

# SERVANT LEADERS



## *Man Proposes, God Disposes*

by Sara Tusek

In 2006, my husband Jarda and I wrote and published a book called *Three Things You Can't Do in Prague*. At that time we knew that the Lord had in mind for us to establish a Christian ministry in the Czech Republic. What we didn't know was the *when* and *how* of His plan.

Nevertheless, we took a real leap of faith and invested our resources into writing the book, which has turned out to be both completely inaccurate and absolutely necessary to defining our ministry to the Czechs.

Nearly everything we wrote in *Three Things You Can't Do in Prague* about the future did not happen as we wrote. The timelines we established, the partnerships we foresaw, even the shape of our ministry did not develop in the ways we delineated in the book.

We failed as fortune tellers. But we know with deep certainty that the writing of that book was a vital step toward our real ministry—the one that God has in mind for us in Prague. As my brother John put it in 2006 after reading *Three Things You Can't Do in Prague*, “God will surely use you, but not in the ways that you imagine.” John was right.

### ***God's wisdom, not our own***

The quotation “**Man proposes but God disposes**” is from *Of the Imitation of Christ*, a work of devotion written in Latin by Thomas a Kempis:

*“For the resolutions of the just depend rather on the grace of God than on their own wisdom; and in Him they always put their trust, whatever they take in hand. For man proposes, but God disposes; neither is the way of man in his own hands.”*

*The exact Latin phrase translating as man proposes, but God disposes; being Homo proponit, sed Deus disponit;*

In the Bible in the Book of Proverbs, attributed to Solomon the Wise, we read:

***A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps. (Proverbs 16:9).***

I understand this verse to mean that humans make decisions by following their heart, or emotional leadings. This is not a criticism, but simply an observation, as other verses in Psalms celebrate the heart of a righteous person:



*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.” (Proverbs 3:5).*

*“He taught me and said to me, “Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments, and live.” (Proverbs 4:4).*

*“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” (Proverbs 4:23).*

So following your heart is not wrong, but it's also not the end of the story if you're a follower of God.

We devise our ways, making plans as best we can, using the guidance we get from God, our intelligence, our emotional leadings, the advice of wise and trusted friends, the words of the Bible and every other resource we can gather.

But in the end, the Lord directs our steps. That's great news!

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## ***Our idea, from the heart***

In *Three Things You Can't Do in Prague*, we outlined a very large project to establish and develop an apostolate in the Czech Republic for the communion of churches we belonged to, the CCI. This apostolate would be a kind of beachhead for the CCI, allowing it to expand all over Europe and to plant churches in a part of the world that's left Christianity behind.

This vision was encouraged by the CCI, until it became clear that the financial and legal resources needed to start a new church in the Czech Republic were far beyond what the CCI could muster. In fact, our mission preparation time (2006-2010) coincided with the financial crisis of 2007-2009, which frightened the CCI. They pulled back in every area of expenditure, and the apostolate to the Czech Republic was one project among many that was jettisoned.

## ***God's direction***

After we understood that our original idea was not going to become our reality, we started to pray and reconsider our call to mission in the Czech Republic. We were still quite sure that the Lord was communicating to us that we should live in Prague, and share the Gospel with people living there, but we didn't quite know how to do so.

We have had close contact with the Czech Republic for 20 years through both family connections and our business, so we had some insights into ways to live in Prague. And we started to think that maybe we could just continue to offer the programs we've been doing for 25 years:

- *Leadership and career development*
- *English language instruction*
- *Job-search seminars.*

In the process of delivering these programs we make friends and then, quite naturally, share our faith in Christ.

## ***Are we hearing Him?***

As the year of our departure for Prague, 2010, comes closer, we are trying to discern God's plan for us. Our original plan was completely wrong, but we aren't bitter. We know that God very often nudges us along little-by-little, rather than showing us a clear path all at once.

We also know that writing *Three Things You Can't Do in Prague* was a turning point for us. We began to take ourselves seriously as potential "missionaries" and as authors. We're working on two books, *Three Things that Last Forever* and *21st Century Jobs*, as we continue to prepare for our move. Thank God, He will lead us!



*Jan Hus memorial in the Old Town Square, Prague*

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