

SERVANT LEADERS

Special Issue

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Answering the Call in the Czech Republic: Heart of Europe Ministries

By Jaroslav B. Tusek

After visiting the Czech Republic more than 40 times during the last ten years (since the collapse of communism and the opening of the country to the freedoms of the West), I'm convinced that the key answer to most of the urgent problems faced by those living there is to be found in a healthy, functioning, Spirit-filled Christian church. The Christian Church in the Czech Republic has been sadly harmed by years of neglect and indifference, so that its effectiveness is at an all-time low.

My goal for the past few years has been to identify and then fulfill God's plans for my wife Sara and me to minister to people in the Czech Republic, finding ways to introduce them to Christ and help them accept Christ as their Lord and Savior. We

have been very grateful for all the support we have received from Christ the Redeemer Church and Providence School during these years, as our friends there have prayed for our ministry, discussed possible avenues of Christian service there and accompanied us on trips to meet Czech Christians who might want to be involved in our plans.

with Christians from several ministries; we concluded that there is tremendous need, and ample opportunity, to demonstrate to these struggling Czech Christians that



Hradcany Castle, Prague: center of Czech secular and religious heritage for a millennium.

In October 2002, our group from Christ the Redeemer (Vince Downs, Bob and Sierra Steele, Bruce Barrett, Diane Mastaglio and I) spent ten days in various parts of the Czech Republic (Prague and South Bohemia) meeting

the world has not forgotten them. Since then we have kept in touch with these people, preparing the way for another mission trip to the Czech Republic for this fall (September 26—October 5, 2003).

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Why are we returning? We know that the Czech Christians need us—and we also need them. We are part of the same fellowship of believers—the same Body of Christ—and we are incomplete until united. We share a calling to spread the message of the Gospel of Christ, and we share a need to be effective in spreading that message. To be effective, we need help: you may be part of that help.

The fall trip will, once again, begin in Prague. Short trips to Western Bohemia, including the lovely towns of Marienbad and Plzen, will give the group a chance to meet with Christians in those areas. Follow-up meetings with people in Prague whom we met last fall will help us continue to sharpen the focus of our mission to the Czech people.

We are inviting you to be part of this group of committed Christians who will be listeners and thinkers, who will help discern God's will for us in the Czech Republic. This country is not unfamiliar with God; the Protestant Revolution began here in the 15th century, 100 years before Martin Luther questioned the Church's doctrines and practices in Germany. Czech Christians were self-proclaimed "Warriors of God." But historical developments since 1620 have given the Christian Church a bad name. The Church seems old-fashioned and irrelevant, something relegated to beautiful historical cathedrals that function more

as museums than as houses of worship. In their quest for Western-style democracy and capitalism, the Czechs have targeted the wealth and power of Western Europe and America as their goal, rather than our spiritual values. Many Czechs sincerely believe that prosperity alone will bring happiness; the American Christian Church's voice is not as loud as that of American movies, music and materialism.

And what is the reward for helping people who don't even know what kind of help they need? Christ made it clear to His disciples that He wanted His message to be taken all over the world. Today, there are people who have never heard of Christ—and some of them live in very "civilized" places! They think they know who God is, and think they have no need of God; they have never yet met the living Christ, the Person who gave His life out of love for every human. We pray that we will find effective ways of introducing many Czech people to Christ as He really is; we believe that, once having met the authentic Christ, each person will have the opportunity to accept His love and his offer of salvation .

We are praying for you and we confidently expect that the Lord will move the hearts of those whom he has chosen for this trip. Thank you for listening to our story, and we pray that God will bless you and your family in mighty ways.

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