



## The Missional Church: A Description

An excerpt from Chapter 6 of *Three Things You Can't Do in Prague*

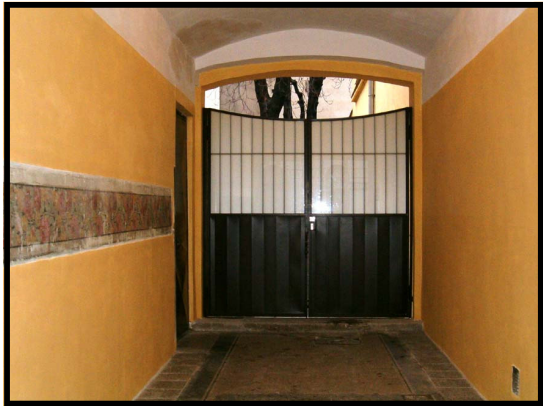
The day of the journey dawned very clear and cold, with a cobalt-blue sky over Prague. As they rode the Cedaz mini-bus to Ruzyně Airport, on their way to visit their friend Olaf in Oslo, Gudrun and Knut laughed at the memory of their first meeting with Olaf. “He was so suspicious, as if we were some kind of spies! Then he was surprised to find we were missionaries, just as he had been,” said Gudrun.

“Yes, he was surprised, all right,” replied Knut. “And now he’s intrigued about our plans for church-planting. I pray that talking things over with him will help us clarify our thinking.”

Knut was referring to their next big task, to somehow figure out what kind of churches might work best in an unchurched culture of the postmodern era, where people no longer think they can find fulfillment within the traditional Christian Church boundaries, be it the Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant Church.

Knut and Gudrun had decided to develop a strategy suitable for Prague’s postmodern “emergent” culture, which would enable them to plant “missional” churches as outposts for God’s Kingdom. For that purpose, they had designed an organic, spirit-driven approach for starting churches based on a life cycle begun usually with the simple first step of “submerging”:

*A leader and a few friends who felt the moving of the Holy Spirit, inspiring them to start a new church, initiated submerging. Once their key relationships had been formed, and they felt comfortable working together, the small group of friends began to rise (emerge); in other words, they could begin to develop a public presence. Their church would attract new believers and grow.*



### ANNOUNCING THE PUBLICATION OF *THREE THINGS YOU CAN'T DO IN PRAGUE*

International Leadership Institute Publications, through its imprint “Servant Leaders Press,” announces the publication of the fiction title *Three Things You Can't Do in Prague*.

Printed by Gorham Printing in Rochester, Washington, this imaginary tale of the future (in the year 2007) follows two everyday people, Knut and Gudrun Peterson, who are missionaries in Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic. Although the Czech Christian church is being challenged by secular and New Age ideas, the Petersons persevere in their church-planting efforts, believing that they “can do all things through Christ who strengthens them” (Philippians 4:13).

Backed by the Communion of Convergence Churches and by their own home church, Christ the Redeemer of Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, the Petersons violate established taboos in their quest to follow Christ: they do the “Three Things You Can't Do in Prague”! In the process, the Petersons make friends, discover much about the Czech Republic that is new to them, and find that helping the Czechs recover their Christian heritage by reawakening the Christian soul is not only possible, but is also highly welcome by the established leadership of that country.



Continued on page 2

For more information, or to request a copy of the book, please send an email to Sara Tusek (aka Gudrun Peterson) at [tusek@fdn.com](mailto:tusek@fdn.com).

After emerging, it was time to settle into converging. This involved experiencing the tug between a worldly, postmodern culture and the blending of traditional Christian sacramental, evangelical and charismatic styles of “being the Church,” before the submerging process began again, in anticipation of another church being birthed.

Knut and Gudrun briefly summarized this strategy as “Submerge, emerge, converge, and submerge again.” Although this process had, clearly, the character of a journey, it would most likely never be as clean and neat as these four steps described here would imply. Yet trying to follow this model would allow each of the newly planted missional churches to become an authentic, spirit-filled convergence church that uniquely reflected the needs and interests of its founders.

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### Upcoming Calvary International MPO

Jarda and I are honored to have been accepted into the July 2006 session of Calvary International’s Missionary Training program (MPO). Dr. Daniel Williams, Archbishop in the CCC-USA and Lead Pastor at Christ the Redeemer Church in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, founded Calvary in Jacksonville in 1981. Daniel and his wife Sharon are enthusiastic supporters of “Knut and Gudrun’s” vision of planting churches in the Czech Republic. We look forward to the knowledge we will gain and the infilling of the Holy Spirit we will receive at this two-week training session.

- Sara Tusek

In the Peterson’s model, these new “owner-built” churches would be laity-driven, with minimal emphasis on the ordained clergy as the primary source of energy and enthusiasm. The lay people (people who were committed Christians but were not officially ordained into a church) who had taken their churches through this model of submerging, then emerging, then converging and submerging again, would have invested their own lives into the church, giving them a real sense of ownership and commitment.

And how might this postmodernist revolution be brought into harmony with the ancient Christian Church? What parts of “doing Church” are cultural (and therefore able to be easily recast into new parts) and which parts are essential to following Christ? Every aspect of doctrine, liturgy, creed, administrative structure, allocation of money, organizational focus and simple habit must be put under a microscope and dissected, to separate what was really Christian and what was just part of the baggage of two thousand years of institutional church routine and custom.

Gudrun and Knut knew that, because they were not born after 1960, they were not “native” to the postmodern era and thus such dissection exercises did not come naturally to them. They were, however, bona fide “naturalized” citizens of the postmodern society, and whether they liked it or not, simply by virtue of the time and place in which they lived, they were an integral part of the postmodern world; they needed to recognize and respect its rules.

This new era presented all Christians with an unprecedented missionary challenge:

*The new presentation of the Gospel should be one that favors local vision over denominational conformity, informs persons about the truth of God’s Word rather than conforming them to religious institutions, and transforms them toward purposeful and dedicated service to Jesus*



*“Because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints—the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth.”*

Colossians 1:4—6