovania-s-ludmi> (9/27/2011).

20/ See [http://www.jezuiti.sk/index.php?stranka=diela\\_aposocialny](http://www.jezuiti.sk/index.php?stranka=diela_aposocialny) (9/27/2011).

21/ See <http://www.socialnesestry.sk/?page=kto-sme> (9/27/2011).

22/ See <http://www.bratislava.umc.sk/index.php?page=programy> (9/27/2011).

23/ See [http://www.slovenski-katolici.sk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=18&Itemid=42](http://www.slovenski-katolici.sk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=18&Itemid=42) (9/27/2011).

24/ See <http://www.chevra.sk/> (9/27/2011).

25/ See <http://www.zivotazdravie.sk/> (9/27/2011).

26/ Until recently the Czech churches have had minimal possibilities to meet and work with foreigners, immigrants, refugees or members of different ethnic, religious or cultural groups. Even in the present day the number of immigrants living in the Czech Republic is still not comparable with their numbers in the countries of Western or Northern Europe. According to recent estimations we can expect a gradual change of this trend and it is thus possible that the Czech churches will have to re-evaluate their stance on immigration, which has been so far rather reserved and cautious. This is why they should aim to make relationships with members of other religions, cultures and ethnic groups and try to understand them better, give them their helping hand in cases of need and, if possible, initiate the process of creative cooperation with them in various areas of missionary activities (e.g. education, social help, humanitarian help etc.)

27/ See the report "The Efficient Help of our Congregations to Refugees in our Country" sent by POEM to the 30th Synod of the ECCB for approval. The Synod approved the report and recommended it to be sent to all ECCB congregations and ordered the Synod Council to start providing the appropriate financial resources from the Fund for the people in the world in need in favour of the account of the advisory centre for refugees at the Helsinki Committee.

28/ See <http://www.diakonie.cz/nase-sluzby/lide-v-nouzi/> (9/21/2011).

10/ Once they have been fully named in the text, we will then use abbreviations for churches and church institutions. CZ or SK appearing at the end of the abbreviations stands for "in the Czech Republic" or "in the Slovak Republic".

11/ Quoted from the official web page of MC, see <http://www.jbcr.info/index.php?str=1&tp=1> (9/21/2011).

12/ More information can be found at <http://www.oprk.cz/> (9/21/2011).

13/ See <http://ecmkladno.webnode.cz/zdarma/> (9/21/2011).

14/ See <http://www.arocha.org/int-cs/index.html> (9/21/2011).

15/ See <http://www.orthodoxa.cz/> (9/21/2011).

16/ See <http://www.baptist.sk/spolu-proti-chudobe> (9/27/2011).

In the AC CZ there exists the Nehemia Foundation (NfN), which is involved in the missionary work among foreigners living in the Czech Republic under the patronage of program "Ondřej".<sup>29</sup>

Regrettably, the situation in Slovakia is maybe even worse. Except the Charity program of the RCC SK caring for immigrants we did not manage to identify any other systematic activities which would lead to the constructive education in dealing with the issue of otherness. The reasons of this situation are obviously similar as in the Czech Republic.

The issue of otherness is inevitably connected with inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue. Generally speaking the Czech churches practically do not have any "professionals of the inter-religious dialogue", as we know them from churches in Western Europe and North America. We can claim that inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue of the Czech churches is still in the preschool age. The attitude of the churches to the issues of inter-religious dialogue clearly mirrors their attitude to other non-Christian religions. It is quite common, e.g. in the AC CZ or in the Czech Baptist Union (CBU CZ), that non-Christian religions are perceived in a negative way and thus the dialogue with them is not supported at all.<sup>30</sup> In contrast, the ECCB CZ is slightly more open to the positive reception of non-Christian religions, which can be deduced from the satisfactory participation of its members in inter-religious activities. Again, we must highlight the fact that this does not happen as a result of an organized and systematic approach but rather it stems from private interest of several individuals.

What has been said about the attitude of the Czech churches to inter-religious dialogue can be also said about the churches in Slovakia, where situation is even more critical. The analysis of the data provided by our research on missionary activities showed that a single (!) organised church community in Slovakia supports the dialogue with other religions in its program. It is the Focolare Movement (Work of Mary), which belongs to the missionary movements and societies of the RCC SK.<sup>31</sup>

Dialogue of churches with contemporary (non-)religious culture is, however, slightly more developed. The most profound experience in this field has probably the RCC CZ, which sponsors, e.g., the activity of the Czech Christian Academy (CCA)<sup>32</sup> or the Christian Academy of Moravia and Silesia (MSKA).<sup>33</sup> The CHC CZ also systematically attempts to develop a prolific dialogue with contemporary culture, mostly in the form of organizing lectures, exhibitions, concerts etc.<sup>34</sup> The Eastern Orthodox Academy Vilémov of the EOC CZ has been already mentioned. The AC CZ tries to communicate with contemporary culture through its initiative "Church Without Boundaries", which focuses on founding church congregations on the basis of adopting elements from the contemporary non-religious culture (the so-called *emerging churches*).<sup>35</sup> Some of the congregations of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (ECAC CZ) and the Old-Catholic Church (OCC CZ) lead the dialogue with post-modern culture in the form of film, literature or debate circles and lectures. The Střep Theatre under the patronage of the EBC CZ seeks contemporary

29/ More information on this program can be found on the web pages of NfN, see [http://nehemia.cz/?page\\_id=2131](http://nehemia.cz/?page_id=2131) (9/21/2011).

30/ See, e.g., the leaflet of the Department for Evangelization and Mission of the AC CZ, freely accessible in the PDF format here: [http://apostolskacirkev.cz/storage/letak\\_misie.pdf](http://apostolskacirkev.cz/storage/letak_misie.pdf) (9/21/2011).

31/ See the official web page of the movement <http://www.focolare.sk/> (9/27/2011).

32/ See <http://www.krestanskaakademie.cz/> (9/21/2011).

33/ See <http://www.mska.biz/> (9/21/2011).

34/ Cf. the self-definition of CHC CZ on its web page <http://www.ccsk.cz/> (9/21/2011).

35/ The overall summary of the project and links to web pages of particular congregations involved in the project can be found on the web page <http://www.cirkevbezhranic.cz/> (9/21/2011).

expression of the message of the Gospel through dialogue with methods and sources of modern art.<sup>36</sup> In the terms of the issue of enculturation and inter-cultural relationships the attitude of the CBU CZ is worth mentioning. In its "foreign" mission, the CBU CZ always stresses the "native" element, i.e. it is convinced that within the country or another geopolitical area there should work primarily the native missionaries from this area (as we can see, e.g., in the missionary projects of the CBU in Armenia).<sup>37</sup> The CBU CZ nevertheless also accepts the reverted model based on inter-cultural relationships, which can be seen, e.g., in a Czech missionary quest to Kenya in order to prevent spreading of HIV/AIDS. The "indigenous" type of mission is also preferred by the CHC CZ in its project "Africa to Africa".<sup>38</sup>

In Slovakia the number of activities of churches in the terms of the inter-cultural dialogue is still lower compared to the Czech Republic. In the EOC SR, dialogue with contemporary culture is provided by the Eastern Orthodox Academy in Slovakia.<sup>39</sup> One of the Roman-Catholic missionary movements and societies focusing on Christianization of human culture is the Forum of Christian Institutions.<sup>40</sup> It is also worth mentioning that the International Evangelical Youth Centre (MEMC, working under auspices of the ECAC SK) sent its missionary worker to Africa in September 2011 within the program "Foundation for Cross-Cultural Education", focused on the development of agriculture.<sup>41</sup>

It is remarkable that the analysed data about missionary work of the churches assembled in the ECC in the Czech Republic and Slovakia did not provide any information about church activities which would emphasize the struggle against political criminality, white-collar crime or corruption. We thus have no evidence for the existence of such activities. There might be many reasons for this situation, the neglect of website update by church representatives being one of them. It is also possible that the churches generally resigned on such activities because of a lack of necessary experience, resources or skilled staff, or because of a lack of interest in this particular area of civic engagement.

On the other hand, the churches in the Czech Republic have quite a rich experience and wide "portfolio" of activities focused on prevention or help in solving various types of critical situations (social, medical, economical and humanitarian above all). The central role in this area is played by Diaconias<sup>42</sup> in the Protestant environment and by the Charity of the RCC CZ.<sup>43</sup> These organizations provide charitable, humanitarian and social help to people who are handicapped or socially excluded in various ways and for various reasons. From the wide and highly-developed spectrum of offers of social services we should at least mention rest homes for seniors, day-care centres, sheltered workshops and habitation, classes, advisory centres, youth drop-in clubs and centres, asylum houses or support for foreigners. These are usually common to all Protestant Diaconias (or the Charity of the RCC CZ). Besides them, some of the Diaconias

36/ See <http://divadlostrep.cz/> (9/21/2011).

37/ The so-called Indigenous Mission Project (IMP) organized by the European Baptist Federation (EBF), which helps local Baptist "evangelists" in their missionary work in their countries. They gain financial support for five years, then they begin to be paid by the locals. For more information on the project see <http://www.ebf.org/imp/>. (9/21/2011).

38/ For more information see <http://www.afrikaafriice.cz/> (9/21/2011).

39/ See <http://academy.minet.sk/> (9/21/2011).

40/ See <http://www.fki.sk/> (9/21/2011).

41/ For more information see, e.g., <http://www.memc.sk/spravy/zahranicna-misia/sprava-misia-zambia-september-2011> (9/21/2011).

42/ ECCB, EBC CZ, CHC CZ, EMC CZ, MC, Silesian Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession (SECAC) and SDAC CZ have all their own organizations, all of them called Diaconia. The CHC CZ calls this organization the Diaconia and Mission.

43/ In EOC CZ there exists a similar organization called Philanthropy, but there can not be found much about it on its website.

also offer specific services, e.g., the Diaconia of the ECCB is engaged in helping the victims of violent crimes and human trafficking<sup>44</sup> and the Diaconia of the EMC CZ has highly elaborated programs of help for drug-addicts.<sup>45</sup> It is remarkable that the Diaconia of the SDAC CZ serves exclusively to the members of the church. The SDAC CZ finds theological support for this stance in the biblical text of Acts 6.<sup>46</sup> Nevertheless, it is the ADRA organization which undertakes the quest to help "outside the church", being involved mainly in humanitarian and development help at home and in foreign countries.<sup>47</sup> Within the AC CZ there exists the abovementioned NfN with a similar orientation.<sup>48</sup> Besides the nationwide organizations of Diaconia/Charity, there are also several civil associations founded and led by particular church congregations of many churches assembled in the ECC CZ (including the CBU CZ, EBC CZ, EMC CZ, MC, EOC CZ, SECAC and OCC CZ). These civil associations devote themselves to educational and advisory activities in the area of prevention and help in personal and generally-social critical situations (mostly by organizing lectures on the issues like bullying, racism, AIDS, drugs, etc. and by helping the people in need practically). But they also provide classes focused on the requalification of people to enable them to enter the job market and the resocialization of the excluded members of the society (e.g. social rehabilitation of people who returned from the prison), and develop also other areas of social and charitable work. The EOC CZ has its own anti-drug advisory centre and forum.<sup>49</sup> The OCC CZ runs the socially-pastoral centre *Communio*.<sup>50</sup> The AC CZ, CBU CZ and EMC CZ participate at the international program Teen Challenge, which aims to help young people going through various life crises (alcohol, drugs, depressions, loss of home etc.).<sup>51</sup> The AC CZ and EMC CZ also engage in projects of the ACET association, focusing on the prevention of risk behaviour of teenage people concerning HIV/AIDS.<sup>52</sup>

The churches in Slovakia show similar emphases on activities connected with preventing and helping in various types of crisis situations. The Diaconia/Charity also play a major role in Slovakia. To name a few examples, we have to mention the service of the Diaconia of the SBU SK in the area of resocialization of drug addicts<sup>53</sup>; the Diaconia of the ECAC SK in the area of preventing crisis situations in life: running of halfway houses, organization of summer camps for children from poor families, etc.<sup>54</sup>; the Diaconia of the EMC SK in the area of help for people in need, especially the lonely, threatened, diseased, disabled, socially marginalised, poor or imprisoned, etc.<sup>55</sup>; the Diaconia of the AC SK in the area of help and advi-

sory to poor families<sup>56</sup>; the Charity of the RCC SK in the area of social services and prevention<sup>57</sup>; and the Slovak Catholic Diaconia of the OCC SK in the area of resocialization of handicapped people or prevention of a risk sexual behaviour.<sup>58</sup> The ECAC SK runs its project of the Slovak Evangelistic Center (EVS), which also provides pastoral care and missionary work in prisons.<sup>59</sup> The Reformed save mission of the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia (RefCC SK) provides help to drug or alcohol addicts or depressed people.<sup>60</sup> The same goal is also pursued by the program of Teen Challenge project of the AC SK, of which the Czech subsidiary has been already mentioned.<sup>61</sup> As in the Czech Republic, the AC SK runs the ACET initiative focusing on education in the area of risk sexual behaviour concerning HIV/AIDS. The humanitarian association ADRA, run by the SDAC SK, has also its subsidiary in Slovakia caring for people in need in many ways (economical development, food supplies, primary healthcare, prevention of natural disasters, education).<sup>62</sup> The RCC SK runs multiple missionary movements, societies, monasteries and nunneries caring for the support of the poor, diseased, homeless, marginalized, disabled or imprisoned people (as, e.g., the missionary movements such as Rodina Nepoškvrněnej [Family of the Immaculate], Slovak Missionary Movement, Faith and Light, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, or the orders such as Missionary Sisters Servants of the Holy Spirit, Congregation of Sisters Servants of Blessed Virgin Mary, Capuchin Tertiary Sisters of the Holy Family etc.).

## Economics and consumerism

The issues treated in the previous chapter about society are in fact very closely tied to the issue of economics and consumerism. The abovementioned collective monograph contains articles by economist Andrej Miklošič<sup>63</sup> and theologian Pavol Bargár,<sup>64</sup> which deal explicitly with the attitude of the church towards economics, or consumerism.

When discussing the economical criminality in the previous subchapter we already mentioned the fact that the data we collected about the missionary activities of the Czech and Slovak churches showed a very little, if any, interest of churches in the area of economics. We have to claim at this moment that the same thing can be told about the issue of the advertising and the advertising market.

Contrarily, the issue of consumerism is treated quite frequently in the Czech and Slovak churches, but as it is shown in Bargár's article in the monograph *Crisis Situations in the Czecho-Slovak Context after 1989*, the term consumerism is often used in a superficial and oversimplified way. We still lack a thorough missiological reflection of the phenomena of consumerism and consumer society and its practical application to the missionary practice of Czech and Slovak churches.

57/ See <http://www.charita.sk/stranky/sluzby-slovenskej-katolickej-charity> (9/27/2011).

58/ See <http://skd.slovenski-katolici.sk/> (9/27/2011).

59/ See [http://www.evs.sk/index.php?option=com\\_blankcomponent&Itemid=29&lang=sk](http://www.evs.sk/index.php?option=com_blankcomponent&Itemid=29&lang=sk) (9/27/2011).

60/ See KIS, B. A. "Reformovaná kresťanská cirkev na Slovensku". In FAZEKAS, J. – HUNČÍK, P. (eds.), *Maďari na Slovensku (1989 – 2004). Súhrnná správa. Od zmeny režimu po vstup do Európskej únie*. Šamorín : Fórum inštitút pre výskum menšín 2008. pp. 403-411, here p. 409; here quoted from the online version [http://www.foruminst.sk/publ/magy/5/magys-zlovban\\_5\\_bela-a-kis.pdf](http://www.foruminst.sk/publ/magy/5/magys-zlovban_5_bela-a-kis.pdf) (9/27/2011).

61/ See <http://www.teenchallenge.sk/> (9/27/2011).

62/ See <http://www.adra.sk/> (9/27/2011).

63/ MIKLOŠIČ, A. "The Impact of the Economic Cycle Changes on the Individual Subjects' Behaviour with the Application to the Advertising Market". In Jurechová –Bargár (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 93-103.

64/ BARGÁR, P. "The Problem of Consumerism in the Context of Churches in former Czechoslovakia after 1989". In Jurechová –Bargár (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 104-119.

44/ See <http://www.diakonie.cz/nase-sluzby/lide-v-nouzi/> (9/21/2011).

45/ See <http://www.diumc.cz/projekty/> (9/21/2011).

46/ Cf. [http://www2.casd.cz/mss/system/view.php?src=inc\\_diak\\_vyber&dat=DK\\_popis](http://www2.casd.cz/mss/system/view.php?src=inc_diak_vyber&dat=DK_popis) (9/21/2011).

47/ For more information see <http://www.adra.cz/adra/kdo-jsme> (9/21/2011).

48/ See <http://nehemia.cz/> (9/21/2011).

49/ See <http://www.popjan.cz/forum/index.php> (9/21/2011).

50/ The centre does not have its own webpage. For contact information see <http://www.cerebrum2007.cz/sluzby/socialni/osobni-asistence/communio-socialne-pastoracni-stredisko-starokatolicke-cirkve.html> (9/21/2011).

51/ See <http://www.teenchallenge.cz/> (9/21/2011).

52/ See <http://www.acet.cz/> (9/21/2011).

53/ See <http://www.baptist.sk/zlozky/diakonia> (9/27/2011). This is mainly the work of Diaconia association named Rodina (Family).

54/ See <http://www.diakonia.sk/index.php/sluzby.html> (9/27/2011).

55/ See <http://www.umc.sk/www/index.php?page=diakonia> (9/27/2011). Statute of the organization is freely downloadable from the web page in MS Word compatible format.

56/ See <http://www.acsr.sk/sluzby/charita-diakonia> (9/27/2011). Annual reports and detailed information on various projects can be also found on this web page.

## Family and children

In the cited monograph, the issues connected with the problem of contemporary family and children were treated by sociologist Jiřina Šiklová<sup>65</sup> and pedagogy theorist/educationalist Mária Matulčíková.<sup>66</sup>

Both studies reflect on changes in the traditional structure of family and childhood, which may become possible sources of crisis situations and therefore are relevant for our mission research. In the following paragraphs we will make an attempt to bring the overview of activities of the churches in the Czech Republic and Slovakia dealing with these issues.

Our research on missionary work of churches gathered in the ECC CZ and ECC SK shows that the Czech and Slovak churches give a considerable space to the work with children and whole families. In many churches (such as, e.g., the CBU CZ, EMC CZ, MC, OCC CZ and others) there are congregations (or, as in case of MC, also purpose organizations and civil associations<sup>67</sup>) involved in various types of work with children (as, e.g., children's clubs, language, sport or "adventurous" camps, Sunday children parties, computer or craftwork lessons, interest groups, lectures, drug abuse or HIV/AIDS preventive education, youth meetings etc.). The Diaconias of the ECCB,<sup>68</sup> EMC CZ,<sup>69</sup> CHC CZ<sup>70</sup> and SECAC<sup>71</sup> respectively also devote themselves to the work with young people. These particularly include youth drop-in centres, asylum houses, care for disabled children and young people (morning care, daily or weekly care centres, special schools, centres of daily service etc.), help to the victims of violence and human trafficking, etc. The work with children is particularly emphasized in the RCC CZ and AC CZ. The AC CZ has several projects for children, e.g. Kidsquest (an evangelization program for children of all ages), the



*Retelling the story of the Battle of Hastings in 1066 from the famous Bayeux Tapestry (part of the textile installation). The author's technique on a linen and cotton fabric.*

65/ ŠIKLOVÁ, J. "A Family Album: Changes of Family and the Present Time". In Jurechová –Bargár (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 139-145.

66/ MATULČIKOVÁ, M. "The Continuity and Transformations of Childhood in the Pedagogical Context". In Jurechová –Bargár (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 146-156.

67/ The overview of civil associations of MC can be found at <http://www.jbcr.info/index.php?str=7&tp=1> (9/22/2011).

68/ For further information on projects and services of Diaconia of ECCB see <http://www.diakonie.cz/nase-sluzby/deti-a-mladi-lide/> (9/22/2011).

69/ For example the Y-port Centre in Jihlava, see <http://www.diumc.cz/products/stredisko-krestanske-pomoci-y-port-jihlava1/> (9/22/2011).

70/ The overview and contact information of spare-time centres can be found at <http://diakonie.cch.cz/strediska-diaconie/> (9/22/2011).

71/ For further information on projects and services of the Silesian Diaconia of SECAC see <http://www.slezskadiakonie.cz/nase-projekty/tuzemske-projekty/projekty-stredisek-slezske-diaconie/> (9/22/2011).

Department for the Work with Children (training for workers with children), Royal Rangers (free time activities).<sup>72</sup> The already mentioned NfN supports children in need in Africa and children's homes in Ukraine.<sup>73</sup> In the previous subchapter we already mentioned the projects Teen Challenge and ACET, which help young people to overcome problems like depressions, drug addiction, alcoholism or irresponsible sexual behaviour, and provide also prevention of these phenomena. The RCC CZ emphasizes, first and foremost, the education of children and young people—not only through catechesis but also through the proper institutional education, i.e. church schools. The RCC CZ has therefore founded many educational institutions of all degrees from nursery schools to universities.<sup>74</sup> The Czech Bishops' Conference (CBC) of the RCC CZ has also its special department for youths.<sup>75</sup> In the framework of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) it also helps children from developing countries.<sup>76</sup> When speaking about the PMS we should also mention the project which involves children from rich countries helping children of the same age in poor countries—both materially and morally.<sup>77</sup> Besides the RCC CZ and AC CZ, the support of children from the Third World is also provided by, e.g., the CBU CZ (support of orphans in Kenya) or the SECAC (the project "Children of Africa"<sup>78</sup>). In the evangelization of children and young people some of the churches use modern, less traditional approaches. As an example of this approach we can mention the EBC CZ and its programs TURBO 316 (evangelization lessons for young people<sup>79</sup>)<sup>80</sup> or "Athletes in Action" (organizing of "adventurous" weekends and sport activities).<sup>81</sup> Another example can be found in the SDAC CZ and its Pathfinder club (for children)<sup>82</sup>, the website Mládež.net (for young people)<sup>83</sup>, and the student initiative INRI Road (for university students).<sup>84</sup>

In Slovakia almost all churches devote themselves to working with children. The SBU SK has a special department for the work with young people<sup>85</sup> and a department for the work with children (called also the department for education).<sup>86</sup> Their approach to missionary work is holistic, connecting evangelization with education and diaconia. The EBC SK has a similar program called Union of Children and Young People, which organizes camps, conferences, educational programs, exchange visits etc.<sup>87</sup> In the ECAC SK

72/ See <http://www.royalrangers.cz/> (9/21/2011). Also some of the EMC CZ congregations participate at the activities of Royal Rangers.

73/ See [http://nehemia.cz/?page\\_id=2136](http://nehemia.cz/?page_id=2136) (9/21/2011).

74/ See <http://www.cirkev.cz/cirkev-vzdelava/> (9/22/2011).

75/ See <http://www.cirkev.cz/cirkev-se-setkava/mladez/> (9/22/2011).

76/ See <http://www.misijnidila.cz/> (9/22/2011) or the 2010 annual report of PMS at [http://www.misijnidila.cz/2sl\\_materi-aly/Vyrocn-izprava\\_PMD\\_2010\\_final\\_web.pdf](http://www.misijnidila.cz/2sl_materi-aly/Vyrocn-izprava_PMD_2010_final_web.pdf) (9/22/2011).

77/ For more information on this project read the annual report mentioned in the footnote No. 60, pp. 14-17

78/ See <http://www.sceav.cz/cs/misijni-aktivita/deti-afriky.html> (9/22/2011).

79/ As an example of more traditional evangelization course we can mention the summer evangelization course of ECCB organized by POEM every year. But here, also, can be seen a vital interest in new approaches and methods.

80/ See <http://turbo316.kam.cz/> (9/22/2011). EBC CZ cooperates with Christian Youth Academy (KAM), which is the author of the project.

81/ See <http://www.cb.cz/ava/> (9/22/2011).

82/ See <http://www.pathfinder.cz/> (9/22/2011).

83/ See <http://www.mladez.net/> (9/22/2011).

84/ See <http://www.inriroad.cz/> (9/22/2011).

85/ See the special website for working with young people <http://mladez.baptist.sk/> (9/27/2011).

86/ See the website of department <http://odborprepracusdetmi.baptist.sk/> (9/27/2011).

87/ The website is still under construction, for further information see the Facebook page <http://www.facebook.com/pages/%C3%9Ania-det%C3%AD-a-ml%C3%A1de%C5%BEE/179524338772303?sk=wall>.

there is a department for so called internal mission which is responsible for the work with children and young people, operating within both districts of the ECAC SK in Slovakia—the Western and the Eastern. Evangelical Lutheran youths are also gathered in the Evangelical Youth Association (SEM)<sup>88</sup> and the Inter-national Evangelical Youth Centre (MEMC)<sup>89</sup>. The two organize various free time activities for young people (sports, music, culture, camps, festivals etc.). A very important role in the work with children within the ECAC SK is played by so-called Children's Party (Sunday School).<sup>90</sup> The Evangelical Diaconia of the ECAC SK also devotes itself to working with children and youths, running various institutions and services such as children's house, boarding school for deaf-blind children, care centre, camp for children from poor families, halfway house, etc.<sup>91</sup> The EOC SK has its own organization named Brotherhood of Orthodox Youth in Slovakia – SYNDESMOS; the latter organizes work and summer camps, sport events, shows, spiritual meetings etc.<sup>92</sup> The RefCC SK runs a children's home in Jelka named Dom Dobrého pastiera (Good Shepherd's House) and an association RE-MI-DIA, which organizes youth meetings and publishes handbooks for the work with children.<sup>93</sup> In the AC SK, in addition to the projects Teen Challenge and ACET mentioned in connection with the AC CZ which also exist in Slovakia, there is the association Generation Y, whose aim is to spread the Gospel among young people by using methods adopted from contemporary culture.<sup>94</sup> Free time activities for children are, as in the case of the AC CZ, also provided by Royal Rangers.<sup>95</sup> The SDAC SK, similar to the SDAC CZ, runs Pathfinder Club, a scout-type organization for children and youths.<sup>96</sup> In the RCC SK there are many subjects caring for children and young people. To name a few: the Association of Salesian Cooperators<sup>97</sup> and Domka – the Association of Salesian Youth<sup>98</sup> (Salesian associations provide probably the most complex care for children and youth—free time activities, education, courses, prevention, care for children from marginalised families etc.); eRko—Christian Children Community Movement (the aim of the movement is to "give the children an opportunity to experience the church as an intimate community" through meetings, camps, trips and other activities)<sup>99</sup>; the Marian Youth Association (organizes camps, sport and cultural events)<sup>100</sup>; the Slovak Catholic Unity ("organizes educational activities and creates the appropriate protective programs especially for the young people")<sup>101</sup>; the Association of Christian Youth Communities (work with young people focused on their spending of the spare-time in a valuable way)<sup>102</sup>; an association of children and young people NODAM (programs of personal development focused on spare-time spending and shaping of responsible individuals).<sup>103</sup> There are also

88/ See <http://www.sem.sk/sk/uvod> (9/27/2011).

89/ See <http://www.memc.sk/> (9/27/2011).

90/ See [http://www.ecav.sk/detska\\_besiedka/index.php](http://www.ecav.sk/detska_besiedka/index.php) (9/27/2011).

91/ See <http://www.diaconia.sk/index.php/sluzby.html> (9/27/2011).

92/ See <http://bpm.orthodox.sk/bpm3/index1.php> (9/27/2011).

93/ See <http://www.remidia.sk/> (9/27/2011).

94/ See <http://www.generaciay.sk/> (9/27/2011).

95/ See <http://www.royal-rangers.sk/home> (9/27/2011).

96/ See <http://www.pathfinder.sk/> (9/27/2011).

97/ See <http://www.ascsllovakia.sk/> (9/27/2011).

98/ See <http://www.domka.sk/site/> (9/27/2011).

99/ See <http://www.erko.sk/o-erku/info-o-erku/> (9/27/2011).

100/ See <http://zmm.sk/> (9/27/2011).

101/ See <http://www.kjs.sk/> (9/27/2011).

102/ See <http://www.zksm.sk/> (9/27/2011).

103/ See <http://www.nodam.sk/> (9/27/2011).

several monasteries and nunneries which perceive the work with children and youths as their primary quest, to name a few: Salesians of Don Bosco<sup>104</sup> and Salesians—Daughters of Mary Help of Christians<sup>105</sup> (emphasizing the holistic approach to personal development of youths); the Roman Union of the Order of Saint Ursula<sup>106</sup> (education focused on evangelization). The important role in this area belongs to the Charity of the RCC SK, for it runs centres for disabled children and special elementary schools, and provides various similar services.<sup>107</sup>

Missionary and pastoral activities of churches focused primarily on families are also quite frequent in the Czech churches, even though their number is smaller compared to the activities for children and young people. Again, we can successfully apply the aforementioned pattern: all the activities are directed either by particular congregations or by church organizations (such as the Diaconia). The first type prevails in the churches such as the CBU CZ, EMC CZ or MC, where particular church congregations found and run family or maternity centres. The second type, i.e., the Diaconia, is preferred by churches as the ECCB<sup>108</sup>, SECAC<sup>109</sup>, EMC CZ<sup>110</sup> or CHC CZ with highly developed programs for families and relations of parental partnership, supporting various asylum houses, halfway houses, civil advisories, crisis intervention (also by phone), family community centres, social activation services for families with children etc. It is notable for our research that the centre DUHA, patronized by the Diaconia and Mission of the CHC CZ, offers services focused on psycho-social rehabilitation of socially excluded families and social activation services for families with children, youths and children disadvantaged because of educational or development problems.<sup>111</sup> In the SDAC CZ the work with families is provided by Christian Home department, offering help to families, premarital courses etc. Several congregations of the ECAC CZ and the OCC CZ organize family worships. And it is also worth mentioning that the Czech Bishops' Conference of the RCC CZ is founder of the National Centre for Family, of which the primary aim is to monitor the social conditions relating to family life in the Czech Republic and to support pro-family initiatives.<sup>112</sup>

Missionary work of the Slovak churches for the sake of family was, quite surprisingly, less frequent in our research data than in the Czech churches. Nevertheless, we should not forget mentioning advisory for parents provided by a department of pastoral care and advisory of the SBU SK.<sup>113</sup> In the RCC SK family services are run, e.g., by the Christian Family Movement in Slovakia (advisory work, camps, educational courses, exchange visits)<sup>114</sup> or Faith and Light (helping families with disabled children to find a dignified place in church and society).<sup>115</sup>

104/ See <http://www.saleziani.sk/> (9/27/2011).

105/ See <http://www.salezianky.sk/> (9/27/2011).

106/ See <http://www.ursulinky.sk/> (9/27/2011).

107/ See <http://www.charita.sk/stranky/sluzby-slovenskej-katolickej-charity> (9/27/2011).

108/ See <http://www.diaconie.cz/nase-sluzby/rodina-a-partnerstvi/> (9/22/2011).

109/ See <http://www.slezskadiaconie.cz/nase-projekty/tuzemske-projekty/projekty-stredisek-slezske-diaconie> (9/22/2011), especially the project Assistance for Children, A Rest for Parents.

110/ See <http://www.diumc.cz/projekty/> (9/22/2011), especially the maternal centres Klubičko and Duha.

111/ For further information and contacts see <http://diaconie.cch.cz/strediska-diaconie> (9/22/2011).

112/ See <http://www.rodiny.cz/07/> (9/22/2011).

113/ See <http://www.baptist.sk/zlozky/odbor-pastoracie-a-poradenstva> (9/27/2011).

114/ See [www.hkr.host.sk/](http://www.hkr.host.sk/) (2/24/2012).

115/ See <http://www.vieraasvetlo.sk/> (9/27/2011).

As we have seen from the brief overview, the Czech and Slovak churches pay quite a lot of their attention to the issue of family and children. It is thus possible to draw two preliminary conclusions. (1) Many churches support children in the framework of so-called "foreign mission".<sup>116</sup> These activities, nevertheless, almost completely disregard recent transformations in the structures of family and childhood as such. However, it is necessary to evaluate positively the global accenting of the enculturation approach and the aim to guide the subjects of help to recover their ability of helping themselves. (2) As we can conclude from the collected material, church activities for the sake of children and families are dominated by services and projects of the free time centre or family centre type. This trend refers to changes in the traditional family structure and childhood, as analysed in the studies of J. Šiklová and M. Matulčíková. Children spare less and less time with their parents, who often tend to prefer their professional careers to family life. Many mothers also can not afford to stay home during their maternity leave because of economical reasons and they have to find at least a part-time job. Grandparents also do not inevitably fulfil their former roles of "babysitters". It seems that churches noticed these structural changes of family and quite flexibly adjusted their offer of family services. A further reflection followed by practical application could be done in the direction implied by the study of Matulčíková – the churches should find their way and position in cooperation with school and family education of children.

It is necessary to remember the fact that this trend is more developed in the case of the Czech churches than the Slovak ones, which refers either (1) to larger changes in the structure of family (and the society as a whole) in the Czech Republic in comparison with Slovakia, or/and (2) lesser flexibility of Slovak churches in reaction to these changes.

## Personality and identity

Fourth and the last area of our research included the issues connected with human personality and identity in contemporary Czech and Slovak society. In the monograph this issue was treated in the study of cultural scientist Alexander Plencner<sup>117</sup> and psychologist and theologian Martin Balko.<sup>118</sup>

In the following paragraphs of our study we will try to find out whether and to what extent the Czech and Slovak churches respond to human "psychological" crises – traumas – and crises of gender identity.

The material which we have collected for our research shows clearly the fact that problems of changes in gender identity, and also gender issues in general, are paid no attention in church missionary activities. However, we may suppose that these issues are at least partly involved in the "packaging" of other advisory and pastoral services. At the same time, advisory and pastoral services are tied closely to the issue of psychic trauma as a life crisis, treated in the study of M. Balko. On the basis of our research data we can conclude that the Czech churches very often devote themselves to psychotherapy, which they consider primarily as a spiritual and pastoral service. We have already touched their work in this area when speaking about personal crises and its solutions. In this place we will thus only repeat the information that particular congregations of various churches (these are, e.g., the CBU CZ, EBC CZ, EMC CZ, MC, EOC CZ, SECAC, OCC CZ etc.) are founders of civil associations which focus on education and advisory work in the area of

116/ This is obvious mainly in Czech churches.

117/ PLENCNER, A. "The Crisis of Gender Identity, Intimacy and Communication in Popular Culture". In Jurechová –Bargár (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 120-138.

118/ BALKO, M. "The Life Crisis as a Predictor of Posttraumatic Symptoms". In Jurechová –Bargár (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 157-165.



*The Virtue Series.*  
*PERSEVERANCE.*  
*Stone, metal thread.*

*"I want to become a rain-  
drop - there's nothing  
more perseverant."*  
*(Daniel Hevier)*

*Photo by Jozef Česla*

prevention of and help in personal crises, including psychic problems and traumas, and a care for healthy mental development of young people (e.g. the civil association Lano [Rope] founded and run by the congregation of the CBU CZ in Šumperk<sup>119</sup>). Also worth mentioning is the socially-pastoral centre of OCC CZ named Communio, providing pastoral, advisory and information services and assistance, the project Teen Challenge, which tries to help young people facing depressions (the AC CZ, CBU CZ, EMC CZ), and psychosocial anti-drug advisory work of the EOC CZ.<sup>120</sup> Systematic, professional, pastoral and advisory services are also offered by the Diaconias of the CHC CZ, ECCB, EMC CZ and SECAC). We should point out the Diaconia of the EMC CZ, while cooperating with the Institute of Applied Psychoanalysis and offering psychotherapeutic training, provides the complex education in psychotherapy (certified by the Czech Psychotherapeutic Society of the Czech Medical Chamber).<sup>121</sup> In many churches of Western Europe and North America, hospital chaplaincy has become a common and highly appreciated service. The ECC CZ also answered the overall need for hospital chaplain service by forming the ECC Commission for Pastoral Care in Medical Facilities.<sup>122</sup> The RCC CZ also provides pastoral care through the Charity; it also runs a confidence hotline.<sup>123</sup>

In the Slovak context the situation is very similar that it is common for the churches to offer pastoral care and advisory services. For example, the SBU SK has a department for pastoral care and advisory work.<sup>124</sup> In its association named Betánia, the EBC SK offers not only spiritual and pastoral advisory services, but also a music therapy, Bible therapy or an art therapy.<sup>125</sup> Free psychological and social advi-

119/ See <http://www.lano.cz/index.php> (9/22/2011).

120/ See <http://drogporadna.popjan.cz/poradna.htm> (9/22/2011).

121/ For further information see <http://www.diumc.cz/sebezkusenostni-vyvik/> (9/22/2011).

122/ See <http://www.ekumenickarada.cz/index.php?setlang=1&a=cat.38> (9/22/2011). The study day of the ECC CZ, which took place October 21 and 22, 2011, focused on the pastoral service in healthcare and the Czech Association of Hospital Chaplains was established here.

123/ See <http://help.vira.cz/> (9/22/2011).

124/ See <http://www.baptist.sk/zlozky/odbor-pastoracie-a-poradenstva> (9/27/2011).

125/ See <http://www.betania.sk/kalinovo.html> (9/27/2011).

sory services are provided by the CHC SK.<sup>126</sup> The EOC SK provides psychological advisory services in the framework of its non-profit organization DOM (patronized by the Orthodox Philanthropy). The RCC SK and ECAC SK provide psychological and pastoral care to young people, especially university students in their university pastoral centres<sup>127</sup> or the SEM organization.<sup>128</sup> The SDAC SK is the founder of Štúdio Nádej (The Hope Studio)—a non-profit organization which offers medical, psychological, pastoral and social advisory services.<sup>129</sup>

## Conclusion

Our study is based on the presupposition that certain types of crisis situations exist in the contemporary Czech and Slovak context, as they were described in the monograph *Crisis Situations in the Czecho-Slovak Context after 1989* by researchers from various human and social scientific disciplines. For the purpose of this study, we divided the crisis situations into four main typological blocks: society, economics/consumerism, family/children and personality/identity. Next we attempted to answer the question, whether and in which way the Czech and Slovak Christian churches assembled in the Ecumenical Councils of Churches in the Czech Republic and Slovakia responded to the challenges defined by crisis situations in their missionary approach to the Czech and Slovak society and citizens. The study draws the information about missionary activities of churches from the previous research based on monitoring of the webpages of the Czech and Slovak churches, congregations and church organizations.

We found that missionary work of churches in the four typological blocks of crisis situations vary from block to block. While the Czech and Slovak churches show a high degree of engagement in the area of working with children and family or in the area of helping to solve difficult personal crises of individuals they practically neglect the whole area of economics or changes in gender identity. They also do not have much experience in dealing with otherness; the same could be said about the active civic engagement. The first steps were already made in the area of inter-religious dialogue, although they are still not grounded in the official institutional basis of churches and thus remain the domain of involved individuals. Our analysis also showed substantial differences between the practices of particular churches in connection to those three last issues (i.e. otherness, civic engagement, inter-religious dialogue).

From the comparison of various types of missionary approaches of the Czech and Slovak churches we can draw the conclusion that the situation in the Czech Republic and the situation in Slovakia show, generally speaking, more similarities than differences. In other words, the Czech and Slovak churches dynamically focus on certain types of activities while they seem to neglect others. Still, several differences can be found: the Czech churches seem to provide more activities and programs for families (namely the family and maternity centres) and they engage more in the area of constructive dealing with otherness and inter-religious relations. The Slovak churches entirely left both of these issues aside, while we could notice at least some rudimentary attempts in the Czech churches.

126/ See <http://www.ccsz.szm.com/poradenstvo/pastst.html> (9/27/2011).

127/ For links to web pages and contact information of all university pastoral centres of the RCC CZ see <http://www.upc.rcc.sk/> (9/27/2011).

128/ See <http://www.klub31.sk/news.php> (9/27/2011). The university pastoral centre MOSTY (Bridges) is a part of one of the ECAC SK congregations in Bratislava.

129/ See [http://www.studionadej.sk/?page\\_id=36](http://www.studionadej.sk/?page_id=36) (9/27/2011).

# A Theological Reflection on the Inter-Cultural Common Worship and the Church Planting Initiative of the Kobylysy Church in Prague

Kwang-Hyun Ryu

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## 1. "Inter-Cultural Common Worship" of the Kobylysy Church

### 1.1 Describing the Kobylysy "Inter-Cultural Common Worship"

In the Czech Republic there is a church in which four different ethnic groups coexist and worship together regularly without a common language. Its name is the Kobylysy Church and it is a Czech local church in the capitol city of Prague. The four ethnic groups are Czech, Korean, Japanese, and Mongolian communities. Three times a month each group gathers separately on Sunday according to its own tradition and style, but once a month they worship together.

On the first Sunday of every month, four ethnic groups of the Kobylysy Church worship together with a common liturgical mode which was consented before. In general, the leader of the worship is a Czech pastor from the Kobylysy Church. His Czech saying is soon translated by a Korean translator. Later, the Korean translation is translated into Japanese in a small Japanese group at the back of the chapel. However, Mongolian Christians, who joined in this multi-cultural fellowship recently worship together only with the day's sermon translated into their mother tongue in advance.

Sermon is preached by the Korean and Japanese pastors as well as the Czech pastor. When the Korean pastor preaches, the Czech pastor provides the Czech Christians with a Korean-Czech translation which was prepared in advance. The translation of the sermon is carried out by the unit of paragraph. During the translation, the people who have heard the sermon in their mother tongue meditate the content of the sermon.

The Holy Communion is one of the most crucial parts in this worship. At this time, the limitation of communication becomes the least for here verbal language is less important than visual language. The Czech pastor and the Korean pastor moderate the ceremony together. The different ethnic groups gather around the holy table without any distinction and share bread and wine with the same confession of one body in Christ.

Right before receiving the Lord's bread and wine, congregation prays together the Lord's Prayer in each mother tongue, and then greets each other with the greeting of peace in Czech: "*Pokoj tobě!* (Peace to you!)" . After the Eucharist, there is a time for intercessory prayer. Each moment a leading pastor finishes praying for one subject, all congregation respond to that with the same short prayer in Korean: "*주여, 자비를 베푸소서!* (Lord, give us your mercy!)" .

The worship is concluded with benediction. The Czech pastor and the Korean pastor grant the benediction from Numbers 6:24-26 together in their own mother tongues, while holding their one hand and lifting the other hand.

This kind of worship can be called 'inter-cultural common worship'. This is an 'inter-cultural' worship,

not just 'multi-cultural' worship. If 'multi-cultural' describes a social reality or phenomenon of cultural diversity, 'inter-cultural' connotes "a conceptual vision for explaining and predicting the way that cultures as well as individuals experience dynamic change in the encounter with others."<sup>1</sup> This is also a 'common' worship, not a 'shared' worship. If a 'shared' worship is to practice in turn different worship services which reflect the characteristics of each ethnic group, a 'common' worship is to worship together repeatedly with a common liturgical mode consented by the different groups in advance.

## 1.2 A Theological Reflection on the Kobylysi Inter-Cultural Worship

### 1.2.1 Inter-Cultural Worship as a Restorative Work of God-centered Worship

Worship is both the eternal purpose of all creatures and the central work of God's people.<sup>2</sup> Jesus said that God seeks true worshippers who worship Him in spirit and in truth. (John 4:23-24) Therefore, we should learn to worship God truly. True worship is a worship directed toward the one true God.<sup>3</sup> The truthfulness of worship is not related to how easily we find God with our wisdom, but to how properly we are accepted by one true God. The 'spiritual' worship which is acceptable to God is to 'offer' ourselves as 'living sacrifices' to Him (Romans 12:1). So to speak, worship is to 'offer', and true offering entails sensible and intentional 'dying' (self-denial).

Our worship is influenced by our relationship with one another, our own histories, and our knowledge of God. We learn untrue worship or idol worship as an ordinary part of the human condition within a community oriented to affluence, success, comfort, security, health, and entertainment.<sup>4</sup> As a result, nowadays, many Christians tend to be consumers or audiences of worship. Here, receiving overwhelms offering. Worship is perceived as a means to get something, rather than the purpose itself. This kind of worship is not 'God-centered worship' which should be oriented to God only.

On the other hand, true worship entails the renewing of mind and the transformation of life against the pattern of this world (Romans 12:2). Just as untrue worship is learned in community, not alone, to which we are accustomed, true worship also should be learned in community; that is, a transforming community which can counter the weight of an idolatrous community.<sup>5</sup> In a true worship community we can reflect on our liturgical orientation before one true God and experience the transformation of our mind and life. In the sense, God-centered worship practiced truly is an 'intentional', 'reflective', 'prophetic', and 'restorative' work.<sup>6</sup>

Inter-cultural worship aims at reaching together the true worship through interaction between different cultures to which worshippers belong. It is not a natural setting which satisfies our own desires at ease. Rather, it is a challenging worship which intentionally seeks to place ourselves in an uncomfortable situation against our predilections. In this inter-cultural setting, unfamiliar culture brings our familiar culture into a crisis. With the intrusion of the unfamiliar one, we cannot get easily what we expected within our

1/ Darrell Jackson & Alessia Passarelli, *Mapping Migration: Mapping Churches' Responses – Europe Study* (Nuczice, Czech Republic: Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe, WCC, 2008), p. 12.

2/ Jonathan R. Wilson, *Why Church Matters: Worship, Ministry, and Mission in Practice* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2006), p. 26.

3/ Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 38.

4/ Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 26.

5/ Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 27.

6/ Wilson, *ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

theological framework constituted by our familiar culture.

On the other hand, during the inter-cultural worship, unfamiliar culture makes us see our familiar one anew with a more objective and prophetic perspective. There exists a strong paradoxical tension between infinite God and finite cultures. This tension can lead to the reshaping of a new worldview which is more mature and wholesome. If we can call this transformation a 'cultural conversion', inter-cultural worship can be an opportunity of a continual conversion for true worship and authentic Christian life.

Many Korean Christians think that to succeed in worship means to 'receive grace'. For them, inter-cultural worship might be perceived as non-gracious and therefore untrue worship. Surely, it is a good attitude to desire to meet God more closely during worship. However, worship is essentially an offering prior to a receiving. The success of worship is, thus, related not so much to receiving than to offering. Though receiving is important in worship, authentic receiving is only followed by authentic offering. Without being a true worshipper, we cannot have a true influence on the world.

In the Kobylysi Church, there are some Korean Christians who are reluctant to attend the inter-cultural worship. The church should go together toward a more wholesome worship within one Spirit, while embracing their weakness. Nevertheless, their reluctance might be an evidence of their cultural orientation toward 'consumerism' and 'individualism' shaped unconsciously within the environment of the capitalist society and the atmosphere of so-called 'marketing evangelism'.<sup>7</sup>

For worship consumers, inter-cultural worship might become an interesting show at least once or twice, but the continual uncomfortable worship which requires them to do their best is not a suitable worship to consume. If they do not experience a radical *metanoia* from a 'worship consumer' to a 'true worshipper', they might have to wander around other churches to find worship 'for them' continuously.

As such, inter-cultural worship is a field of spiritual warfare. In the worship we participate in Christ's victory when we confess our sins and turn around our previous ways instead of justifying ourselves.<sup>8</sup> In the sense, the Kobylysi inter-cultural worship is a restorative work of God-centered true worship which makes worshippers' faith oriented toward the paradoxical victory of the Cross and the new life of resurrection.

7/ Bryan Stone, *Evangelism after Christendom: The Theology and Practice of Christian Witness* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2007), p. 163.

8/ Wilson, *ibid.*, p. 31.



THE GARMENT OF THE LENT. "Arttex", natural sheep fleece, photosensitive emulsion on silk. Photo by Jozef Česla

### 1.2.2 Inter-Cultural Worship as the Embodiment of Christian Reconciliatory Identity

Christian identity is the sense of belonging to God's people who were born again in Christ and understand the world around them in Him.<sup>9</sup> "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" for God "reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:17-18). Here, Christians are depicted as the people of reconciliation. Christ's ministry of reconciliation on the Cross has generated a new community of reconciliation.<sup>10</sup> "He has destroyed the barrier", "the dividing wall of hostility", between Jews and Gentiles by abolishing in his flesh the law of exclusion. "His purpose was to create in himself *one new man* out of the two, thus making peace" (Ephians 2:14-15).

As such, inter-ethnic reconciliation is a part of redemption in Christ.<sup>11</sup> The 'one new man' signifies not only the universal Church which transcends all ethnic, racial, sexual, linguistic, or cultural boundaries, but also the Christian reconciliatory identity which transforms hostility into hospitality, and division into integration. In other words, the new Christian identity relativizes (without denying or abolishing) all prior social differences or other identities, "rejecting their discriminatory impact",<sup>12</sup> and integrates all Christians, including future Christians, into "God's household" (Ephians 2:19).<sup>13</sup>

Baptism as the initiation into God's household means to receive a common calling to the new identity of reconciliation and to mutual accountability for it.<sup>14</sup> In the same vein, the Eucharist is the practice of sustaining the new identity and of empowering for the life suitable to the identity.<sup>15</sup> As such, the Christian reconciliatory identity established through baptism should be reaffirmed and reinforced in the works of God's people; such as worship or mission, again and again.

Inter-cultural worship is an attempt to reaffirm and embody the Christian reconciliatory identity through the interaction between different cultures to which worshippers belong. Inter-cultural worship does not try to homogenize diverse cultures into a dominant culture, but to integrate them toward a new *catholicity*<sup>16</sup> through a "dynamic two-way process of mutual accommodation".<sup>17</sup> The worship tied to the protection and prosperity of a race, a nation, an economic status, or a culture is taking a wrong step toward untrue and immoral worship.<sup>18</sup> It is likely to deteriorate the gospel of reconciliation and jeopardize the Christian reconciliatory identity.

On the other hand, inter-cultural worship of the Kobylysy Church aims at the new catholicity. It does not force worshippers, even minority groups, to give up their own languages or cultures. It does not choose a common, or dominant, language; i.e. English or Czech. As the Pentecost event shows, in a local level, God's message needs to be heard in an understandable mother tongue.<sup>19</sup> In the same vein, the Kobylysy

9/ Jackson & Passarelli, *ibid*, p. 10.

10/ Bryan Stone, *ibid*, pp. 182-3.

11/ John Howard Yoder, *For the Nations: Essays Evangelical and Public* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), p. 44.

12/ John Howard Yoder, *The Royal Priesthood: Essays Ecumenical and Ecclesiological* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1998), p. 369.

13/ Stone, *ibid*, p. 182.

14/ Stone, *ibid*, p. 184.

15/ Wilson, *ibid*, p. 109.

16/ "*Universal* has the rather innocuous and limited sense of breadth in space and time. *Catholic* claims that sort of breadth but also connotes an embrace of variety and style that is crucial to understanding one aspect of the church's participation in and witness to the kingdom." Wilson, *ibid*, p. 124.

17/ Jackson & Passarelli, *ibid*, p. 12.

18/ Wilson, *ibid*, p. 42.

19/ Jackson & Passarelli, *ibid*, p. 22.

inter-cultural worship does not choose a liturgical mode based upon a culture or a tradition, but constitute a new one through the consensus between different ethnic groups and supplement it continuously.

When the Koreans greet the Czechs with "*Pokoj tobě!*", the Czechs feel that the Korean migrants are their household. The Korean traditional song sung by the Czechs during the worship arouses in the Koreans the feeling of being accepted and respected. While hearing the benediction by the polyphony of two different local languages, all worshippers reaffirm their common universal identity, while feeling that all of them belong to each other before one blessing God.

The Eucharist is the most crucial element in worship of the Czech Protestants, for they have a history of having bled for it. In their tradition of the Hussite movement, the Eucharist meant a 'union of blood' between the warriors for the Truth and freedom. So, when receiving their traditional bread and wine, the Czech Christians remember not only the union with God by Christ's blood, but the union with other brothers and sisters standing in a circle.

This cultural and traditional particularity of the Czechs makes an impact on other ethnic groups; especially, the Korean Christians who tend to focus only on the former relationship. The Holy Communion with the Czech Christians reminds the other migrant Christians not only of how precious the freedom and prerogative of receiving Christ's flesh and blood is, but also of how their lives are closely connected with the lives of other Christians as well as with Christ's life.

Conversely, the presence of the other migrant Christians around the Lord's Table also makes an impact on the Czech Christians. The Czech Protestants are the Christians who have protected their faith and consciences in persistent persecution and oppression. This historical condition has brought about the close union between church members, but at the same time, it contains the danger of taking a too passive and exclusive posture toward other people outside the community.

The Holy Communion with the other migrant Christians protects the Czech Christians from confining the scope of the 'union of blood' only to their culture and tradition. Through the practice of the Eucharist they reaffirm their universal reconciliatory identity and are inspired to the practice of reconciliation and hospitality in their real lives.

### 1.2.3 Inter-Cultural Worship as a Visible Witness of the Kingdom of God

The church is not identified with the Kingdom; it is rather its 'foretaste'. Thus, Christian evangelism should be defined in term of the 'initiation into the Kingdom', not of the initiation into the church.<sup>20</sup> This fact, however, does not weaken the importance of the church; it rather articulates the distinctive vocation of the church in relation to God's mission. The church is the light of the world. It was called by God for the visible witness of the Kingdom. The church is a city on a hill which can never be hidden (Matthew 5:14). It cannot help showing the meaning of the initiation into the Kingdom, whether it is positive or negative, "before the watching world".<sup>21</sup>

As such, "the ecclesial foretaste does not contradict but rather implies the visibility of the church".<sup>22</sup> The gospel is not just 'a distinctive message' but 'a distinctive people' that, through its worship and obe-

20/ William J. Abrahams, *The Logic of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), p. 95.

21/ John Howard Yoder, *Body Politics: Five Practices of the Christian Community before the Watching World* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1992).

22/ Stone, *ibid*, p. 313.

dience, is itself God's message – 'a living letter'.<sup>23</sup> The church is part of the gospel, not just an instrument for it, not only in that the inconformity between message and messenger is scandalous, but also in that "the restoration of a damaged humanity to wholeness can only happen in community".<sup>24</sup>

In this vein, the church becomes the authentic witness of the Kingdom of God through being both a 'counter-politics' to a politics of the world characterized by "domination, exclusion, national idolatry, and individual rights" and a 'counter-economics' to an economics of the world conditioned by "scarcity, consumption, greed, utility, and competition".<sup>25</sup> Surely, this kind of witness, as a distinctive and subversive way of life, entails sufferings.<sup>26</sup> However, the church's 'cruciform' difference is an intrinsic condition of its authentic witness; namely, the church should be different *from* the world *for* the world.<sup>27</sup>

In the sense, worship can be itself communal witness of the gospel – the Kingdom of God. Evangelistic worship does not contradict 'true' worship. The evangelistic true worship which embraces cruciform difference is the worship directed toward the one true God rather than the worship intended to persuade the gospel more attractively and credibly. The church witnesses the gospel not through 'pretending' but through 'practicing'.<sup>28</sup>

The evangelistic worship does not contradict 'beautiful' worship either. The evangelistic beautiful worship which embraces cruciform difference is a worship which embodies the Christian reconciliatory identity and the *telos* of creation in the coming Kingdom – the redemption of people from every tribe, tongue, and nation (Revelation 5:9-10), rather than a worship which the congregation of one-color, one-culture, one-class offers in excellence according to a homogeneous standard of beauty.<sup>29</sup>

Inter-cultural worship is an attempt to witness the Kingdom of God visibly through the interaction between different cultures to which worshippers belong. Inter-cultural worship witnesses the Kingdom in the tension of 'already and not yet'. It manifests the Kingdom inaugurated in Christ, in that it is both governed by the politics of hospitality and inclusion, and managed by the economics of thanksgiving and charity. Without the Kingdom's penetration into our faith and lives, we can never try such an "inconvenient" and "extravagant" approach.<sup>30</sup>

However, at the same time, the inter-cultural worship expresses the earnest longing for God's whole reign in the future. The worship community is not a complete community but a struggling one. In this worship, rather, each worshipper senses more thoroughly barriers of culture, language, tradition as well as human weakness in embodying the Kingdom values.

In this vein, the Kobylysy inter-cultural worship can be a relevant missionary approach to the Czech context. According to the statistic of 2008 European Values Study, the Czech Republic is the most secularized

23/ Stone, *ibid*, p. 317.

24/ Andrew Kirk, *What is Mission?: Theological Explorations* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1999), pp. 35, 207.

25/ Stone, *ibid*, pp. 178-9.

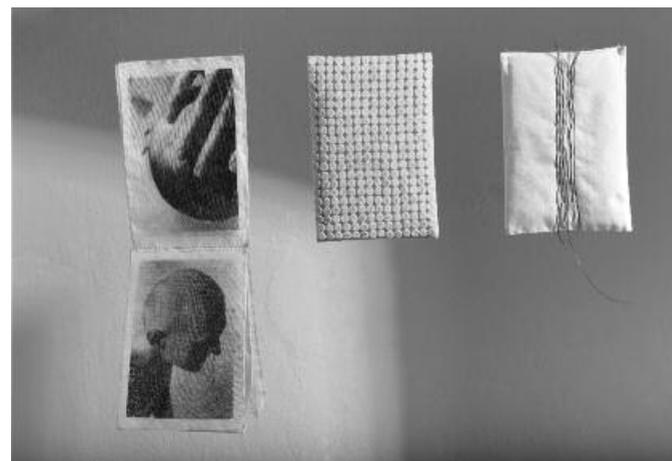
26/ "The *martyria* of the Church will entail, for individuals and for the community, the way of the cross." The World Council of Churches, Commission on Faith and Order, *The Nature and Purpose of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement* (Geneva: WCC, 1998), p. 16.

27/ Stone, *ibid*, pp. 176-7.

28/ Wilson, *ibid*, p. 33.

29/ Wilson, *ibid*, p. 46.

30/ "The logic of God's reign is a logic of *extravagance* and *superfluity* premised on God's victory over death in Christ." Stone, *ibid*, p. 205.



*HOMAGE TO DONORS III.*  
Photosensitive emulsion  
on fabric, pills, embroide-  
red with human hair.

Photo by Jozef Česla

country in Europe.<sup>31</sup> It is said that the Czech church history filled with religious persecutions and conflicts between churches is one of the crucial reasons for that. The Communist regime had taken advantage of it for anti-religious propaganda, which also became another important reason for the country's secularization.

In this situation, what the Czech churches should do, first of all, is to restore the lost confidence both of the church and of the gospel. The churches' direct proclamation of the gospel may often appear to be a plaintive cry for its lost prestige.<sup>32</sup> Rather, it is better way to bear witness by letting the world watch the authentic display of the gospel – the visible Kingdom. Worship is a crucial part which can give concrete reality to the claims of the gospel.<sup>33</sup> In the sense, the inter-cultural worship and mutual-transforming fellowship in a Czech local church can be understood as a visible witness of the Kingdom of God practiced together by churches sent to the seriously secularized context

## 2. Church Planting Initiative of the Kobylysy Korean Community

### 2.1 Christian Migrants and Diaspora Church

#### 2.1.1 Defining 'Migration' and 'Diaspora'

Migration is defined as "the movement of people from one place to another".<sup>34</sup> The identity of 'migrant' is built within two processes; the first one includes the dynamic that varies between interaction and exclusion in the new land, and the second one does the dynamic that varies between nostalgic romanticism and complete denial of the homeland.<sup>35</sup>

31/ Cf. [www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu](http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu) (accessed March 8, 2012).

32/ Wilson, *ibid*, p. 32.

33/ Wilson, *ibid*, p. 33.

34/ S. Mayhew (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of Geography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 281.

35/ Jorge E. Castillo Guerra, 'A Theology of Migration: Toward an Intercultural Methodology', in Daniel G. Groody and Gioacchino Campese (eds.), *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), p. 248.

'Diaspora', at the heart of the concept, embraces the Jewish historical experience, but nowadays the meaning of the term transcends the particular tradition;<sup>36</sup> namely, as it comes to be more widely applied, 'diaspora' can be defined as 'a group based on "a degree of national, or cultural, or linguistic awareness" of "a relationship, territorially discontinuous, with a group settled elsewhere"'.<sup>37</sup>

### 2.1.2 Migrants and Diasporas in the Bible

The Old Testament reports a lot of migratory stories of God's people, such as Abram, Jacob and Joseph's journeys, Israel's Exodus and journey to Canaan, the deportation of North Israel by Assyria, the Babylonian exile and return of South Judah. With the Babylonian exile and subsequent mass dispersions under the Greeks and the Romans, a new entity of 'diaspora'—"colonies of Jewish people living in communities throughout the Mediterranean world"—was born and increased.<sup>38</sup>

Jesus was a paradigmatic migrant who dwelt between the borders of two worlds.<sup>39</sup> During his ministry, he was itinerant and homeless (Luke 9:58). He also identifies Himself with a stranger (Matthew 25:35).

After the death of Stephen, there had been a deadly persecution in Jerusalem, and most of church members were scattered beyond Judea and Samaria (Acts 8:1). Some of them traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the gospel message only to Jews (11:19). As a result, for a while, there existed a new kind of diaspora church which was based on the gospel of Jesus, but was comprised of Jews only.

Meanwhile, in Antioch some Jewish Christians from Cyprus and Cyrene began to preach the gospel to Greeks too and got a great number of converts (11:20-21). As such, a multi-ethnic church was established first in Antioch, and a new universal identity of 'Christian' was also articulated in the multi-cultural setting (11:26). The Antioch church constituted its leadership as well as its membership in cultural and racial diversity, and placed its focus on mission, sending off its crucial leaders, Paul and Barnabas, for God's evangelizing work (13:1-2).

The mission team visited first as usual Jewish synagogues for evangelism. It did not mean that it aimed at Jews only. In the synagogue there were many Gentile 'God-fearers' as well as Jews (13:43). It signifies that the synagogue sought not so much a mono-ethnic community as a homogenization into Judaism. That was why many Jews persecuted Christian missionaries with jealousy (13:45). They did not want to rectify their previous ethnic and religious identity in response to the universality of the gospel.

On the contrary, Paul's message was focused on the Kingdom of God (19:8), which embraced a new inclusive and reconciliatory Christian identity. As a result, other churches founded by him were also socially, culturally and ethnically heterogeneous communities like the Antioch church.<sup>40</sup>

36/ Steven Vertovec, 'Religion and Diaspora', *New Landscapes of Religion in the West* (Oxford: University of Oxford, 2000), p. 6.

37/ Richard Marienstras, 'On the Notion of Diaspora', in G. Chaliand (ed.), *Minority Peoples in the Age of Nation-States* (London: Pluto, 1989), p. 120.

38/ Donald Senior, 'Beloved Aliens and Exiles: New Testament Perspectives on Migration', in Daniel G. Groody and Gioacchino Campese (eds.), *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), p. 22.

39/ Peter C. Phan, 'Migration in the Patristic Era: History and Theology', in Daniel G. Groody and Gioacchino Campese (eds.), *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), p. 58.

### 2.1.3 Missionary Identity of Christian Migrants and the Diaspora Church

Migrants represent the face of Christ in border. Many migrants suffer from physical or emotional pain, inconvenience, isolation, marginalization, discrimination etc. The church is commissioned to serve them with hospitality. Especially Christian migrants in sufferings for their faith represent a continuing way of the cross of God's people. To serve them is to serve Christ. This is the church's mission 'among' migrants. Here, Christian migrants are depicted as 'objects' of mission. This reflects a conventional perspective of mission. Christians in Europe are used to seeing Christians from Asia or Africa as objects of *diakonia* and theological education.<sup>41</sup>

However, to see Christian migrants solely as objects of mission is missiologically inept. They are called by God as equal 'agents' or 'partners' of mission. Christian Mission in the context of migration is not only 'mission among migrants' but also 'mission of migrants'.<sup>42</sup> Christian migrants themselves participate in God's mission with their own gifts and abilities, while helping the churches in their new land to become what they are – the full catholic reality.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, they can participate in God's mission distinctively in terms of continuing Christ's migratory ministry in the world.<sup>44</sup> Christian migrants living at border, *in-between*, know well the needs of strangers and yet also know how precarious human connection to status, resource, and community is.<sup>45</sup>

The diaspora church which focuses primarily on the former identity, Christian migrants as objects of mission, tends to shape an independent mono-ethnic community. It is likely to have a close connection with the churches of its native country rather than indigenous churches in the receiving country. This kind of church planting can be called a 'synagogue model'. Surely, when it comes to the contents of faith, these two are different. Strictly speaking, this kind of mono-ethnic church model is near to the Jewish diaspora churches which had existed for a while before the gospel was proclaimed to the Gentiles in Antioch. However, it is similar with the synagogue in that its planting is initiated on the foundation of 'ethnicity' and 'homogeneity'.

On the other hand, the diaspora church which focuses primarily on the latter identity, Christian migrants as 'agents' or 'partners' of mission, can be directed to an interdependent multi-ethnic community. It tends to have a close connection and cooperation with indigenous churches in the receiving society. This kind of church planting can be called the 'Antioch church model'. The Antioch church as a multi-ethnic church was not only a springboard for God's mission but also the model church of other churches replicated in the Roman Empire.<sup>46</sup> The interdependent diaspora church is similar with the Antioch church in that its planting is practiced on the basis of 'catholicity' and 'heterogeneity'.

40/ Thorsten Prill, *Global Mission on Our Doorstep: Facing Migration and the Future of the Church* (Muenster in Westfalen: MV Wissenschaft, 2008), p. 72.

41/ W. Karl, 'A Theological Perspective: The Common Missionary Vocation of Mainline and Migrant Churches', *International Review of Mission*, No. 91 (2002), p. 331.

42/ Stephen Bevans, 'Mission among Migrants, Mission of Migrants', in Daniel G. Groody and Gioacchino Campese (eds.), *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), pp. 89-102.

43/ Bevans, *ibid*, p. 91.

44/ Bevans, *ibid*, p. 91.

45/ C. D. Pohl, 'Biblical Issues in Mission and Migration', *Missiology: An International Review*, No. 31 (2003), p.10.

46/ Prill, *ibid*, p. 72.

## 2.2 Church Planting Model of the Kobylysy Korean Community: Inter-dependent Multi-Ethnic Church

### 2.2.1 Kobylysy Church's Self-Identity and Missionary Vision

The Kobylysy Church was started from the missionary motivation to help closed Czech churches' self-transformation into a missionary church. The Kobylysy Church's way of existence is based upon the confidence that all churches in the world are one in Christ and they are equal participants in God's mission. In this vein, the Kobylysy Church assumes that interdependent church planting initiative is not only a continuation of Christ's reconciling ministry, but also a challenging practice of 'mission in unity' in the current situation that division between churches or Christians became another barrier against the gospel.

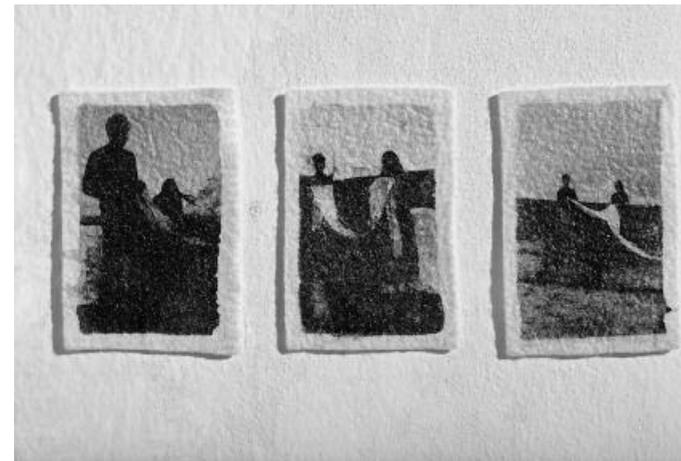
On this foundation, the Kobylysy Church aims at a Korean diaspora church which breathes and works together with the Czech church. In the inter-cultural ecclesial setting, Christian identity is being shaped anew beyond the framework of nationality. Here, the Korean Christian migrants are primarily perceived as active agents or partners of mission rather than as objects of mission, from the beginning of the church planting. As strangers who live-in-between two cultures, they can contribute to both their new land and homeland through both their cross-cultural and counter-cultural existence.<sup>47</sup>

In this dynamic and progressive view, the diaspora church is described in terms of the church on the move. Like the Antioch church, the church moving continuously along the frontier is characterized by its heterogeneity and catholicity. Here, mission is a common witness to the coming Kingdom.<sup>48</sup> It is not a church expansion but a Kingdom initiation.<sup>49</sup>

### 2.2.2 Principles and Methods of the Kobylysy Church Planting

The Kobylysy Church's planting initiative is based upon the principle of 'integration' and the idea of 'mission-in-unity'. Integration can be defined as "a long-term and multi-dimensional process, requiring a commitment on the part of both migrant and non-migrant members of society to respect and adapt to each other, thereby enabling them to interact in a positive and peaceful manner".<sup>50</sup> As such, authentic integration does not point to reestablishment of a supposed unity, rather achieves an ecumenical reconstruction of the social order in which strangers can contribute to the work with their strangeness.<sup>51</sup>

'Mission-in-unity' means the common witness of the reconciliatory gospel through the authentic integration between churches. Breaking down the barriers separating people is an essential part of the gospel, so the church should grow across cultural barriers.<sup>52</sup> Apostle Paul, right from the start, sought to build churches in which Jew and Greek, slave and free, poor and rich, would worship together, learn to love one another, and grow together with dealing with difficulties arising out of their different back-



*OF LOVE (detail).  
Photosensitive emulsion  
on felt.*

*Photo by Jozef Česla*

grounds.<sup>53</sup> As such, Christian ecumenism is not a fellowship exempt from conflict, but a ceaseless struggle for the unity in diversity.<sup>54</sup>

'Sharing in mission' is one of the aspects of the Kobylysy Church's integrative mission-in-unity. The Kobylysy Church's inter-cultural fellowship was initiated with the expectation that the Czech Protestant Church, which had a great tradition of Reformation but remained closed and passive toward the world by the experience of persecution in its history and with the stream of secularization in Europe, and the Korean Protestant Church, which was full of missionary passion but had a weak root in its Reformed tradition, would be able to grow together under one roof, while learning from each other and sharing spiritual and material resources.

Under the initial common vision, the two churches have grown together through their mutual accommodation and respectful sharing. If the Czech Christians made efforts to aid the Korean migrants' needs or problems, the latter became a spiritual stimulus and a missionary catalyst for the former's self-transformation. As a result, the Czech local church which had been closed and exclusive has been transformed into an open and inclusive one, to the extent that it allows Korean representative deacons to participate in their leaders' assembly to reflect the minority group's opinion. Now the Czech local church has become a multi-ethnic church which is open enough to embrace two more migrant Christians, namely Japanese and Mongolians.

### 2.2.3 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Inter-dependent Church Planting Model

The focal context of the inter-dependent Korean migrant church in terms of its missionary existence is the Czech society. It is the Czech churches that should take the lead of the missionary activity for the Czech context. Then, what is the most relevant way of existence of a migrant church to help the Czech churches' self-transformation into missionary churches? Regarding this question, a Korean migrant church's inter-dependent church planting initiative can be a practice of 'mission of migrants' that Korean

53/ Bosch, *ibid*, p. 466.

54/ Bosch, *ibid*, p. 465.

47/ Phan, 'Migration in the Patristic Era: History and Theology', pp. 56-57.

48/ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), pp. 465-7.

49/ Abrahams, *ibid*, p. 95.

50/ Jackson, *ibid*, p. 12.

51/ Raul Fornet-Betancourt, 'Hermeneutics and Politics of Strangers', in Daniel G. Groody and Gioacchino Campese (eds.), *A Promised Land, A Perilous Journey: Theological Perspectives on Migration* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), p. 220.

52/ René Padilla, *Mission between the Times* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), pp. 166-7.

Christians can help the Czech church to witness the gospel through its distinctive presence authentically, while inspiring the Czech Christians to participate in 'mission among migrants'.

One of the strengths of the interdependent model is that it is the way of existence which is mutually enriching for both those who give and those who receive. The non-migrant Czech church is being transformed into a missionary church serving the world, while practicing the hospitality toward the migrant Korean Christians. The Korean Christians are, however, not just passive recipients of the charitable giving. In the inter-cultural fellowship, they participate in God's mission, while calling the indigenous Czech church to the full 'catholicity' and deeper truth of the gospel that cannot be encountered except by moving out into places of risk and vulnerability.<sup>55</sup>

In addition, by existing under the roof of the Czech church, the Korean migrant church can not only spend most of its finances, instead of paying rental fee for its worship place, in inspiring and supporting the missionary ministries of Czech local churches, but also exist as a church in the Czech society officially. This condition is a crucial factor which enables it to cooperate with other Czech churches for mission.

Another strong point of the interdependent church is that it embodies the church's missionary nature and Christian's migratory, or pilgrim, nature by its way of existence. The church should be a "clearer sign of God's saving presence", so mission should be carried out not only in the world but also within the church.<sup>56</sup> If the church's mission is about crossing boundaries, the inter-dependent model is a way of practicing the boundary-crossing mission through the church's dynamic interactive presence.

In the sense, the interdependent setting is an advantageous condition for liberating each church from its egoism and self-sufficiency and thereby leading it into self-transformation for God's mission.<sup>57</sup> The interdependent church is the church on the move, composed of pilgrim Christians who are continuously challenged to cross their own borders to participate in the mutual transforming ministry. Here, mission is articulated as the whole churches' cooperative participation in *missio Dei*. It is neither one activity among many in which the church engages, nor a next stage of the church's revival; it is, rather, both the church's very *raison d'être* and a crucial mark of its revival.<sup>58</sup>

The other strength of the interdependent church is that its way of existence is a visible witness of the gospel by itself. The inter-dependent existence of the church, which is crossing national and cultural boundaries by its way of existence, witnesses the Kingdom of God through its 'acts in hope' distinctively and authentically. Namely, the church's distinctive way of life struggling to be one in Christ with the fidelity to the coming Kingdom is a 'sanctifying' and 'proclaiming' ministry for the world in the 'mission of the Cross'.<sup>59</sup>

In spite of these missionary strengths, the inter-dependent model has some weaknesses as well. At first, it is not easy to initiate and develop such an inter-cultural fellowship. Even though their chapels are being empty, surprisingly, many churches in Europe are reluctant to welcome Christians from abroad as their household and to learn from their experiences. Their racism and theological arrogance might be rea-

55/ Daniel G. Groody, *Crossing the Divide: Foundations of a Theology of Migration and Refugees* (Oxford, U.K.: Church Mission Society, 2010), p. 33.

56/ Bevens, *ibid*, p. 92.

57/ Bevens, *ibid*, p. 100.

58/ Bevens, *ibid*, p. 92.

59/ Bosch, *ibid*, pp. 513-5.



*THE SOOTHING. Perforated sheep fleece felt, rice and herb painting, soap imprinting, photosensitive emulsion (part of the textile installation).*

sons for that.<sup>60</sup> Many migrant Christians also prefer to build their own churches and reproduce their religious traditions.<sup>61</sup> They might be afraid of being alienated or despised from a cultural majority in a mixed congregation. In reality, to develop such an inter-cultural fellowship requires a lot of continual and reciprocal self-denial and sacrifice to its members. It is certain that this kind of approach is likely to be perceived to some church members as too inconvenient, intellectual and even extravagant.

Another weakness of the inter-dependent model is related to the aspect of pastoral care. This kind of approach which puts its focus upon the mission in a receiving context cannot help containing weakness in responding to the needs of the church members sensitively. Inter-cultural fellowship may be a beneficial, but not comfortable setting. It is a pastoral structure against the human nature. Thus, the inter-dependent model can cause the situation that the church members do not catch up with their pastor's missionary mind and passion. Furthermore, the failure of pastoral care can hinder the church's missionary practice from going forward.

However, pastoral care is an endless ministry. If a church plans to do mission only after having solved all its problems, it might never be able to participate in God's mission. The pastoral care only oriented to meet the church members' needs can contradict the discipleship of the Cross. Until experiencing the power of resurrection through their suffering, Saints might never be satisfied with any pastoral care. In the sense, the inter-dependent church planting model does not contradict pastoral care, but requires a new sort of pastoral structure. Namely, to actualize the purpose and strengths of the inter-dependent model sufficiently, it is necessary to establish an effective pastoral structure through which pastoral care for church members can be followed by missionary energizing for them.

60/ Prill, *ibid*, p. 100-2.

61/ Jackson & Passarelli, *ibid*, p. 29.

## Book Review: Crisis Situations in the Czecho-Slovak Context after 1989.

Zuzana Jurechová and Pavol Bargár (eds.). Prague: CECMS 2011, 180 pages.

Maroš Šefranko

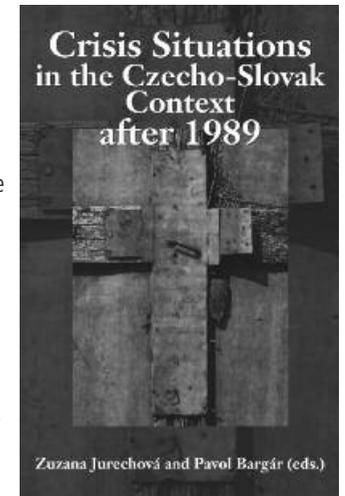
The collective monograph *Crisis Situations in the Czecho-Slovak Context after 1989* was published by the Central European Centre for Mission Studies in 2011.

It begins with greetings of Yeon Ok Lee, President Emeritus of the National Organization of Korean Presbyterian Women, which made a generous financial contribution, thus making the publication of the book possible, and Rev. Dr. Dong-Sung Kim, Programme Executive for Asian Regional Relations of the World Council of Churches. He quotes a famous Asian proverb: "Crisis is, at the same time, an opportunity" (p. 6). He notes that "God, who revealed his good news of life in Jesus Christ, chose to engage the world in crisis and utilize it as an opportunity to save and give himself as a gift" (p. 6).

Preface of the monograph was written by Zuzana Jurechová. Here she explains the method of the multi-disciplinary research adopted in the book and describes it as a collection of academic texts "dealing with the subject from the points of view of theology, philosophy, sociology, economy, psychology, political science, cultural studies and religion studies" (p. 7). It is not, however, a "comprehensive interdisciplinary study on the shape of the society", but rather a presentation of "several topical issues and challenges" (p. 8).

Introduction was written by Jurechová's colleague editor Pavol Bargár, who reminds us of the main intention of the research project—"to point out the connections between the world of the biblical authors and the world in which contemporary churches live and work" (p. 9).

The main part of the book consists of a dozen of chapters written by researchers from various academic disciplines. Biblical theologian Jiří Lukeš contributed with his lucid study "Rhetoric of Paul's Speeches in the Critical Situations of his Missions". Lukeš focuses on analysing selected speeches of Apostle Paul, which the latter had to face during his missionary journeys. He picks up speeches which were delivered in critical cultural situations of face-to-face encounters with Jews, pagans and secular authorities. It is notable that Paul's "speeches not only ward crises off (Acts 14:15-17) but also bring them about (Acts 22:22)" (p. 13). Biblical texts explored by Jiří Lukeš obviously show that "Christianity entered the world occupied by many religions, where each public speech meant a considerable personal risk and, thus, places demands of quick-wittedness and profound cultural knowledge on the public speaker" (p. 30). Lukeš comes to a conclusion that in his service to the Resurrected Christ Paul does not avoid any obstacles. The crisis situations he has to face lead him neither to a shift in his missionary strategy nor to giving



his mission up (p. 33). However, Paul does not enter the conflicts needlessly or wilfully. Spreading of the gospel, a proper understanding of which is in danger, remains his main objective. Paul does not seek his own popularity or profit; he does not care about his possible imprisonment or death (p. 34) and enters the conflict situations always with a distinct and clear attitude. This might be one of the main reasons why these texts found their way into the biblical canon and why they have been notably shaping the life of Christianity till nowadays (p. 34). Their message still remains valid and authentic.

Political scientist Juraj Laššuth has contributed with his meditation named "A Brave New World?" His aim is to analyse recent theses about the "end of history" from a Christian point of view and apply its conclusions to the current situation of the world. It is commonly believed that history has come to its end—the last of the biggest threats embodied in Communism was defeated and now we live in a "brave new world". Laššuth warns that this opinion might be dangerous, because it inevitably brings the attitude of averageness, "normality"; it replaces the desire for change of the world with a "comfortable self-preservation" (p. 42). As Christians we should consider the "end of history" theses in a more complex way. Laššuth thus redefines the problem as follows: There is no end of history, the evil still remains in the world, but there is always a hope for change (p. 51). In history all the "definite" prophecies about the "end of the world" were always followed by big controversies and turmoil. Laššuth comes with a new concept of history illuminating the fact that good and evil are mixed together in every historical situation; while Christ's message is already in the process of growth, evil and sin still have their power (p. 53).

Sociologist Markéta Sedláčková has written the chapter named "Trust and Democracy in the Czech Society", where she depicts the crucial importance of trust (in the system, in the institutions, in other people) for proper functioning of democracy (p. 57). A long-term lack of trust may cast doubts on the legitimacy of democracy itself (p. 57). Václav Havel once labelled this situation as a "lousy mood" of the society (p. 62). We may ask whether this emblematic label does not also fit the situation of the contemporary church. Sedláčková does not expect tumultuous changes to happen "in a few years" but rather sticks to a sober point of view: "We most probably still have some years of 'wandering in the desert' ahead of us" (p. 72).

The sole name of the chapter "The Crisis of Czech Democracy as a Crisis of Institutions" by Václav Němec shows the way the philosopher interprets the current crisis of democracy. As the main problem he recognizes the destructive influence of the pressure of private interests of economical subjects on public institutions, which contaminates democracy from within (p. 78).

In the article "The White-Collar Crime as a Factor in Crisis Situations in Everyday Life" sociologist Ľubomír German focuses on criminality of so-called "white-collars", which is now experiencing its "golden age" (p. 83). The boom of "white-collar" crime is caused mainly by a general low interest of citizens' participation in public issues (p. 87). The core of the problem in German's point of view lays in a serious failure of the maintenance of moral codes and regulations as well as a low enforceability of law (p. 90).

"The Impact of the Economic Cycle Changes on the Individual Subject's Behaviour with the Application to the Advertising Market" is a chapter by economist Andrej Miklošík. Here he compares the behaviour of consumers in the environment of "normal market" with the behaviour of consumers on the Internet. He concludes that the Internet advertising is currently the most effective form of advertising (p. 95), where advertising companies can directly evaluate the efficiency of each advertising method in particular, and

are thus able to support the most efficient methods and cut down the less efficient methods of communication with consumers (p. 103).

In his article "The Problem of Consumerism in the Context of Churches in former Czechoslovakia after 1989" theologian Pavol Bargár critically analyses the use of the term "consumerism" in public speeches and sermons of various church representatives. He comes to a conclusion that the term "consumerism" became a "rhetorical code-word for anything that a proper Christian should supposedly avoid" (p. 109). Superficial and wilful condemnation of "consumerism" leads to a wrong attitude of Christians towards the world they live in, which negatively influences spreading of the gospel (p. 111). In fact, the term "consumerism" depicts not only "wasting" or "addiction on commodities" but also "normal consumption" (p. 112) and "legitimate use of the gifts of the world" (p. 117). On the basis of the biblical text Eccl 9:7-10 Bargár illuminates the human need for a balance between "work" and "entertainment", since a lack of this balance becomes a "slavery without any relief, or hell of a never ending feast" (p. 115). In compliance with Bargár's text churches are appealed to study the issues of the world always in detail and in their proper contexts before giving oversimplified and premature answers (p. 116).

The study "The Crisis of Gender Identity, Intimacy and Communication in Popular Culture" by Alexander Plencner, an expert on mass media communication, tries to dispel our superficial view of popular culture. "That, what people like, needs to be taken as a fact to deal with, not as a problem to be solved. In the past, many critics of popular culture were motivated not by their will to protect the public from negative impact of popular culture, but by their own desire for influence and authority" (p. 123). Plencner focuses on analysing the crisis of gender identity, intimacy and communication on the basis of the picture drawn by lifestyle magazines, TV reality shows and social networks. His text is inspiring particularly for those who come to a contact with the young generation.

In the next chapter "A Family Album: Changes of Family and the Present Time" renowned sociologist Jiřina Šiklová highlights the main changes of the Czech family in a last few decades. She shows that, on one hand, freedom means a relief, but on the other hand it also brings incertitude and doubts. A higher level of freedom brings a higher level of risk (p. 145). Beside, a higher level of state support does not automatically mean an improvement of family life (p. 144).

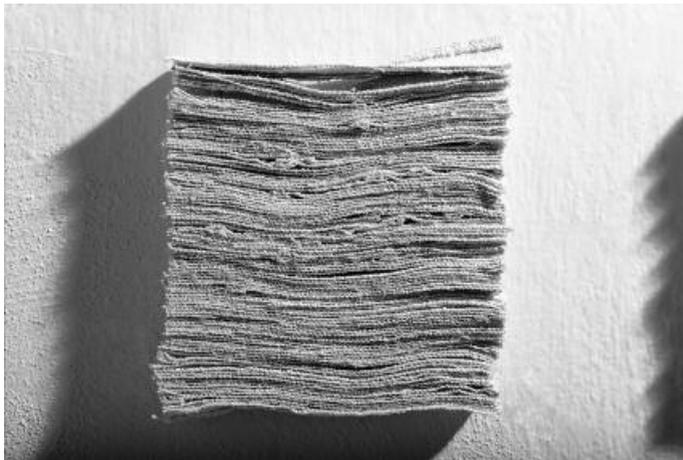
In her text "The Continuity and Transformation of Childhood in the Pedagogical Context" educationalist Mária Matulčíková searches for a solution of crises emerging as a result of restructuring of family in multi-centric education. She suggests improving the cooperation between school and family; meanwhile the whole process should start with the most problematic part—which is the communication (p. 154).

In his article named "The Life Crisis as a Predictor of Posttraumatic Symptoms" clinical psychologist and evangelical chaplain Martin Balko notes that "individual subjective reaction to the trauma has a greater psychological influence than the traumatic event itself" (p. 166). Balko then focuses on a description of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and outlines the possibilities of its treatment, both by pharmacotherapy and psychotherapy.

In her study "Revival of Religious Anti-Judaism in the Postmodern Spectrum of Ideologies" scholar of religion Veronika Tydlitátová publishes results of her monitoring of web pages and Internet forums in the Czech Republic. She warns against the alarming increase of reviving signs of Anti-Judaism, which should be taken seriously. She mentions the active group of Lefebrists, known especially for their questioning of the Holocaust. Though we should distinguish between racial Anti-Semitism and religious Anti-Judaism, it

is more than clear that they both represent diverse forms of the same hatred (p. 168).

The collective monograph *Crisis Situations in the Czecho-Slovak Context after 1989* is not a book, which you would read like a magazine—when reading it, one can not stay unconcerned. But this is, probably, exactly the effect the authors had in mind. Solving diverse "crises" is not possible without profound knowledge and understanding of each problem on the basis of its specific time and historical context. In this point, the publication edited by Z. Jurechová and P. Bargár seems to be a valuable assistant.



*The Song of Songs Series.  
THE RAINS ARE OVER  
AND GONE (2:11).  
Layered paper, linen, felt,  
ceramics and organza.*

*Photo by Jozef Česla*

## The Social Context of Work in Christian Churches:

A Reflection of the CECMS Conference in April 2011 in Prague

Zuzana Jurechová

Each missionary attempt of the Christian church to spread the witness of the Divine Revelation to others takes place in a specific social setting. The conditions we live in influence our daily life, but since they are often quite complex, multi-layered and interrelated, we—in our practical everydayness—usually do not have enough time and energy to undertake a more profound research of this system of actions and reactions. Thus one of the main aims of missiology is to make that, what we usually call "conditions", more transparent and understandable.

This short contemplation stood at the birth of the project undertaken by the CECMS named "The church and its context" which climaxed in (1) publishing of the collective monograph *Crisis Situations in the Czecho-Slovak Context after 1989* in February 2011; and (2) organizing two conferences in April 2011—in Prague (1 April) and in Bratislava (14 April). In the following lines I will try to briefly summarize and reflect on the main theses and inspiring thoughts we could hear at the Prague meeting.

## Crisis as a key to "context"

Why "the church and its context", and why "crisis situations"? We simply wanted to use the concept of "crisis situations" as a gateway to the wide and multi-faceted topic of "context". The conference was meant as an experiment enabling us to make space for a discussion between human scientists and researchers and representatives of various Christian churches; a space that would be no longer bound to a single academic discipline or a single dogmatic tradition. A space that would approach closer the reality we live in, so that it could offer useful and practical insights into current events around us. We were wondering how the confrontation of the academic sphere of scholars and the world of the churches would look like. Would their communication be possible? Would they be able to enrich one another's thought? Could the churches profit somehow from the knowledge provided by the scholarly standpoint, gain a new idea of humanity in its actual needs and, consequently, re-evaluate their missionary approach, teachings and offers?

Five researchers from the Czech and Slovak Republic accepted an invitation to the Prague conference: philosopher Václav Němec, sociologist Markéta Sedláčková, sociologist Jiřina Šiklová, theologian Pavol Bargár and sociologist Lubomír German. In addition, four representatives of the churches accepted the invitation, but accidentally only two of them were able to come—Roman Juriga, vice-chairman of the Eastern Orthodox Academy in Vilémov at Litovel and chief editor of monthly magazine *Hlas Pravoslavi* ("The Voice of the Eastern Orthodoxy") and Karel Šimr, a pastor of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren in Chrást u Plzně. Papers of the researchers, dealing with the topic of miscellaneous crises which began to emerge in the Czech and Slovak society after 1989, had been published in the reviewed collective monograph and sent to the church representatives in advance so that they were able to prepare their responses and reflections. Finally, seventeen people attended the conference, which made the atmosphere very pleasant and cosy—there was no need to use a microphone and an amplifier and the discussion thus became more spontaneous and dynamic.

## Democracy, family, consumerism, corruption... and the church

Václav Němec opened the conference with his paper which reflected on the crisis of democracy. He explained that democracy is interwoven with a complex network of human relationships and mutual interactions of individuals. Institutions in which people work have their own patterns of regulations and orders and it is expected that people will adopt them voluntarily. If this does not happen, the democratic system should be equipped with legal tools to enforce obedience to the institutional patterns. But when even this does not work, i.e. when legal tools are missing or fail to maintain the democratic order, and people lack their ability to fulfil their moral "roles", we can speak about a crisis of democracy. Such a crisis can be the result of a situation when we try to apply the old patterns of behaviour in new conditions of democratic transformation. I asked myself a question whether this depiction does not also fit to the situation of the churches. From a sociological viewpoint the church is nothing else than an institution based on democratic principles and, at the same time, it also influences democracy as such. The church with a transparent "network of relationships" can lead its members to act democratically even outside of the church institutional borders—and the other way round. But even churches can not protect themselves from repetition of negative behavioural patterns of the past and thus its members should always reflect on the "network of relationships" and support such a behaviour which is in compliance with Christian values. The question is

whether we—maybe because of a lack of time and space for an open discussion—do not rather tend to overlook the "networks of relationships" in our churches and all maladies they bring and whether we do not utilize words about "forgiving love" to conceal and cover those maladies instead of curing them.

The reflection on democracy also continued in the paper of sociologist Markéta Sedláčková. It seems that people in general have a very vague understanding of the term "democracy". What most people consider "democracy"—i.e. "free elections"—is rather a caricature of the original concept. Dr Sedláčková builds her interpretation of democracy upon the one of its fundamental prerequisites—social trust that shapes civil society and aims towards collective civic actions and initiatives. The birth of social trust is always preceded by the process of "socialization", i.e. conforming to the system. People who are currently in their thirties (and were thus brought up in the Communist era) show more capability of such social integration than their parents, but obviously less than contemporary teen-agers. Democracy helps the churches in their active life. A malfunction of democracy also impacts the churches. If old behavioural patterns prevail in the civil society, they also prevail in the churches. While in the society it is often uneasy to recognize and point out these patterns, the churches—at least theoretically—should be equipped with better democratic tools of critical debate and self-reflection thanks to a warmer, more familiar atmosphere. Thus the churches in general have the best potential to give their members a "practical lesson of democracy", which could then spread into the everyday life of the civil society.

Life of an individual is originally and with an utmost impact shaped by his family. Jiřina Šiklová offered her reflection on contemporary family and the crisis it faces. She suggests we should finally put an end to the search for someone to blame for the current negative situation in families and grasp at the "power of powerless": be aware of our freedom to act accordingly to our own opinions and consciousness. Despite this freedom, the current attitude of society is rather characterized by "rejection" and "anger", which Šiklová considers a manifestation of lacking self-confidence and our adoption of the "powerless" attitude. Can the church be somehow helpful in this point? What is its attitude towards mixed marriages? Certainly there is still a certain tension in the attitude of churches towards mixed marriages, since the aim of churches is to support marriages, where both members are of the same confession. However, it should better, in compliance with the Scripture, protect family as an institution as such, regardless of differences in the confession of its members. Pastor Karel Šimr brought an inspiring insight. In his own experience mixed marriages can play very important and positive role in the ecumenical life of the church. Owing to mixed marriages in his congregation, he and his congregation participated at many ecumenical events—biblical lessons, passion plays or collections, which were organized spontaneously and which would have probably not taken place otherwise.

In his paper, Protestant theologian Pavol Bargár reflected on the concept of "consumerism", which is very often being misused by church representatives and authorities as a code-word to label a "common danger" of any kind. On the contrary, an exaggerated demonization of "consumerism" and "consumer society" prevents churches from becoming engaged with the real problems—causes and effects of an excessive consumption. Instead of an exorbitant call for asceticism and self-denial, Bargár suggests the churches should admit that moderate consumption brings joy and pleasure and we should better seek real roots of an excessive consumption.

"Consumerism" as a negative concept and as an invisible power that dissolves ethical limits of our behaviour, was also foregrounded in the paper of the last speaker at the conference, sociologist Lubomír German. He focused mainly on the analysis of "white-collar" crime. He defined this term as a space

emerging from the conflict of two contradictory concerns of "white-collars": (1) as workers and citizens they are obligated to bear responsibility for public welfare (or company benefit), (2) as private subjects, they also aim towards their personal profit or power, regardless of moral standards and ethical regulations. Nonetheless, the concept of "white-collar" crime can not be limited to the crime of individuals, as the term also inevitably includes the crime of companies and organizations abusing their powers. There are many crafty and well-concealed varieties of such abuse and so the bigger part of the "white-collar" crime remains unrevealed and unpunished. Moreover, the "white-collar" crime is contagious and has ability to spread into all social classes and change its form according to the current situation. Therefore, anti-corruption measures must be enforceable, so that abiding the measures would be simply more profitable than breaking them.

## What can we do to raise public awareness of the churches?

The discussions during the conference revealed an interesting fact: church workers are a way better informed about public affairs than researchers are informed about church activities and events. It implies a question: What can we do to raise public awareness of the churches? What tools or means should we use to inform the society about the wide range of church beneficial activities? Church activities have their irreplaceable position in the society beside other activities of civil organizations and associations and it is rather shameful that they still have not found a proper way to show it and to be heard.

Roman Juriga presented the activity of the Eastern Orthodox Church and Eastern Orthodox theology as an active response to the current social questions, making his case with the fact of several conferences organized by the Eastern Orthodox Church in recent years. Just as his colleague Karel Šimr, Juriga highlighted the importance of biblical ethics. They shared the opinion that biblical ethics represents the fundamental power upon which social transformation and progression can be built. The ecumenical atmosphere was spontaneously penetrating through the whole conference and there was thus no need to accent it further. In the encounter with the insights of humanities, the ecumenical dimension seemed rather as an essential necessity, which the churches can no longer avoid if they want to work not only for the benefit of Christianity but for the benefit of human society as a whole. Undoubtedly, the church must remain an unambiguous "constant" to the society but it should not forget, above all, that it is still a part of it.

The reflections of the current crises presented from various points of view generally showed many accords and convergences, being sometimes complementary. However, they brought many insights important for shaping our critical thought and attitudes for practical life. In my opinion, the conference succeeded in avoiding both critical thought for its own sake only and the often hasty and premature pastoral evaluation of crisis situations. Creating a diverse interdisciplinary and ecumenical environment meant a great pleasure for all of us and, hopefully, it will accompany all our future projects.

## To recognize the Finger of God

Let me conclude with a few words from the opening speech of Joel Ruml, Chairman of the Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Czech Republic, which I leave without comment:

"Crisis evokes fear, an image of a failure, and that is why we spontaneously try to avoid the whole issue. We dream about a *status quo* of ease and well-being—but only crisis can bring fundamental changes. Even the Scripture knows the possibility of 'teaching an old dog new tricks'. God is not

a motionless principle, but he always has entered and enters our present situation. Thus the most important thing in life is to recognize the proverbial finger of God. God's people had chance to grow when they succeeded in recognizing the finger of God in crisis situations they had to face. It is not a matter of our specializations. Dividing line is not drawn between 'specialists' and 'laymen', but between those who are willing to see further and those who are in every situation satisfied with seeing only the surface of things, that what is 'obvious' and 'logical'. Christians lift up their eyes and hopes to God and they see a great companion in life, in everyday struggles, a companion in personal joy and a confessor in the times of crises. With this very attitude they can contribute to improving the life of the society as a whole."



THE HERMIT'S CLOAK.  
"Artex", natural sheep  
fleece.

Photo by Jozef Česla

## Crisis Situations in the Czecho-Slovak Context after 1989:

A Reflection on the CECMS Conference in April 2011 in Bratislava

Viktória Šoltéssová

### The Bible and the church today

Jiří Lukeš analyzes the selected defense speeches of the Apostle Paul from the Book of Acts. After his rejection by the Jerusalem audience, Luke begins to present Paul also as a "secular" person. It is known that the Apostle Paul had knowledge of classical rhetoric. This biographical fact, as well as Paul's Roman citizenship, is repeatedly highlighted by Luke in the context of Paul's future witness in Rome. In his speech before Agrippa, Paul refers to Christianity as a significant social phenomenon. As Lukeš writes, a crisis situation does not lead to a change in the strategy of Paul's mission; it does not mean the abandonment of

his mission. Recurring crises were perhaps the main reason why the Apostle Paul reached a deeper interpretation of the "theology" of the Cross of Christ.

An application of the New Testament text in the practice: The known efficient methods for doing mission appear to be less applicable in recent decades. The content of the message does not change, but some strategies are changing. Paul does not change his strategy—not only it was the way to proceed with mission, but it was a timeless purpose to preach Christ to the Gentiles, too. If we would like to interpret the missionary situation of the church today in the light of this analysis, we could just focus on a new understanding of the nature and quality of mission. Empirical studies mostly target on the missionary experience. On one hand, there exist a few partial researches on missionary strategies which map out the reactions of missionary workers, while on the other hand, we are entirely missing the reactions of converts, which would help us to fill in the mosaic of knowledge on the effectiveness of missionary work. If we want to narrow our view on the situation in the Czecho-Slovak context, their voices should be also heard.

Juraj Laššuth discusses the thesis of *the end of history* famously introduced by the author Francis Fukuyama. In addition to being its open critic, Laššuth focuses on the impact that Christians might have in the world of today. He defines the fundamental problems of social and political relations. According to Kant, the author reminds, despotism in religious thinking and policy manifests differently: "Their common feature is the inability to use the intellect without the direction of someone else." It is a government that is not based on consent and does not reflect the law of liberty. The author sees the concept of the end of world history in the context of Christianity as an establishment of the fullness of God's kingdom on earth. He points out two main and related texts from the Old Testament as interpreted in Christianity:

– *Isaiah tradition of the servant* (the world is empty and waits for God's good news—everyone shall believe in God—eternal peace)

– *Daniel's vision of the kingdom of the Son of man* (duality of the two ways of the governance—the battle between divine forces and antidivine forces—the world as a hostile place).

Jesus is committed to both traditions and the functioning of the church becomes a situation known as "*already and not yet*". Paul's skeptical theology, focused on the suffering of Christians in the world, is balanced by the optimistic view of the Book of Acts. The author discusses the political theology in relation to the Roman Empire; this was an important question for the early church. In his writings, Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea, tried to deal with the new situation in state-church relations (year 313 is considered the end of world history). In this context, Laššuth suggests an association with the perception of the political situation in the Czech Republic. For example, he quotes Masaryk's notion of the conflict between theocracy and democracy during the First World War. In the light of the development after the fall of the Communism, he sees signs of the end of history in rhetoric of a defeat of "the last enemy." The concept of the end of history was evident in the rhetoric of politicians and priests in the period after the Velvet Revolution. The use of this concept is not surprising, given the historical experience of persecution of Christian churches. Laššuth mentioned several ways how Christians can respond to the situation of "the end of history". He regards a redefinition of problems as a viable way—not the end of history, evil remains, but at the same time there is a real hope for change. As an alternative to the concept of the end of history he offers a conception of the world polytheism of values and world political sphere, where these values meet. A reflection on the plurality of the concepts of goodness is to be found in the works of Max Weber and Hans Morgenthau, as well as in the theology of Reinhold Niebuhr. The major representatives of this

theory of ethical realism are A. Lieven and J. Hulsman. Unlike Kant's optimism with regard to the end of history, Morgenthau puts forward realistic expectations in terms of political philosophy. *The evil cannot be destroyed, only limited*. Morgenthau sees the tragic situation of man in the world. Laššuth considered political realism to be a suitable alternative activity of the Christian in the world, in the tradition of Augustine and Paul. He proposed the concept of the political sphere as a space for meetings of the plurality of values and in order to avoid the disappointment of the controversial "end of history" in the future.

Let us look at the role of Christians in the world through the eyes of another author, a theologian dealing with Christian ethics. According to I. Kišš, Christians need to seek the implementation of justice in the world by analogy with the basic ethical values of the spiritual kingdom of God. The latter include justice, love, freedom, equality, truth, peace, kindness, community, respect for life, and an ethical phenomenon of work. *The spiritual values of the kingdom of God must become ethical and human values around the world*. Christian ethics has significant specificity. Its center is not mediated by abstract and normative acts (as in Old Testament ethics), but by the particular person of Jesus Christ. According to H. U. von Balthasar, Christ is the specific categorical imperative, because he is a personal and particular standard, not just a formal universal standard of ethical behavior. The morality of the New Testament underlines three essential aspects: the coming of the Kingdom of God, the fulfillment of the law—a call to conversion and repentance, and the supreme order to fulfill God's will. The ideal Christian life is to follow the example of Jesus Christ.

## Society and economy

Markéta Sedláčková explores democracy and trust in democracy in the context of the Czech society. A functioning civil society is dependent on the quality of social relationships; the author highlights the need for a general trust in the functioning of the democracy. She follows the decline of trust in democracy in the Czech Republic (for example, in 1998). Legitimacy – the trust in the legitimacy of the democratic system is crucial. However, researchers are encountering different understandings of democracy in different population groups; linguists pointed out differences in the understanding of spoken language in relation to its scientific definition. The author quotes a certain research of democratic values in the Czech Republic, as well as the trust in institutions and the general trust in other people. The research found a lack of confidence in different areas of society; the author sees this as a possible hindrance in the development of a democratic society and of a market economy system.

The quality of life requires integrity: material and spiritual-cultural values. The values affect the relationship with self and others, but also with the environment. Today, more and more researchers speak about a crisis in value systems. Schwartz's research has confirmed that the basic problems that societies are facing are between individual and society: ensuring the responsible behavior of the society members and the relationship of humankind to the nature and to the global community.<sup>1</sup> Every person has his values and goals; for society, it is important to discern how individual values have an objective validity, since every society applies a particular system of values.<sup>2</sup> The importance of universal values for which there is a con-

sensus between the theories of religious and secular values has been shown by E. Bergin and I. R. Payne. The confidence in the democratic system is a specific problem of the research of values. In contrast to objective moral requirements (such as Kant's categorical imperative), there is a dominance of individual freedom, which can be traced for example in S. Kierkegaard's work. According to M. Buber, interpersonal communication is a fundamental fact of human existence. As the basis of our humanity he determined a relationship. This principle opens to him new perspectives in cultural anthropology as well as philosophical, religious and political issues. A need for the social values and democracy is often denied today. A representative of *neopragmatism*, R. Rorty, expressed the philosophy of values as follows: "The ichotomy of facts and values has arisen as a consequence of the dichotomy of the objective and the subjective, therefore the term 'objective value' sounds to us today as mythologically as a winged horse".<sup>3</sup> From this perspective, the proclamation of objective values (such as democracy) as the development of the social relations is inadequate for a pragmatically oriented society. However, without accepting objective values, a society cannot be functional in practice.

A reassessment of advertising budgets in the transition between phases of the economic cycle is noted by Andrej Miklošik in his presentation. He pointed out, *inter alia*, long-term trends in the transfer of expenditure on advertising in the modern media like the Internet, mobile phones advertising, etc. Based on his research he notes that advertisers in Slovakia are more conservative in comparison with the U.S.

Harold Laswell – a political scientist and one of the founders of the discipline of communication – constructed a basic model of medial communication: „Who says to whom through what channel and for what effect?“ The audience is also the producer and consumer of thinking. The consumer decodes and interprets the media in ways that are created from his social and cultural situations and subjective examination of these effects. Researchers have started to use the term "interpretive community". An issue of subcultures and their preference to certain kinds of content in the media is an independent chapter of the global research.

In the United States, 2% of the gross national product was used for advertising in 1986 (Association of National Advertisers, USA, 1988), excluding the expenses for design, marketing and production. Among the principles defined by "American Advertising Federation" it is also included that: "Good advertising informs the consumer and helps him buy more wisely." However, the producers of advertisements put a great emphasis on the emotional part of the personality of the consumer.<sup>4</sup> TV commercials usually last for 60, 30, 15 or even 10 seconds. Most of them are dramatizations of the lifestyle, enjoyment and benefit of the consumer society. TV advertising often takes the structure of *conflict–resolution* from television programs. This raises a serious question: *Is advertising information or persuasion?*

To learn how to watch advertisements critically is an important task for experts who can help us avoid the manipulation. In order to sell certain products corporations are inventing campaigns to associate their products with positive and desirable examples.

Advertising sells its products and an image of the world through a verbal and visual expression and a design effect calculated in a certain psychological and marketing strategy. The mass media reach a large audience; they have a great political and economic influence. Their control has become a particular prob-

1/ SCHWARTZ, S., H. A Theory of Cultural Values and Some Implications for Work. In *Applied Psychology : An International Review*. Vol. 48, No.1, 1999, pp. 23-47. ISSN 0269-994X

2/ GRÁČ, J. *Pohľady do psychológie hodnotovej orientácie mládeže*. 1st edition. Bratislava : Slov. pedagogické nakladateľstvo, 1979. 338 p.. p. 36.

3/ BROŽIK, V. *O hodnotách a ľudoch*. Nitra : FF UKF, 2006. 177 p.; p. 118. ISBN 80-8050-958-1

4/ DOWNING, John–MOHAMMADI, Ali–SREBRENY-MOHAMMADI, Anabelle, 1991: *Questioning the Media: A critical introduction*. USA: Sage publications, 1991. 3rd edition. ISBN 0-8039-3642, p. 330.

lem for a democratic state. Therefore, knowledge of the problems of mass culture, mass communication and the mass media are becoming a focus of those sciences, which are concerned with the issues of collective behavior. These facts lead us to recommend confronting the freedom of creative expression with the need to protect children and youth from the negative effects of the mass media. It seems to be an urgent social need, which ultimately reflects the wishes of parents and professionals.

## Personality and identity

In his paper, Alexander Plencner deals with popular culture. It includes a crisis of intimacy and communication, as well as a crisis of gender identity as its accompanying phenomenon. The crisis of communication results in remorse, self-pity, explosions of anger, manipulative forms of communication etc. In the late modern society, man has lost confidence in knowing his own experience. Our author explores the above-mentioned factors on the case of contemporary "lifestyle magazines" that offer insight into an imaginary ideal world. After a detailed analysis of variables the author concludes with saying that the late modern man lacks the concept of *the meaning of life as a stabilizing perspective*.

The concept of the meaning of life is a relevant topic. V. E. Frankl considered the search for the meaning of life to be a basic responsibility of human; he called finding an individual life-long meaning an "occupation".<sup>5</sup> Basic human needs also include "the will to meaning". Frankl puts the meaning of life to the spiritual dimension of man (not necessarily in a religious sense). He describes three categories of values: *creative values, experiential values and attitudinal values*. Individual elements of his theory are closely related to the search for one's own worldview and value system. P. T. P. Wong clarified his concept of the noetic dimension of personality; the noetic dimension of personality, according to him, lies in the overlapping of psychological and spiritual dimensions.<sup>6</sup> As was noted by Chlewinski, the central object in human consciousness controls the functioning of a human. If religiosity as an individually lived religion is the central value, then the other values are subordinate.<sup>7</sup> In Slovakia, P. Halama examined how values and value systems affect human behavior. According to Halama the development of *existential intelligence* helps an individual to interpret his life as meaningful and can offer valuable goals to live his life as meaningful.<sup>8</sup>

In her presentation entitled "The Continuity and Transformation of Childhood in the Pedagogical Context", Mária Matulčíková draws attention, *inter alia*, to the influence the media have on today's children. She supports the *media education* of children, focusing on the research of role and authority of a father in the present-days concept of a family.

Media research, with a particular focus on issues affecting children, is a standard attempt to create insight into the long-term socialization effects of mass communication. D. Morley was interested in the role of watching TV, which he called a "policy of the living room." It would be interesting to look at the relationships between parents and children in the context of media behavior. The media play an important role in arranging our daily lives and social relations. For a child it is extremely important to meet the needs of security, stimulation and success; for the further development of the child's personality it is of a great

importance to meet the needs of one's own responsibility.<sup>9</sup> The approach of J. Piaget, who deduced the formation of children's moral attitudes from internal sources, is inconsistent with theories that favor the impact of socialization and socio-cultural environment. According to Muchova's opinion the role of parenting is to create a psychological "basis" for the adoption of the Christian message.<sup>10</sup> Family is the first environment where socialization as well as education of the child begins; by implication, it applies to the formation of his personality, too. The task of catechesis is to strengthen positive socializing effects of interpersonal relations, but also to build child's relationships on the biblical foundations. The willingness to forgive, help and receive is a litmus paper of the unity with God (Matthew 5:45.48 and 6:12.25.40-45). The desire for *value-education* is one of the responses to the crisis of orientation, caused by a rapid cultural transformation of modern societies.<sup>11</sup>

There are many ways in which parents, teachers and religious institutions try to convey values. A direct implantation of values shows best results, if there is a complete agreement on how the desirable values are formed. The restriction of the direct implantation of values lies in the fact that this method often leads to discrepancies between theory and practice. Another way to communicate values is to give an example. Being a role model is therefore an effective way of teaching values, because it represents a living example of the practice. Of course, one serves as an example, whether or not one is conscious of it. We note how other people behave and how to handle a serious decision. Also, we look at whether their behavior matches their proclaimed faith. Everyone always serves as an example to others, be it a positive or negative model. Similar to implantation, being a role model is an important and necessary method of the transmission of values; of course, it also has its limitations. The main problem is that people are surrounded by many different examples they can follow. The role of the father also consists in trying to help children choose their life values.

## Conclusion

The modernity project of human freedom assumes that everyone wants to be a mature personality who sees his life as a vocation. But it is not so. Therefore, we ask whether the Czech and Slovak society as a whole in the post-communist period, as well as families and individuals, do not miss this unifying element. This conference in Bratislava, as an output of the aforementioned interdisciplinary research, brought a constructive debate on critical social situations from the perspective of theologians, Christian workers and experts in social sciences. It is precisely these "views inside the house from other parallel windows" which represent a new refreshing aspect that can produce good fruit in the study of missiology in our context.

5/ DRAPELA, V., J. *Přehled teorií osobnosti*. Praha : Portál, 1997. 175 s. s. 145-153. ISBN 80-7178-251-3

6/ HALAMA, P. Teoretické a metodologické přístupy k problematice zmyslu života. In *Československá psychologie*. Roč. 44, 2000, č. 3, s. 216-236; s. 221. ISSN 0009-062X

7/ STRIŽENEC, M. *Psychologie náboženstva*. Bratislava : Veda, 1996. 108 s. s. 66. ISBN 80-224-0475-6

8/ HALAMA, P. *Zmysel života z pohľadu psychológie*. Bratislava : SAP, 2007. 223 s. s. 107. ISBN 978-80-8095-023-1

9/ HOMOLA, M. *Motivace lidského chování*. Prague : Státní pedagogické nakladatelství, 1977. 359 p. pp. 271-272.

10/ MUCHOVÁ, L. *Úvod do náboženské pedagogiky*. České Budějovice : Pedagogická fakulta Jihočeské univerzity, 1992.

147 p. p. 83. ISBN 80-7040-052-8

11/ BREZINKA, W. *Filozofické základy výchovy*. Prague : Zvon, 1996. 213 p. p. 7. ISBN 80-7113-169-5

# Mission of the Contemporary Church: A Meditation on the Missionary Practice of the Gospel in the Secular Environment of the Czech Republic

Pavel Černý

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## Introduction

Due to the fact that it has been often misused by various ideologies and deformed by incorrect historical interpretations, the term "mission" evolved merely into a swear-word or at least into a word with pejorative connotations. Despite all these distortions it is still in use to indicate the mission of the contemporary church in the world. The term still appears in the language of the world ecumenical dialogue and it is a permanent issue of academic theological research. No wonder; as *missio Dei* it represents the key concept of contemporary biblical hermeneutics and never ceased to be an inspiring model of church service to the world. The mission of the church is closely related with the practice of the Gospel in the secular environment of the Czech Republic; through its new understanding, which springs from re-reading Bible in a "missionary" perspective and a radical contextualization of the Gospel of Christ, inspires ecumenical dialogue, helps churches in their orientation, and leads to their cooperation in the field of improvement of the current practice of the Gospel.

Repeatedly, articles and publications by Professor Filipi reveal the accent on the Gospel of Christ, which crosses various borderlines between people, connects, unifies and overcomes differences, contradictions and disputes. How can the Gospel of Christ influence the theology of mission of the Christian churches and practice of the Gospel in the secular environment of the Czech Republic? I try to answer this question on the basis of theological discipline called usually "theology of mission", which deals both with evangelization and social action, i.e. the church in the service to the world.

First of all we need to admit that in the Czech Christian environment the words "mission" and "evangelization" are not commonly used anymore. It may be the result of the long life of our churches in the totalitarian era, when very limited and restricted religious freedoms were preserved, with a focus mainly on the performance of liturgical acts inside churches, chapels and prayer rooms. The churches were not allowed to appear in public. Thus churches and congregations, little by little, got used to care more for themselves than for missionary work and evangelization outside their communities. Up to now some Christians react antagonistically upon even hearing the terms "mission" or "evangelization" and consider them to be anachronisms or relics of the past.<sup>1</sup> Surprisingly, such attitude can not be found in the world church organizations—be it the World Council of Churches, which has produced a vast number of missio-

1/ Exceptions to this trend are the following publications and articles: SMOLIK, J. *Současné pokusy o interpretaci evangelia*. Prague: KEBF, 1968; "Evangelizace: Ekumenická diskuse." In *Křesťanská revue*, Vol. 48, 1/1981, pp. 5-10; FILIPI, P. "Chudým evangelium se zvěštuje." In *Křesťanská revue*, Vol. 50, 1983, p. 123. Articles of Miroslav Heryán and Cyril Horák are also worth mentioning.

logical documents, or the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe—Leuenberg Church Fellowship<sup>2</sup> or the Conference of European Churches. *Charta oecumenica*, a document signed by a majority of churches in the Czech Republic, says: "The most important role of churches in Europe is the collective preaching of the Gospel in words and acts for salvation of all people".<sup>3</sup> Important conferences of the world ecumenical movement never miss out the issue of mission and evangelization. The same can be told about the Roman-Catholic Church, which often mentions the issue in its encyclicals and other important documents.

If we consider the European context, we can observe that it has been the two recent popes, who heavily influenced the discussion on mission and evangelization by their encyclicals. I have in mind especially *Evangelii nuntiandi* by Paul VI<sup>4</sup> and *Redemptoris missio* (of permanent validity for missionary work) by John Paul II.<sup>5</sup> The latter, acclaimed by almost all Christian institutions today, stated clearly and plainly that Europe needs a new evangelization.

The study of mission and evangelization in the Czech environment also evolves very slowly, and is still not adequately reflected at the academic ground.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that the interest in the issue slowly increases and the historically first study day, organized by the Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Czech Republic, focused on the understanding of mission in its particular ecclesial structures.<sup>7</sup>

In the Czech environment Professor Pavel Filipi often treats mission and related issues in his publications in connection with ecclesiology. He emphasizes that the church, mirroring the inner relations within the Trinity, must have a purpose other than itself; it is here for the world. The place of the church in the Divine plan of salvation is defined by its sending out to the world. In a certain perspective, the church does not "*perform*" mission, but rather the church as such is God's mission to the world. This is exactly where Filipi seeks its *raison d'être* and the norm for its ecclesiological structures. The unity of church also has its missionary dimension and is a clear testimony of faith to the world. Besides the passive testimony of the church, i.e. when the church makes its teaching public and offers its "goods" to people, there is also the active model: mission work and evangelization, marching across marketplaces of the world with a prophetic appeal, a kind of a "home delivery".<sup>8</sup> According to Matthew 28:19, the Great Commission, i.e. entrusting the disciples of Jesus with a missionary quest, is understood as approaching people in their environment and conditions, seeking common language, not respecting any borders and division lines. Filipi concludes: "From the eschatological perspective the world is more important than the church. Noah's Ark mentality, the high self-confidence of an isolated island of a few rescued from the global flood, does not have place in the universal vision of the Kingdom of God."<sup>9</sup>

2/ A document named *Evangelicky evangelizovat – perspektivy pro cirkve v Evropě*. 2002-2004, issued in 2006

3/ *Charta Oecumenica*. Article 2, <http://www.ekumenickarada.cz/index.php?setlang=1&a=cat.13>

4/ PAUL VI. *Evangelii nuntiandi*. Prague: Zvon, 1990.

5/ JOHN PAUL II. *Redemptoris missio*. Prague: Zvon, 1994.

6/ *Do we need missiology? And if so, why do we not teach it and develop it systematically?* The conference proceedings from the 1st conference of the CECMS. Issued in the Czech-Slovak and English version by the CECMS, Prague, 2007.

7/ The 1st Study day of the ECC CZ took place in Prague on May 24, 2004. Various perspectives on mission and missionary work were presented there: the Roman-Catholic (by Bishop Fr. Radkovský), the Eastern Orthodox (J. Hauzar), the mainline Protestant (L. Beneš) and the evangelical (P. Černý).

8/ Cf. FILIPI, P. *Církev a cirkve: Kapitoly z ekumenické eklesiologie*. Brno: CDK, 2000. pp. 34-35

9/ *Ibid.* p. 35

However, application and development of the active model of the church based on mission and evangelization is rather problematic in the Czech environment. After all, it means to approach people, search for a comprehensible language, disrespect any limitations and disturb the self-confidence of an isolated island of a few rescued. This is exactly the point where we have to deal with serious questions of our understanding of the missionary work of the church. I dare to pick only four most pressing questions from the vast and multi-layered issue.

## Mission in the multi-faith world

In one of his articles, Dr. Ed Stetzer, editor of *Christianity Today* magazine,<sup>10</sup> recalls a multi-religious conference, similar to hundreds of others being currently organized all over the world. The participants represented the Catholic Church, Orthodox Church and Protestant churches, Jews, Muslims, and members of the Baha'i Faith. According to his memories it was an assembly of nice and warm people. In the beginning the conference host explained that a collective research should lead to cooperation in sharing resources and mutual help. He suggested that the participants create, publish and distribute resources to help particular fellowships to develop and grow. Ed Stetzer asked to speak and he said, smiling: "I appreciate your kind support, which enables to make research on churches to improve our understanding of their life and service. Nevertheless, I am not here to make partnerships, which would lead to mutual help in growth of all religions. I want to help churches I serve and one reason of their existence is to make some of you to convert to Christianity." The conference room began to ferment. Some stayed still, staring in surprise, others nodded their heads in agreement. A Muslim imam sitting next to Stetzer said his view is similar. It came clear that both Stetzer and the imam represented dynamic and growing communities. Both believed in the sense of sharing and spreading their faith. Their aim was not to create a syncretistic model made of parts of all religious beliefs. The Christian theologian and the Muslim imam stayed together in a friendly talk long after the conference had ended and laughed together at certain trends of the conference.

Peaceful coexistence of world religions is very important and inter-religious dialogue is deeply rooted in the ground of the theology of mission. Nevertheless, it is important to discern what exactly we expect from this dialogue. It seems that proselytizing among Christian churches has been overcome and nearly eliminated. The churches mutually respect their annunciations of Saviour's grace and diversity of gifts of the Spirit. Is it possible, however, to adopt such a stance also towards other religions? Is it not the case that we should rather proselytize among members of those religions and to give them the same chances? Is it not rather important to grasp anew the theological reflection on what the Christian churches worship and serve and what other religions do? Theological research should help us make a clear decision of whether we want partnership or religious association with other religions or whether we should try to proselytize among them—on the assumption that the other religions will do the same. It is no doubt that we have much to learn from other religions and that inter-religious dialogue is an essential part of mission. The Scripture testifies the Lord as God who is in dialogue with his people. God incarnated in Jesus Christ remains in the dialogue. The early church leads dialogue with the Jewish synagogue and the Hellenistic society.

10/ STETZER, E. "Proselytizing in a Multi-Faith World." *Christianity Today*, April 2011. pp. 20-27

There is no doubt we have to respect other religions and treat them with dignity, but it does not mean that our testimony of Jesus Christ should be concealed as an esoteric teaching. In an inter-religious dialogue it is the very integrity of our faith which is tested. A dialogue with a partner who hides the most precious thing he has ceases to be interesting soon. Members of other religions very often express disdain and mockery for those unable or unwilling to confess their faith.

Filipi also warns about a danger of confessional vagueness. False tolerance, which defends itself with such vagueness, is not a positive value.<sup>11</sup> Inter-religious dialogue should not be taken as a "warehouse" of diverse beliefs. Friendly relations among people of different religions should not be an obstacle to confessional straightness in the context of universalism of the Christian understanding of salvation.

## Secularization or the return of God?

Friedrich Nietzsche foretold the death of God and many after him repeated monotonously "God is dead". But it seems that the "God is back" phrase would fit the current situation better. Everything points towards the fact that the global trend of secularization has stopped. In 1990, 67% people admitted to belonging to one of the four world's biggest religions (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism). In 2005 it was already 73%. According to estimations it will be 80% of the world population in 2025.

In 1960s and 1970s, world Christian conferences were dominated by secularization theses. Since then many theological documents have considered secularization to be an irreversible and natural process. European theology in particular has been strongly affected by secularization theses as member bases of the churches got thinner and thinner year after year and Christianity gradually became a minority religion. It is no doubt that certain waves of secularization have taken place and their impact has not been thoroughly negative. On the other hand it must be said that in a global scale the process of secularization is not as successful as it seemed to be in a few past decades. Be it the effect of migration of population or spreading of the postmodern paradigm of spirituality and desire for transcendence, we can speak about the "return of God" in Europe. A thorough sociological analysis of secularization trends and its opposites is offered in the recently published book by Zdeněk R. Nešpor *Too Weak in Faith: The Czech (Non)Religiosity in the European Context*.<sup>12</sup> The publication gathers material, which strongly shakes the stereotypes of our understanding of secularization. For a long time many have thought that the whole world would develop according to the Western secularization model. However, the idea of science and technology replacing and destroying the religious realm faded away. Nešpor does not hesitate to talk about the "secularist ideology", which represented a fundamental misunderstanding of religion and its function.<sup>13</sup> In our current condition it is more than important to push the "secularist ideology" out of our society, which relied on the wrong presumption of a decline of religiosity.

Nešpor concludes: "The contemporary Czech society is still not as atheist as it might like to 'proudly' think and claim about itself. It is rather anti-clerical, as it transformed the content of the actual religious needs and ideas into declaratively different types of symbolic realms. Generally speaking, the Czechs refuse the Christian God. But they do not cease to believe in something, identifying it occasionally with the structures of the fragmentary Christian memory tucked in the social consciousness."<sup>14</sup>

11/ Cf. FILIPI, P. *Církev a církev: Kapitoly z ekumenické eklesiologie*. Brno: CDK, 2000. p. 21.

12/ NEŠPOR, Z. R. *Přilíš slábi ve víře: Česká neřeligiózita v evropském kontextu*. Prague: Kalich, 2010.

13/ Cf. *ibid.* pp. 34-35

14/ *Ibid.* p. 188

He adds: "The Czechs have chosen the path of progressive de-religionization, which they have not managed to pursue properly yet, and the effects of their ambiguous relation to religion have been apparent until today."<sup>15</sup>

Another problem is that missionary work of congregations, parishes and churches is often still attached to the secularization trends. The current missionary condition is actually much more similar to that of the 1st century AD than to the one we had here four or five decades ago. Today we also encounter polytheism, myriads of mystery cults and various forms of old and new religions. It is quite obvious that the Communist totalitarian ideology also had its religious content and character. From this point of view it is quite surprising that the emphasis on the rational aspect of the Revelation still prevails over religious experience in many Protestant churches.

It remains questionable whether Barthian dialectic theology and neo-orthodoxy had not somehow contributed to the communication barrier of the current church mission. In contrast, narrative theology and symbolic language seem to rise in popularity and prove to be very vital mediators in modern preaching. Subjective experience of faith, which has been overlooked and neglected in European Protestant theology for a long time, is also experiencing a massive revival. American sociologist Peter L. Berger notes: "...hope that explosive pluralism of our times can lead to the rebirth of a new theological synthesis does not seem in any way exaggerated."<sup>16</sup>

### Dialogue and cooperation with churches of other languages

Last year, the ecumenical circles were surprised by the discovery that people of a different origin than English prevailed among the participants of Sunday worships in London, i.e. the immigrants of various nationalities. This is an example of the fact that some of the European cities are experiencing an increase of influence of church communities consisting of immigrants. Our dialogue with theology and mission practice of these churches seems, thus, inevitable.

In the Czech Republic, there are still not so many immigrants as, e.g., in Western Europe. However, Korean, Russian, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Japanese or multinational congregations emerged on the Czech territory. Some of them are parts of traditional denominations; some of them are already independent. I suppose this is a great chance for theological dialogue and mutual enrichment in the field of mission. At the time when the European concept of multiculturalism is in decay or even in ruins, Christian churches should be able to manifest their ability to overcome ethnocentrism and cultural differences, developing intercultural hermeneutics. While systematic theology remains almost untouched by the phenomenon of migration, the value of intercultural hermeneutics of Biblical texts increases undoubtedly.<sup>17</sup>

New churches begin to evangelize among Czech citizens and spread their faith in a country which, to them, is foreign. Will Czech Christians be able to create a favourable environment for newly contextualized missionary church models? Will they be open to dialogue which can positively influence missionary work of existing churches? This still remains an open question.

15/ Ibid. p. 190

16/ BERGER, P. L. *Vzdálená sláva: Hledání víry ve věku lehkověrnosti*. Prague: Barrister and Principal, 1997. p. 69

17/ Cf. NOORT, G. "Emerging Migrant Churches in the Netherlands: Missiological Challenges and mission frontiers." *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 392, April 2011, p. 13

### Culture

Theologian Jonathan J. Bonk recently wrote: "Apparently, theology can be liberated from cultural bounds only through mission."<sup>18</sup> This piece of knowledge is hardly new; we can verify its validity on the pages of the Scripture itself, depicting the development of the early church. The Apostle Paul is an archetypical bearer of missionary quest, who preaches the Gospel connecting the Jewish and the Greek thought. His theology is shaped by his mission and it shows apparent traces of a spiritual struggle to contextualize the Gospel in a foreign cultural environment.

In a recent issue of the journal *Universum* Jan Regner reports on a European Jesuit conference, which tried to interpret secular culture as a challenge for new evangelization.<sup>19</sup> Since modernity stood on two pillars – the development of science and the new self-understanding of an individual, the postmodern era brings religion back on the stage, even though it has the shape of a wide pluralism. Irish Jesuit Gallagher describes postmodernity as "cultural hopelessness and inconsolability", but on the other hand it also means "new openness to faith".<sup>20</sup> The conference also took account of Cardinal J. H. Newman's opinion, who was convinced that "departure from Christianity is not the matter of intellect, but of the heart."<sup>21</sup> Thus, Christianity is not a "theorem" to which evangelization should bring a proof. Rather, as also the Pope Benedict XVI says, it is an experience, which a Christian must go through authentically and, then, testify it and share it with others.

The World Council of Churches, a heavy-footed organization burdened with many problems, has been publishing a remarkable journal *International Review of Mission* for many years. Its issues not only inform the world about new developments of the concept of mission, but also drag us directly into missionary dialogue between Protestants, Evangelicals, Orthodox and Catholics. We can only regret that such ecumenical scholarly debate on mission does not take place also in our country.

The hermeneutics of mission seems to be one of the most important prerequisites of a proper understanding and application of the biblical text. Missionary reasons shine through writings of the New Testament and the Old Testament authors very often. To approach the biblical text without any knowledge of the missionary quest of Israel and that of the early church means giving too much space to modern culture, which may result in a lack of authentic pre-understanding and thus in missing a precise interpretation.<sup>22</sup>

### Conclusion

Current missionary conditions lead us to re-evaluate many beaten tracks of church paradigms. Europeans used to play a leading role at theological conferences for many years; now it is their time to show humility and accept that newly contextualized missionary shapes of non-European churches are coming into existence. It is not easy to learn from those, whose Christianity is still of a young history. We should

18/ BONK, J. J. "Missions and the Liberation of Theology." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 34, 4/2010, p. 194

19/ REGNER, J. "Evangelizace v sekularizovaném světě." *Universum* 1/XXI, pp. 30-31

20/ Ibid. p. 31

21/ Ibid.

22/ ČERNÝ, P. "The Relationship between Theology and Missiology: The Missiological Hermeneutics." *European Journal of Theology*. Vol. IXI, 2/2010, pp. 104-109

pay attention to cultural study of the epoch we live in. Culture determines an individual a way more than we are willing to admit. Theological schools should make a sort of a missionary "audit" of their curriculums and ethos to improve their service to the missionary quest of churches and answer the challenges of today.<sup>23</sup> A theological synthesis, which does not take account of the missionary quest of the church, is endangered with "escapism" from the current ecumenical research and struggle of Christian churches. It can lose its relevance and miss its quest to serve as a helper and guardian to the current process of evangelization and social mission of the church. The materially saturated Europe has been manifesting a spiritual hunger in recent years. Just try to "Google" the words "Europe" and "spirituality". Four million links will appear. Despite the fact that many of them are linked to occultism or paranormal phenomena, we can recognize in this phenomenon a certain sign of our epoch—people in Europe are experiencing the feeling that there might be something more than material life. People seek answers to their difficult questions; they are craving for spiritual experience and search for the meaning of life. What will be the answer of theology—and practical theology in particular—to this spiritual need?

## Crucial Obstacles of Evangelization and Mission Work

Jaroslav Kratka

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### What evangelization is not

First of all, we need to clarify, what the "spreading of the Gospel" genuinely means. We will start with telling what it does not.

The majority of us can still remember the big boom of mass evangelizations in the Czech Republic after 1989. Its representatives were coming to our country and also to other Post-Communist countries mainly from the United States, but also from Sweden and Germany. Despite the fact that some of them were preceded by serious and proper preparations (especially those organized by the Billy Graham Association), their influence on the Czech Christianity has been rather devastating and it still has not fully recovered since.

I participated at some of the evangelization events myself, regrettably, not always with a critical attitude. But when I remember it, I can not avoid a strongly unpleasant feeling. When I finally managed to meet personally some of the organizing teams and get acquainted with their methods, I was nearly horrified. Everything happened on the basis of a primitive manipulation.

23/ ČERNÝ, P. "The Relationship between Theology and Missiology: The Missiological Hermeneutics" In *Do we need missiology? And if so, why do we not teach it and develop it systematically?* The conference proceedings from the 1st conference of the CECMS. Issued in the Czech-Slovak and English version by the CECMS, Prague, 2007

What was wrong? Well, above all—the psychological pressure exerted on the audience and the oversimplified schematisation in interpreting the Scripture. The vast majority of "evangelists" promised more than even Jesus Christ could do himself. (I deliberately skip the whole area of so-called "miraculous healings", which I would rather recommend as a good topic for a Master's thesis to a student of psychology. Crowd psychosis can really be a powerful instrument, but it has nothing in common with the manifestation of the Spirit.)

When I was working in Ukraine in the years of 1992-2001, I had a chance to explore the effects and consequences of such "evangelizations". I will give two examples. One of them took place in Vinnice (southern Ukraine, 380,000 inhabitants), the other one in Krivoj Rog (eastern Ukraine, 681,000 inhabitants and probably one of the "longest" cities in the world—130 km).

The first one had been prepared by the aforementioned association of Billy Graham and I became a close friend to its national president. The preparations took half a year and the whole event itself lasted a week. Evening after evening there were people coming in masses, first and foremost because of their curiosity about what is going on. A local Baptist congregation, taking part in the organization of the event, tirelessly invited their friends and friends of their friends and provided them with all necessary spiritual and material care. After every closing sermon, people who decided to accept Jesus Christ were invited to come forward and the officials prayed over them. Finally, they were asked for their postal addresses and were invited to a special meeting, where they should have obtained proper pastoral care. As I said, the preparations were careful and serious, nothing was neglected. The evangelization event gained 1,100 new believers. What a surprise when just a half year later only 80 of them remained. I am not going to give any details here, but — interestingly enough—the majority of "new believers" later tended to strictly distance themselves from this "act of faith".

Later I gave a lecture in Krivoj Rog on the topic of evangelization and I couldn't help mentioning the example of what happened in Vinnice. During the break, a local pastor took me to the near park. There was a huge sport stadium behind it. He told me: "At this stadium seven thousand people had been converted in a week. And do you know how many remained after a year?" "No...", I said bashfully, as I was not sure whether he wanted to support or to disprove my previous lecture. "Eight," he answered bitterly. "Tell me, how could eight thousand remain, when there were only seven thousand converted?" I asked with an ingenuous irony. I admit I wanted to provoke him. "Not eight thousand, but eight people!" he explained. "We know only about eight of them, who remained in our Baptist church and in the Pentecostal movement. There might be others, who simply moved to another place or entered another church...". To be sure, I asked whether they took down all their names and addresses. He said they did.

I could continue giving more examples, but all of them would seem very similar to those described above. People who had been starving spiritually for a long time threw excitedly into a new spiritual "adventure", but when they sobered up from the initial enthusiasm, there was only emptiness and they felt they had been cheated.

Well, for the third time, one more experience from Ukraine. In Severodoněck I encountered a very friendly, kind and genuine Baptist, a refugee from Armenia. He was chosen for a group of pastoral assistants, as we would call them, but they were called „*dušpopiečiteľ*“ in Ukrainian language, which means "a carer for souls". They had to pass training, where they were taught how to cooperate with a team of "evangelists" coming from the United States to organize and finance a mass evangelization event. When he described preparations and then the main course of the event, he cried. But his tears were not the

tears of emotion. He was devastated and shocked mainly by the methods the "evangelists" had been using and the huge amount of money they had invested into the event. But most of all he felt hurt that the central piece of the event was not Jesus Christ but video cameras.

I personally participated at a "stadium evangelization" in Brno, Czech Republic, organized by the Australian "evangelist" Steve Ryder and his Reach Out For Christ. It was based, like many similar events, on the "disco" principle. I managed to tolerate the extremely loud music, but when the "falling down backwards" started I was about to leave. Call me a sceptic but I frankly do not believe that the Holy Spirit makes people fall on their backs and roll on the floor. It is an effect of crowd psychosis and it does not have anything in common with repentance.

Yet there are, or were, more movements and religious groups, which use or recommend the same or similar methods. To name a few:

- **Branhamism**
- **The Latter Rain Movement**
- **The Second (and The Third) Wave of the Holy Spirit**
- **Word of Faith Movement (WFM)**, leaders Ern Baxter, Kenneth Hagin and others
- **Derek Prince Ministries (DPM)**, spread in the Czech Republic especially during the Communist era
- **Network of Christian Ministries**, leaders Charles Green, Emanuel Cannistraci, John Gimenez
- **Benny Hinn and the "Toronto Blessing"**
- **Promise Keepers—Men of Integrity**

## Ignoring the continuity of the church

All those movements (and many others which I did not mention) have one thing in common—they deny or refuse the continuity of the church. From the Christian history we can learn about the devastating effect of the broken continuity of the early church with Judaism. Up to nowadays a proper remedy has not been found. Similarly, discontinuity with the original Christianity always means a lot of problems. Despite all the criticism of the church establishment or hierarchy, which may be often legitimate, one can not simply build his thought upon rage and mere defiance. There is no point in covering the fact that many reformation movements were influenced by the political situation of their times and thus remain conforming to this situation.

The Western (Papal) Schism of 1378 – 1417, the major division of the church between the Western and Eastern Church in 1054... A certain tension is already visible in the apostolic era. See, for example, I Corinthians 3, where Paul proves his wisdom in overcoming the tension and reuniting the church.

Opinions of William Branham (1909–1965) are a straight opposite to Paul's peaceful attitude. In his book named *The Choosing Of A Bride*, he writes: "Now, then when we change back now for a moment to the spiritual side, and when you see a church that's in the world, acts like the world, anticipating in the world, partaking of the world, counting God's commandments as if He never had wrote them, then you— you can just imagine Christ ain't going to take a Bride like that. Could you imagine taking the modern church today for a Bride? Not my Lord. I don't—I could hardly see that. No. Remember now, a man and his wife are one. Would you join yourself to a person like that? If you would, it would certainly kinda disappoint my faith in you. And then how about God joining Himself to something like that, a regular denominational prostitute? You think that He would do it?"

Discords, discords and discords again. This is not the manifestation of the Spirit, but one of the most powerful weapons of Satan himself. We must be well aware of the continuity not only in the universal church of Christ, but also in God's people, as Holy Scripture puts it: "If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, do not boast over those branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you." (Romans 11:17-18)

We can not simply find ourselves a different tree—no matter how ornamental it might be—only because we do not like the tree of Christ's church. Even though such groups of enthusiasts can maybe enjoy a good company and have a high level of their morals (e. g. Jehova's Witnesses or Mormons), but they do not live the life in Christ.

## Confusing the God-human and human-God relation

Another distinctive feature of new evangelization movements is their confusing the God-human and human-God relation. In both Testaments God is the supreme ruler and humans are standing in front of him with question: "Lord, what should I do to fulfil your will?" Even his son Jesus Christ, the true Saviour of the world, says: "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." (John 5:30) "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." (John 6:38)

New spiritual leaders of "Kenneth Hagin" type and all the loud announcers of the "gospel of prosperity" are in the straight opposite to Jesus's message. Instead of God requiring human to fulfil his will, they preach human who demands God to fulfil his wishes. It is an odd mixture of pagan-Christianity and neo-shamanism. Note well that the main intention of those movements is to promise their followers an improvement of their life and, especially, its animal, sensuous part.

## Jesus Christ's self-sacrifice taken less serious

Even in the apostolic era diverse movements emerged which tried to change or to deflect the theological accents of the Gospels (e. g. the cross-centrism) in various ways. On their account St. Paul says: "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." (I Corinthians 1:22-24) And he adds: "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (I Corinthian 2:2)

Robert Schuller is currently the most successful TV preacher, who lives in the Crystal Cathedral in Los Angeles, which is a house made all of glass. Please note what he says in his 1981 book *Living Positively One Day at a Time*: "Jesus knew his worth, his success fed his self-esteem... He suffered the cross to sanctify his self-esteem. And he bore the cross to sanctify your self-esteem. And the cross will sanctify the ego trip!" (p. 201)

Or: "I don't think anything has been done in the name of Christ and under the banner of Christianity that has proven more destructive to human personality and, hence, counterproductive to the evangelism enterprise than the often crude, uncouth, and unchristian strategy of attempting to make people aware of their lost and sinful condition." (*Christianity Today*, 1984)

Moreover, the aforementioned popular Christian evangelist Billy Graham has scared the respectable

Christian world, when he participated at one of Robert Schuller's TV worships named "Hour of Power" in 1997, saying: "I think everybody that loves Christ, or knows Christ, whether they're conscious of it or not, they're members of the Body of Christ (...) They may not even know the name of Jesus, but they know in their hearts that they need something that they don't have, and they turn to the only light that they have, and I think that they are saved, and that they're going to be with us in heaven." (See <http://www.christ-net.cz/magazin/clanek.asp?clanek=2642>) Satan tries in many ways to ridicule Christ's self-sacrifice or at least to diminish it.

## What is a true evangelization, then?

### Evangelization is a process

Spiritual reproduction or multiplication can be better understood through the analogy of biological reproduction.

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter 1:23)

Acceptance of the Divine Word can be compared to conception of man in the maternal womb. The womb here means the community of the church—as it is often said "church womb" or "church as mother". This womb nurtures him, gives him warmth and protects him. He is nurtured not with "strong meat" of the Scripture, but with its excerpts, warmed by love of his community and protected with intercession prayers. When all these conditions are fulfilled, he grows and aims towards his birth. It is not, though, a birth of life—after all, life of a child begins with his conception and not with his birth—but it is a birth of his independence, albeit limited. He still can not walk, he can not prepare his meal, he can not protect himself, but he breathes, hears, sees and feels independently. In this phase of growth certain problems may occur, which should not, however, discourage the "mother", i.e. the church. There are complications in feeding, excreting, diseases. Maybe, a few sleepless nights at mourning baby's bed will have to be spent. But it is this phase which is of a highest value for life. Till baby attains maturity a lot of patience and wisdom in his education is needed.

One small observation at the end: A married couple can not have babies, if one of them is sterile. Let us not seek a new life "*in vitro*". The true life comes from the Holy Spirit only.

# The Missionary Work among Children and Adults in Socially Excluded Localities in the Czech Republic: Practical Experience in the Field of Social and Pastoral Care

Iva Pellarová

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## Conditions of Romani people in the Czech Republic

According to qualified sociologic and ethnographic estimations there is about 250–350 thousand of Romani people living in the Czech Republic. They belong to various ethnic and language groups: Slovakian Romani (80-90%), Vlach-Romani, Czech and Moravian Romani, Sinti Romani and Hungarian Romani. A considerable part of Romani people is situated in socially excluded localities all over the country. A higher density of these localities can be found in north Bohemia and north Moravia.

Among the most acute problems of these communities belong: a low level of education, a high level of long-term unemployment, low living standards, habitation provided mostly by public hostels without any possibility of change, an increasing number of indebted persons, an increasing number of drug addicts, a gradual decay of the traditional caste system, short-term and long-term migration, an increasing number of children suffering from mental disorders.

As a result of this, a part of Romani people faces long-term stress and accumulation of problems. The most common reaction is resignation, depression and hopelessness.

## A story of the boy from the picture

He lives in the far worst excluded locality in town, has five brothers and sisters, lives in a flat with a single room; his parents are unemployed, have almost no money and face problems with alcohol abuse. Children are starving. He also suffers from a mental disorder. His cross is really heavy and no one can see hope for a change.

The situation of Romani people living in socially excluded localities gets progressively worse. In such cases, possibilities of the solution of their problems through some kind of social work are very limited. Social workers have limited competences and motivations. It is possible to convince the clients, who are willing to make some partial changes, but it is impossible to initiate the radical ones—these people will simply continue living at the edge of society in spiritual and material poverty.



## Mission and pastoral care

The missionary work and pastoral care among Romani people is currently rather at the margins of interest of churches. Since there is no systematic approach, mission develops mainly from individual interest of priests, church workers or congregations. In the Czech Republic, Christians are also a minority and they, also, can be socially isolated; their voice in the society is too weak.

Moreover, even in churches there can be strong prejudices against Romani people. Their generally negative portrayal in the mass media does not help much either. Nevertheless, several churches devote themselves to work with Romani people—be it in the form of Diaconias, charities etc. There are also leisure time and community centres situated directly in the excluded localities where Romani people can also obtain pastoral care. In Brno, Rokycany, Prague, Ústí nad Labem and many other cities there are many enthusiastic people working, who simply love what they do. There are cases in which some of the people working with Romani people identified with the latter's mentality so much that they adopted the Romani nationality in the last census.

In September of each year there is a national Romani pilgrimage to the Holy Hill near Olomouc. Some charismatic movements also have Romani congregations, which, however, tend to be unsustainable in the long-term perspective.

## What are the main obstacles of missionary work and participation of Romani people in the life of Protestant churches?

- Exclusion of congregations,
- family clans,
- high demands on education (Biblical knowledge),
- temperance, low emotional level ("more thinking and less joy"),
- claims on self-control, high self-demands, individuality, need to be distinguishable from others.

When Romani finally come to believe that Jesus Christ died for the world because of his love, they do not understand why Christians do not genuinely and deeply enjoy the fact; why there is not more joy in the masses. Romani brought with them bits of Hindu religion from India; there a god acts as merciless and believers are to fear him and bring him offerings, and that also happens in some Christian rituals (baptisms, funerals).

We need to discern clearly the core of the Biblical message, the Gospel of Divine love and redemption, which of these really is to be heard and spread. The "superstructure" of customs, practices and rituals sometimes hides this message so masterfully that it may be difficult for a person from a different culture to find.

We should take note of the fact that even though many children and adults among Romani people can read fluently, they do not understand the subject of what they read because of the lack of abstract thoughts and imagination. Their life is fully aimed towards practical abilities and survival. There have been, though, good results with narration of stories.

## What personal qualities should a missionary worker among the Romani have?

A missionary worker among the Romani must "burn for Jesus"; have a good knowledge of the environmental and ethnical particularities; not abhor the environment where the Romani live; know the Romani

language; respect the Romani and their way of life; be highly sensitive and authentic; have natural authority and ability to attract people's attention; be clear in speech; be able to approach the Romani mentality; respect the caste system; not exceed borders and rules; and be able to work with whole families.

For the Romani, the faith in Jesus Christ should mean hope and strengthening of their identity, their "*Romipen*", as they call it—we should always assure them that God loves them the way they are, and not the way we want them to be.

## The Message of Visual Artist Jana Zaujecová

(Slovak visual artist and the author of the artistic artefacts from the photographs used in *Misiologické info* 4/2011)

### Jana Zaujecová

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In my opinion, the sheep fleece reshaped into the author's felt represents the most accurate definition of what I am trying to say through my work. My aim is always to reach the purity and power of the context by using minimal means of expression. For me this becomes possible when I use the sheep fleece felt, mostly in white and brown natural colours. I am creating two- or even three-dimensional artefacts with it. The felt feels soft and warm. It is a material, which absorbs noises and blows, you can also use it to paint with it; you can model it and knead it. When used for sewing a liturgical vestment, the sheep fleece felt symbolizes the sacrificial lamb, or Jesus Christ himself. I like to tell stories with the fabric, to hide silent ideas within it, which could not be seen or noticed in any other way. I am fascinated by the monochromatic white colour, all its delicate shades and all the spectrum of colours when white turns grey. I use white colour to create the feeling of depth, structure or layers in my textile collages, mosaics or fibre painting. However, my production is never random.

In my installation named *The Soothing* ("Tíšenie"), I pay tribute to Mother Theresa, who was able to touch people with her "gestures of love", healing not only their bodies, but also their souls. I am trying to reproduce these gestures in the layers of soothing pain, hunger, dirt and poverty, and I am using such creative methods as soap imprints, rice drawing or perforated felt to reach the feeling when the touch begins to disappear.

The artistic series *Homage to Donors* ("Pocta darcom") also tells a personal story. I am imprinting the felt with the touch of a donor, who gives a part of himself for the sake of the other. The expressive and life-giving red colour is impregnating the white non-woven fabric, where it suggestively mirrors the suffering and takes shape of transfusion tubes, blood or bone marrow. Here, a life is being saved. The textile relief mirrors the earthly suffering of the ill person, which is heavy but not hopeless. The second plan of the picture reveals hope, which lifts human above their physical bodies and brings them spiritual relief.

The series *The Song of Songs* ("Pieseň piesní") is about the everydayness of man-woman relationship. I tried to express the beauty of common things, used in our everyday lives, with such materials as linen

cloth, baking paper, ceramics and felt. The point is we use these things so often and repeatedly that they leave a considerable trace in our thought and acts. Naturally, the everydayness also brings many obstacles. I suppose that the quotation which accompanies the work could offer us their metaphorical overcoming. The artefacts are passing from dark to the light.

In the work *Of Love* ("O láske") I tried to emphasize the layers of two textile objects – a man and a woman. The work speaks about their mutual relationship, based on sharing their vision of depth. It is thus a certain cross-section, enabling the observer to see their very interior feelings. The man, shaped in the horizontal structure, embraces and protects, while the woman, shaped in the vertical structure, gives and grows through. Together they both form a harmonic unity, which gives the impression of monumentality.

The white shirts of the textile installation named *The March of the Souls* ("Pochod duší") tell the epic story from the Bayeux Tapestry (embroidered in 1077). The forty scenes from the Battle of Hastings (1066) are accompanied with the original text in Latin from the original tapestry along with its Slovak translation.

The artistic series of works named *The Virtue Series* ("Cyklus cnosti"): *The Garment of the Lent* ("Rúcho pôstu") and *The Hermit's Cloak* ("Plášť eremite") were created during the Ora et Ars symposium in Skalka pri Trenčíně; it is the place where two medieval saints, Svorad and Benedikt, lived and worked. The whole series is strongly influenced by *genius loci* of the place. I created a series of so-called "arttexes" (i.e. the non-woven tapestries), which I call "garments" but which resemble to the real hermit's garments only in a symbolical way. It is possible to understand the series as a symbolic hermitage, a cave or a tree-hole, where the saints used to watch over their virtues. The "arttexes" are followed by seven abstract stone artworks covered with felt or fibres, representing the seven virtues. The stones come from the riverbed of the Váh River, the authentic environment of the saints.

At my expositions, I often expose excerpts of poetry or Bible quotations along with my works. I always adjust them on the sheep wool felt, which gives them a new dimension. The texts accompanying the works often help to tell the rest of their stories, making them deeper and clearer at the same time. Their mutual influence creates space for thinking and reflection. Also, their connection means the mutual penetration of the two artistic genres—poetry can be read as a visual art and the visual art becomes poetry.

During my studies at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design I used to devote myself to the design of clothing. In the wide spectrum of possibilities, I made my way to the free expression through the work with fabric, scenography, sacral textile or restoring of historical fabrics. The latter, along with my occupation as a curator in the Historical Museum of the Bratislava Castle, made me to focus more on the theoretical level of history of fabrics and motivated me to study it further. The history of clothing, sewing patterns and technology of clothes production belong among my most favourite interests.

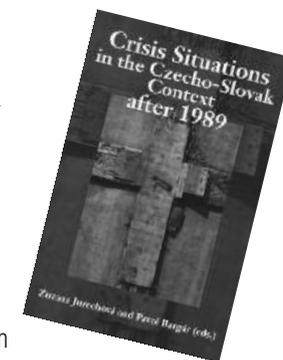
I work as an external teacher at the Department of Textiles of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design in Bratislava. I have a lot of future plans in my career of a visual artist, although I currently spend the most of my time with my three little sons, creating for them and with them.

Rear cover art by Jana Zaujecová: "Ultima Forsan—možno posledná"  
Material: felt, ashes, salt. Photograph by Jozef Česla

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