

# Foreign Missions Ministry Plan

## Jihlava Evangelical Church Methodist (ECM)

Updated September 2008

### Introduction

#### Czech Republic (Ceska Republika): The Country

The country of Czechoslovakia became independent from the Austria-Hungary Empire after World War I in 1918. Czech Founding Day is 28 October (1918). Czechoslovakia was a free nation until occupation by the Nazis in World War II and later under the Communists in 1948 until the 'Velvet Revolution' in 1989. The country split into the Czech and Slovak Republics on 1 January 1993.

The Czech Republic is a parliamentary democracy, a political system in which the legislature (Parliament) selects the government (a prime minister, premier, or chancellor along with cabinet ministers) according to party strength as expressed in elections; and by this system, the government acquires a dual responsibility: to the people as well as to the Parliament. The current chief of state is President Vaclav Klaus (since 7 March 2003). The Parliament consists of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies.

The Czech Republic is divided into 14 regions with a self-governing representative body headed by a president. The city of Jihlava is the capital of the Vysočina (The Highlands) region. The historical border between Bohemia and Moravia goes through the center of the Vysočina region.

The Czech Republic today has just over 10 million people. The faiths in the country are Roman Catholic 26.8%, Protestant 2.1%, other 3.3%, unspecified 8.8%, unaffiliated 59% (2001 census) (Reference: The World Factbook website).

#### The History of Methodism in the Czech and Slovak lands

In 1920, the Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (US) sent a missionary, Rev. Joseph Dobes to Prague. He set up a tent ministry, as he had in Texas, and began to hold worship services to capacity crowds. The slogan for his first sermon was 'Czech Nation, return to Christ'. The tent ministry traveled to other cities and congregations began in several locations and grew rapidly in membership. An interesting aspect of this story is that the work really started in 1907 in Texas. That is when the Methodist Episcopal Church began work among Czech farm workers. Among the young preachers hired to serve in this ministry were several with origins from Czechoslovakia, including Joseph Dobes. Over the years, he continually reminded the Board of Missions of the need for evangelism in his homeland. He even offered to start it himself. The end of World War I provided this opportunity. One of the first buildings purchased was the current facility at Jecna 19 in Prague, which is home to a congregation and the Conference headquarters. More Pastors were sent, including C.T. Collyer, J.L. Neil, J.P. Bartak and Vaclav Vancura. Congregations formed in other cities of the country during the 1920's, and Annual Conferences began with their first meeting on 3-7 August 1922 in the Jecna Street facility. At the second annual conference in 1923, the statistical record showed 22 congregations, 14 preaching stations, 964 members and 2975 preparatory members. Fifty churches had been planted in the nation by 1927. Unfortunately, a series of crises occurred after that, including the great depression of the 1930's, German occupation and destruction during World War II and then forty years of Communist rule starting in 1948. Only after the fall of Communism in 1989, has the Methodist Church begun to reverse this trend. (Reference: 'Methodism in Czechoslovakia' by Dr. Rev. Vilem D. Schneeberger in 1982 and translated into English in 1991)

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### Methodist Churches in the Czech and Slovak Republics Today

The Methodist Churches within the Czech and Slovak Republics today consists of 22 churches and about 18 other small preaching stations (small groups of people included in a Pastors circuit), and two outdoor camps. The General Superintendent is Rev. Josef Cervenak, located at the Conference headquarters in Prague. There are several other District Elders who oversee the other Pastors (similar to District Superintendents in the US), but who also serve one or more churches themselves. There are about 1900 Methodist members, more than 60% of whom have come since the end of communism in 1989. The government returned some of the buildings taken after 1949, but not all. To make up partially for this, the government gives churches an annual lump sum of money, but it is not nearly sufficient to cover what was taken. The government through the Ministry of Culture also pays Pastor salaries (except one denomination), but it is only about 60% of an average workers pay. The workload is very heavy for the Superintendent, Elders, Pastors and other leaders, and resources are extremely limited. In addition to being underpaid, Pastors work long hours serving several churches, frequently are still studying for ordination, drive 15 to 20 year old cars that require frequent repairs, and there are not enough of them. Despite this, they have a love of Jesus in their hearts, and are evangelizing and sharing the grace of Jesus Christ they have with others. The Czech Methodist Church ([www.umc.cz](http://www.umc.cz)) is blessed to have such faithful, dedicated, hardworking leadership who have persevered for Christianity during the Communist period and since. Students attend Theological Seminary either at St. Charles University in Prague or in Banska Bystrica, Slovakia, but not enough are currently enrolled. To supplement this, there is a program to educate and train lay persons on-the-job to become Pastors, in a correspondence seminary type program, with monthly testing in Prague. (Reference: In Mission Together website)

### **Our Partnership**

#### Description and Purpose

McEachern MUMC began a three-year partnership in September 2000 with the Jihlava Evangelical Church Methodist (ECM) through the In Mission Together (IMT) program which is part of the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM). The IMT program was established to partner US churches with Eastern European churches to build relationships and to provide assistance where needed and to engage in effective long-term ministry. Although the minimum three-year commitment has been completed, the McEachern and Jihlava churches through their members continue to strengthen personal and ministry-related relationships. For example, McEachern has continued financial support (about \$3500 per year) for the Jihlava church and through exchanges of members. The chronology of the McEachern partnership with the Jihlava church is described in Attachment A.

Three key ministries of the Jihlava ECM are actually nonprofit organizations under the umbrella of the Czech Methodist Church and not the Jihlava ECM. These organizations are accountable to the Diakonie (social work) branch ([www.umc.cz/diakonie](http://www.umc.cz/diakonie)) of the Czech Methodist Church. These organizations are called 'Středisko Křesťanské Pomoci (SKP)' which means 'Center for Christian Aid'. The Czech Methodist Church requires local churches to participate in these organizations at an operational level and the directors and boards are members of the Jihlava ECM. The Jihlava affiliated organizations include the following:

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- The Men's Shelter with Tana Kuklova as its director
- Naděje pro život (Hope for Life) (<http://admdjihlava.euweb.cz/>) is the Women's Shelter with Ctirad Hruby as its director
- Y-port (pronounced E-port and means youth-port) (<http://www.y-port.cz/en/>) is the Youth Outreach in the community with Michal Rod as its director

Czech law allows the Czech Methodist Church to form nonprofit organizations that provide social services that the government does not provide directly. These organizations are eligible for financial aid such as grants and loans from the Czech Methodist Church, and Czech and Vysočina governments including the European Union. These organizations are financially independent from the Jihlava church with oversight from the Czech Methodist Church. An annual report of all nonprofit organizations under the Czech Methodist Church is produced each year. Three of the 12 nonprofit organizations currently under the Czech Methodist Church are operated by Jihlava ECM members.

Y-port uses the Holy Spirit Church for many activities because of its location near several local schools. Y-port sponsors an annual summer program for youth called 'Open Sky' and a fall sports program called 'Athletes in Action'. In addition, Y-port sponsors a youth and young adult English camp.

### **Eastern Europe and Balkans Consultation**

The In Mission Together (IMT) program sponsors an annual consultation to bring together U.S. churches who are active with their sister churches and other churches interested in becoming a sister church. This is a time of sharing and meeting others involved with sister churches.

McEachern hosted the consultation October 26-28, 2006 using the theme "Mission Possible." The consultation was very successful.

### **The Partnership as we go forward**

#### Goal

It is recognized that there will come a day when the government will no longer finance churches. In preparation for that day, the goals of the Jihlava Missions Ministry Plan should ensure that the Jihlava church is financially and physically capable to continue its ministries and grow within the local community.

#### Mission Teams

Conducting English camps as an outreach ministry to the community is expected to continue based on the success of the camps since 2004. Mission team goals and frequency of trips is assessed annually, but the hope is that annually at least one McEachern team will visit Jihlava and representatives from Jihlava will visit McEachern.

#### Y-port (<http://www.y-port.cz/en/>)

Y-port started sponsoring a youth/young adult English camp in 2005. There is possible interest in partnering with a local school. The headmaster at one school learned of the success of the English camps in 2005 and was interested in a program that could be done during the Czech school year. This idea needs further discussion and development to see if it is feasible.

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### Family English Camp (<http://www.striving-together.org/>)

The McEachern and Jihlava churches sponsor a family-oriented English Camp in or near Jihlava for the local community. Results indicate this ministry is well received because it focuses on building relationships with people in the community. The Family English Camp is normally scheduled in July when both Czech and U.S. teachers and students are on summer vacation because many of the volunteer teachers for the English Camp are full- or part-time teachers in their respective countries. Based on the camps in the first two years, the target audience is families in the Jihlava community with participants of all ages. The goal is to fulfill the McEachern MUMC mission to 'love our neighbor' and 'make disciples' by building relationships within the Jihlava community. It is expected that future Family English Camp will grow with several participants returning each year.

### Mothers and Children

Gabriela Krocakova, Josef Thal's daughter, leads an outreach program for mothers and children in the local community by teaching English to the children once a week. Several women not associated with the church bring their children to the church to participate in English classes. The mothers remain at the church while the children are taught by Gabriela. To support these children and their mothers, there is a need to improve the kitchen facilities and outside areas. In addition, Gabriela is interested in contacting women involved in the McEachern mothers program.

### Children's Outreach

Jitka Zemcikova leads children activities including outreach to children in the community.

### Visioning

The Jihlava ECM has done what we asked by beginning a visioning process to help them determine what they should be doing in the future and what their needs are to succeed. Although they are continuing the process, several building projects are planned to facilitate church ministries.

### Church Renovation and Building Projects

The Jihlava ECM has identified several renovation or improvement projects to the Jihlava and Holy Spirit Churches. The church will provide information on project costs and their priority to help McEachern MUMC determine what help can be provided to the church. McEachern work teams can assist in some of these improvements, but licensed specialists may be needed for specific tasks or projects as required by Czech law. Projects include the following:

- Add an inner room to the Holy Spirit Church to allow for year-round use for Y-port and Jihlava ECM activities for the community. For example, a Christmas Eve service. The estimated cost is \$3500. McEachern MUMC previously contributed to the earlier renovation of the church to make it habitable.
- The basement for a new community 'Contact Center' was renovated in early 2006. The Women's Shelter, with a government grant, is renting the basement of the Jihlava ECM for three years for the 'Contact Center' for a new program called 'The prevention of eviction and its consequences.' The center has several computers with internet access and be a place for people to meet. Although the center is sponsored

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by the Women's Shelter, other Jihlava ministries and social activities within the community (eg, mothers & children, widows, senior citizens) are expected to use the center. Internet access is also available in other areas of the church. A new and more efficient heating system was installed to allow removal of some heating pipes that obstructed portions of the basement. The Vysočina regional government with help from the European Union social fund provided some money to buy the computers.

- Improvements to the Prayer Room (Sanctuary) were completed in 2007. The changes included new floor covering, painting the walls, an elevated stage for the pastor's podium and music group, and a new audio visual system.
- Most of the windows were replaced in late 2006 to more modern energy saving windows.
- Improvements are needed to the church kitchen.
- Enclosing the two outside balconies with glass on the first and second floors to provide additional space for church activities.
- Improving the outside areas for children to play safely. This includes new pavement, seating areas, and a garden.
- A basement room was finished in 2008 as a coffee house with a small kitchenette and tables.

### Opportunities for Financial Assistance and Participation

- Scholarships for English camp participants, travel, retreats
- Y-port activities such as Open Sky, Athletes in Action, and Youth English Camp
- Church renovations such as the prayer room, kitchen, outside areas for children
- A prayer coordinator to facilitate and coordinate prayer between the two congregations regarding concerns and needs.
- Partnerships between McEachern and Jihlava families as 'prayer partners'

### Ideas

- The Jihlava church has a few copies of the McEachern church directory, but there is no Jihlava directory. Should the Jihlava church create a directory to help McEachern members better know the Jihlava church members?
- Share organizational charts from each church to identify key contacts at both churches and facilitate communication (eg, youth, children, mothers, men,).
- Think of both churches as one church instead of two separate churches.

### Direct Financial Support to the Jihlava Church

- Continue to provide at least \$3500 per year through IMT
- Continue to support Jihlava visits to McEachern

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- Continue to support youth activities at the Church of the Holy Spirit which is a key outreach for the Jihlava church
- Potential support for a youth minister

### **Key Interactions**

One of the participants in the 2005 and 2006 English Camps was the Vysočina regional president, Miloš Vystrčil. Miloš officially greeted the team on the last day in Jihlava at his office in the Vysočina regional headquarters in Jihlava. He provided the team with several gifts and spoke about the importance of the people-to-people contact that the team provided. He is very supportive of the camp and future interactions between U.S. and Jihlava.

Jeff Jernigan asked Jihlava to go through a visioning process to identify what the church would like to do in the future. Jeff stressed that McEachern used this process to help identify what was needed but how to reach the vision.

### **Attachments**

- Attachment A    Chronology of the Partnership
- Attachment B    Partnership Activities

## **Chronology of the Partnership**

After making a commitment to the Jihlava church through IMT in 2000, an initial \$3500 was sent to the Jihlava church, but there was little contact between the two congregations. Don and Sheila Scott initiated correspondence with Michal Rod and his wife Sarka Rodova. Subsequently, the following interactions have occurred:

### 2001

September 2001, Dave Adams became the McEachern liaison with the Jihlava church

December 2001, Dave Adams and Laura Giordano visited Jihlava to make the first personal contact with the Jihlava church. Ladja Kukla was the acting pastor and David Chlupacek became the Jihlava liaison with McEachern.

### 2002

June/July 2002, David Chlupacek, Josef Thal and Tana Kuklova from Jihlava visited McEachern.

August 2002, Jan Zajic was named as the new pastor of the Jihlava church.

### 2003

April 2003, Pastor Robin and wife Kathy Lindsey visited the Jihlava church. Robin developed a deep kinship with Jan.

### 2004

April 2004, Jan Zajic, Michal Rod and Sarka Rodova visited McEachern with Jan preaching at all three services.

May 2004, Trouper and Peggy Vansant visited Jihlava on a personal visit.

June 2004, the Jernigan family visited Jihlava on a personal visit.

June 2004, the first English Camp with about 10 participants was conducted in Jihlava in the evenings and at a remote location on the weekend.

September 2004, Dave Adams visited the Jihlava church to discuss the 2005 English Camp and meet with church elders.

### 2005

July 2005, two separate English Camps were conducted simultaneously in separate locations—one for youth and one for families

July 2005, three young adults, Veronika Thalova, and sister/brother Jana, and Jiri from Jihlava visited McEachern.

September 2005, Dave Adams visited the Jihlava church to discuss future activities.

### 2006

March 2006, Jolana, Lenka, and Jan participated in the Missions conference

July 2006, the Family English camp was conducted for nearly 50 participants in the town of Karlstejn.

July 2006, The Youth English camp was conducted for 50 participants at the Veleska Methodist Camp.

September 2006, David Chlupacek attended the United Methodist Men (UMM) Rock Eagle retreat, and his wife, Martina attended the McEachern Women's retreat.

## **Chronology of the Partnership**

### 2007

April 2007, the first McEachern construction team went to Jihlava to refurbish the prayer room and basement.

July 2007, the family English camp was conducted with about 62 participants in the town of Kamenice nad Lipou which is about 40 Km from Jihlava.

July 2007, the youth English camp was conducted in Trest south of Jihlava.

### 2008

July 2008, Marketa and Lucie from Jihlava visited McEachern and worked the children's summer camp.

June/July 2008, the family English camp was conducted with 59 people at the Lesni penzion Podmitrov near Strážek in the Vysočina region about 50 km from Jihlava.

July 2008, the youth English camp was conducted Penzion Selský dvůr in the town of Sněžné with 35 people.

October 2008, Libor Bobek, Eliska Kubikova, and Jaroslava Honova visited McEachern for the Beyond These Walls Missions conference.

## Partnership Activities

### English Camp 2004

#### Jihlava

David Chlupacek, leader  
Jolana Kruzikova  
Lenka Honova  
Marcela (Marcy) Kovarova

#### McEachern

John & Diane Moeller  
Dave Adams & Laura Giordano  
Bridget Doss

### English Camps 2005 (Youth and Family)

#### Jihlava

##### Family

David Chlupacek, family leader  
Jana and Lucie Benkova  
Jolana Kruzikova  
Petra Vondrakova  
Marcela (Marcy) Kovarova  
Gabriela Krocakova  
Josef Thal

##### Youth

Jan Zajic, Pastor  
Lenka Honova  
Michal Rod, youth leader  
Sarka Rodova

#### McEachern

##### Family

Charles & Karen Chilton  
Dave Adams & Laura Giordano  
Peggy Vansant

##### Youth

Jeff, Jill & Jessica Jernigan  
Trey Hill

### English Camps 2006 (Youth and Family)

#### Jihlava

##### Family

Jolana Kruzikova  
David Chlupacek  
Ctirad Hurby

##### Youth

Jan Zajic, Pastor  
Lenka Honova  
Michal Rod, youth leader  
Sarka Rodova

#### McEachern

##### Family

Robin & Kathy Lindsey  
Dave Adams & Laura Giordano  
Charles & Karen Chilton  
John & Diane Moeller

##### Youth

Russ & Cindy Blocksidge  
Jeff, Jill & Jessica  
Rebecca Wright  
Trey Hill  
Chris Letts

## Partnership Activities

### English Camps 2007 (Youth and Family)

#### Jihlava

##### Family

Jolana Kruzikova  
David Chlupacek  
Ctirad Hurby  
Jiří Neužil & Sonia  
Gabriela Krocakova  
Jiri Semek

##### Youth

Jan Zajic, Pastor  
Lenka Honova  
Michal Rod & Sarka Rodova

#### McEachern

##### Family

Dave Adams, Laura Giordano & Angie  
Charles & Karen Chilton  
Donna Goff

##### Youth

Russ & Cindy Blocksidge  
Bob & Matthew Porter  
Randy & Jake Hardy  
Mary & Ellie Smith  
Caroline Warren

### English Camps 2008 (Youth and Family)

#### Jihlava

##### Family

Jolana Kruzikova  
David Chlupacek  
Ctirad Hurby  
Jiří Neužil & Sonia  
Gabriela Krocakova  
Jiri Semek

##### Youth

Lenka Honova  
Michal Rod, & Sarka Rodova

#### McEachern

##### Family

Dave Adams, Laura Giordano & Angie  
Charles & Karen Chilton  
Donna Goff  
Lisa & Ella Hasty

##### Youth

Bob, Matthew, & Rebecca Porter  
Jeff & Kristen Goldberg  
Kathleen & Kristen Plumer  
Chris Huffman