

Czech Protestant News

A Bulletin of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren,
the Diaconia of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren,
and the Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University

Ecumenical Bulletin 48 – Advent 2019

Editorial

Dear readers,

in the summer edition of our Bulletin, I mentioned the fact that our church has lately been celebrating one anniversary after another.

This autumn, we have yet another important reason to celebrate. Not necessarily a church-related one, but definitely one that concerns Christians in a fundamental way: the anniversary of the Velvet Revolution, which took place thirty years ago, is an anniversary that celebrates freedom. In 1989, the citizens of Czechoslovakia won their freedom, and living in freedom is certainly something we, as Christians, should always be striving for.

And what about today? Do we still have enough reasons to be happy? What has been lost and where has it disappeared during those thirty years? Such doubts and questions are only proof of the fact that the struggle for freedom never ends.

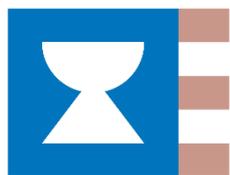
I am not going to go into detail describing the articles you can find in this issue, but there is one event we have reported about that I would like to bring to your attention: the new Protestant school called Filipka (the last issue of the Bulletin provided an interview with its director) opened its doors in September and its students as well as the staff are happy and satisfied with how things are going. Let's hope it stays this way! And, I might add, let us also hope there are many other articles that you will find interesting in this edition of the Bulletin.

Advent is near, we are looking forward to celebrating Christmas, the birth of God's Holy Son, who came to stay in our midst, to be with us and comfort us, to keep our heads above the water, and most of all, to be with us and above us as the vision of the things to come.



Wishing you the Lord's peace
On behalf of the Editorial Board Jana Plíšková

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The foundations of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren stem from the Hussite church (1431–1620) and the Unity of the Brethren (1457–1620). The Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) was established in 1918, when the Lutheran and Calvinist wings of the local protestant creed were united in one. Their existence, however, had not been legal until Joseph II issued his Patent of Toleration in 1781, following a long and tough anti-reformation campaign that began in 1620. Even after issuing the Patent of Toleration, Protestants still had to face many restrictions, which would only be lifted following the Protestant Patent of 1861.

At the time of its establishment, the ECCB had 250,000 members, the number increased to 325,000 in 1938. Today, the church is divided into 14 seniorates and has a total of approximately 250 congregations and 100,000 members. The church is headed by a six-member Synodal Council, elected for a six-year period, represented by the Synodal Senior and Synodal Curator.

What Should Not Be Forgotten



Thirty years have passed since the Velvet Revolution, which started on the 17th of November 1989. This is a truly important milestone and our Bulletin is therefore covering the topic more extensively in this issue. News of the protest that took place on Prague's Narodni Street on the 17th of November made foreign headlines at the time and, quite unexpectedly, set in motion other events that spread like wildfire throughout the country and finally freed it from the communist dictatorship.

Let us go over why the spontaneous protest march actually took place on that very date.

The 17th of November has been marked as the International Student Day since 1941. The reason, surprisingly perhaps, lies in our little country.

In 1939, following the autumn student demonstrations against Nazi occupation, Czech universities were shut down on the 17th of November, as decreed by the Reichsprotektor. Students and teachers alike were arrested, nine students were shot dead, 1,200 students were subsequently transported to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

Jan Opletal, a student who was shot during the protests and died 14 days later, became the symbol of these tough times. His funeral took place in Albertov, Prague. Fifty years later, on the 17th of November 1989, this was where people decided to meet to commemorate the evil deeds of the Nazi occupation. A peaceful march set out from Albertov towards Národní Street, where, however, the demonstrators clashed with the State Police and the peaceful protest was broken up. The harsh intervention of the police, however, no longer had the power to keep things under control. Demonstrations would take place on a daily basis from this point forward. This was the beginning of the Velvet Revolution, which led to the final elimination of Communist rule in Czechoslovakia and, after forty years of oppression, opened the door for the first democratic election of the Czechoslovak President – Václav Havel.

As chance would have it, the ECCB's Synod was taking place on that very same Friday, the 17th of November. Later that night, young Protestants who had been beaten by the police arrived at the Synod to inform those present about how brutally the demonstration had been crushed at Národní Street. The Synodal Senior at the time, Josef Hromádka, immediately drew up a protest memorandum addressed to the Prime Minister, Ladislav Adamec. It was in fact the first official protest in the country, however it did not yield any tangible results. The ECCB remained one of the focal points of the Velvet Revolution's events also in the days, months and weeks to come, and it definitely contributed to the rise of a democratic society in our country.

Since we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of these events, the ECCB's central office has prepared a webpage called Thirty Years of Freedom, where we intend to commemorate the history that is worth being noted down. The webpage collects written, audio and video records, memories, photos, anything that brings to mind these difficult times and that is worth having a look at. We want to draw attention to how the transition to a free society actually happened within the ECCB's churches. We have been receiving contributions from Protestant churches all over the Czech Republic: pastors who were serving at the given locations in 1989 have been sending us messages, as have members of individual churches. Such important moments in our history are not easily forgotten.

Back in these turbulent times, Professor Jan Heller, an important Protestant theologian, said: „The fact that nobody died during those revolutionary days, to me, is the sign of a true miracle.“

Jana Plíšková

The Journey Around the Planets Begins

The “Filipka School – Learning Through Stories” has welcomed its first students

The seventh school of the Evangelical Academy has opened its doors to children from first to fourth grades on the first day of the new school year. The school is called Filipka – Learning Through Stories and it is located at Filipínského Street in Brno.

Opening Party in the Schoolyard

The festive opening in the schoolyard was attended by children, parents, friends of the school, the ECCB's partner church in Brno-Husovice, as well as representatives of the ECCB's management.

After two years of preparations and countless uncertainties, the dream has become a reality. Students have arrived, teachers and their assistants are ready, the school building shines with cleanliness, the corridors are bright with interesting decorations. The classrooms are marked as planets of various colours: the space odyssey, a journey towards knowledge, begins right here.

In his opening sermon, the Synodal Senior, Daniel Ženatý, spoke of his gratitude and stressed the importance of truth and freedom, which are essential for co-existing not only at school, but also in all other areas of life. After the opening service, which was intended both for the children and for the



grown-ups, the students went to see their classes and meet their new teachers. The first day of school finished with a theatre play.

“From tomorrow, we are going to start working hard. We are about to embark on an adventurous journey, the journey of getting to learn new things. On this journey, we are going to need not only to keep an open mind, but also to be able to work as a team.” With these words, the director of the new school, Ruth Konvalinková, concluded her opening speech. Let’s keep our fingers crossed and hope everything goes well!

What does “Filipka” have in store for us?

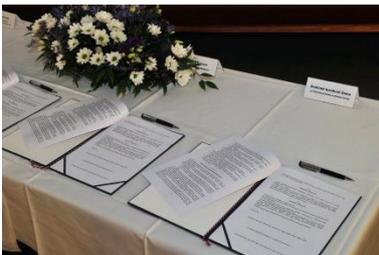
The “Filipka” school offers an alternative educational programme for elementary school students. Each class combines two different age groups, the older kids will be helping the younger ones. Once the school’s capacity is full, each class will be led by two teachers, and an assistant where needed. Children with disabilities and from less favourable social circumstances are expected among those who enrol. The school should later also go up to grade nine.

Once a week, the kids get to study outside, which will especially please the children who previously attended a forest kindergarten. The school has a vast courtyard and a barn, which should later serve as a set of studios where the children can experience different types of crafts. The kids should also be able to study in the large, beautiful garden of the Medical School in Brno-Líšeň, which is also part of the Evangelical Academy’s network of schools.

The “Filipka” school is established and administered by the ECCB. And why “Learning through stories?” The school builds on the Protestant tradition of deep respect for the written and spoken word. “Our aim is to educate mature readers, critical thinkers, people who are able to express their thoughts both in spoken and in written form, and who are able to communicate and get along with anyone they meet,” says Ruth Konvalinková.

Daniela Ženatá

Spiritual care in health care receives clear rules



Representatives of the Christian churches have signed an important agreement with the Ministry of Health. After twelve years of efforts, an agreement was concluded between the Czech Ministry of Health, the Czech Bishops' Conference (CBC) and the Ecumenical Council of Churches in the Czech Republic (ECC). It represents a historically significant step, because for the first time ever, it establishes the framework, concepts and structure for the provision of spiritual care in healthcare facilities.

“Spiritual care plays an extremely important and irreplaceable role in the health care in the hospital. It is not only intended for the seriously ill and for the elderly, it also serves their family members or their bereaved. And it is not even necessary to be faithful, most people in difficult life situations feel the need to talk about their problems or talk to someone trustworthy about why there are incurable diseases or what happens to us after death,” said the Minister of Health Adam Vojtěch and thanked the members of the Council for Spiritual Care in Health Care for the arrangement of the tripartite agreement.

The agreement was signed by Dominik Duka on behalf of CBC and Daniel Ženatý with Petr Jan Vinš on behalf of ECC. “There is a unique cooperation between churches in the Czech Republic in the areas of spiritual ministry for people in non-standard situations - in the military, in prison or while hospitalised. The spiritual service in hospitals works on an ecumenical basis, it is meant to provide spiritual care to anyone who so requests, regardless of their church affiliation,” said Petr Jan Vinš, the Secretary General of the Ecumenical Council of Churches.

Spiritual care in the hospital can be provided exclusively by the chaplain, i.e. persons commissioned by the Church and jointly sent out by the CBC and the ERC. The agreement establishes qualification requirements for persons performing this service. In addition to completed university education, the hospital chaplain candidate must complete a special course at the Theological Faculty.

Priests and pastors have been going to hospitals from way back. In the second half of the nineties, with the development of hospices, the role of clergy in palliative teams proved to be irreplaceable. Spiritual service in the hospital serves patients, their relatives and staff. At present, about 140 chaplains from ten churches operate in one hundred Czech hospitals and hospices.

Press Release of the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic / Daniela Ženatá

Let us pursue what makes for peace



On September 17, 2019, representatives of five Protestant churches from Central Europe met in Warsaw to discuss the current situation in our region. The leaders of the participating churches signed a Memorandum of Understanding in which, inter alia, closer cooperation between the churches in the region was agreed.

The meeting took place in the context of a conference organized the day before by the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in

Poland, and many other partners, entitled "We Create Peace". At the same time, the Memorandum on Democracy of the German Protestant Church was presented along with other documents and, in a spirit of ecumenical openness, the connection between faith and democracy was discussed.

A commitment to democracy and the rule of law is also contained in the joint statement. The church leaders emphasize that the Protestant churches in Central Europe want to contribute to the urgent issues of our time, such as the preservation of creation and the peaceful coexistence of people, nations and religions. As minority churches, they want the prophetic witness of their voices to be heard. Similar meetings will take place every year from now on, with the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren offering to host the next gathering in autumn 2020.

The Text of the Declaration:

Church Leaders' Joint Declaration

Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (CZ)

Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession (CZ)

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia

Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary

„For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual edification.“ (Romans 14,17;19)

During the conference *We create peace*, which took place on September 16, 2019 in Warsaw,

- conscious of the history and geographical location that binds us, especially the atrocities that have hit Central Europe in the 20th century, 30 years after the liberation from communist tyranny
- citing the common values that are rooted in our Christian faith and our Protestant heritage and that govern our actions in freedom and responsibility,
- based on the fellowship that we form within the Lutheran World Federation,

we declare our desire for closer friendship and cooperation among our churches in the region to bear witness to our faith, our hope and our love, which result from the liberating and healing power of God's love expressed in the risen Christ.

We declare our desire to contribute to the preservation of creation and the respectful coexistence of people, nations and religions in Europe, and that our churches support the principles of democracy and the rule of law, because we as Christians are called to care for values such as: truth, peace, freedom, justice, mercy, human dignity and the protection of minorities.

This declaration means:

1. that we also want to apply and develop the principles of law and democracy in our own structures and to let the prophetic voice of the Church be heard;
2. that, as children of the one Father, we want to engage in dialogue in a spirit of mutual respect and without violence. We want to work for peace and cultivate a respectful culture of communication in society and in the news media;
3. that we also fulfill our mission to follow Christ, and spread His gospel of peace and hope in the society in which we live, by caring for and advocating for those excluded and injured.

May God help us in this endeavour!

Warsaw, 17. 9. 2019

Daniel Ženatý, Moderator, Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren

Tomáš Tyrlík, Bishop of the Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession

Ivan Elko, General Bishop of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia

Jerzy Samiec, Senior Bishop of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland

Tamás Fabiny, Senior Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary

The Miracle in Cheb



The changes that the Cheb protestant church has seen in the past few years are very close to a miracle. In 2017, the cracks gaping in the thick walls were so wide you could see through them; the roof desperately needed repair and the plaster was peeling off the walls, posing a danger to the passersby.

Thanks to substantial financial support provided by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria, the town of Cheb, the Czech Ministry

of Culture, the Czech-German Future Fund and others, the local Protestant Church of Peace did not fall into disrepair and has been restored to serve future generations. Also the church's structural stability is safe again.

The church was re-opened at a celebration that took place on 6 October 2019. The Thanksgiving service, at which the Lord's Supper was also celebrated, was bilingual. Apart from members of the local congregation, the service was also attended by members of the German partner church in Marktredwitz, as well as the regional bishop from Bayreuth, Dorothea Greiner. The ECCB's Synodal Senior Daniel Ženatý pointed out that the ECCB is currently switching to a new funding system, under which the responsibility of every church member is gaining much more significance and people are learning more about solidarity.

This is also the way in which one may perceive the message that is written in German on the church's altar: "Peace be with you." These simple words have survived throughout all the times the church existed, they welcomed the Thanksgiving guests, and they are calling on us to remember our responsibility for the future.

Oliver Engelhardt

DIACONIA OF THE ECCB



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The Diaconia of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) is a Christian non-profit organisation that offers help and support for living a dignified and full life despite age, illness, disability, isolation, difficult social situations or other forms of crisis situations that occur in life. The services of the ECCB's Diaconia are based on the message of the Gospel about the Love of our Lord and the example that Jesus Christ has given us in serving others. In its centres and special educational facilities, the ECCB's Diaconia offers social and educational services, healthcare, and ministry. It is the second largest non-governmental organisation providing social services in the Czech Republic.

Thirty Years of ECCB Diaconia



Festivities, music, interviews, reflections and screenings. These were all part of the celebrations of thirty years of Diaconia. They started professionally: an international seminar on values in diaconal work. This was followed by two gatherings: in the Salvátor Church in Prague, and then in the Prague Crossroads centre of Dagmar and Václav Havel. Music was provided by the orchestra of the Evangelical Academy Conservatory, under the leadership of Ladislav Moravetz; and by Hradištan, a world-famous ensemble combining Moravian folklore and world music. Taking part in the talks were International guests, clients of Diakonie and founders of the organization, thanks to whom Diakonie resumed its activities in 1989 and grew into one of the most respected care organizations in the Czech Republic.

Diaconia for Syrian Refugees



600,000 CZK, proceeds of this year's Lent Collection, will go to help Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan. Diaconia will use the money to buy equipment for the winter, which is surprisingly cold in the mountainous areas of Lebanon. For refugees often living in one bare room, it is not easy to survive. Blankets, mattresses, stoves or fuel oil will be purchased by Diaconia on site to support the local market. Syrian refugees themselves produce warm blankets in community workshops, which receive aid from us.

Another portion of the money will support the establishment and operation of a community centre in Zarqa, Jordan, which will provide leisure and education courses and help build the economic independence of refugees.

'We have been operating in Lebanon since 2017. With the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, and in cooperation with our local partner, we are helping the most vulnerable people who are not covered by UN official assistance,' says Erik Siegl. '700,000 CZK was used to build and operate a day centre for children aged three to five in the Jordan refugee camp Zaatarí.' The Diaconia Centre for Humanitarian and Development Cooperation have organized the Lent Collection before Easter for the last 12 years. The proceeds are always used to help people abroad who are in need. Over these years, donors have contributed a total of CZK 5.5 m.

Ivana Dingová

A school known far and wide

Interview with Ivana Kováčová, director of the diaconal school in Merklín



Families are willing to move over 100 kilometres for this school. As one of the few in the Czech Republic, this school has long been admitting pupils with severe autism and is able to provide them with special education as well as day care. It is attended by 114 children. More than half of them have a certain form of autism, 80% of them do not speak and communicate with teachers through a so-called image exchange communication system. Nevertheless, together with the parents and the staff of the school, they form one

large community, as is evident from this interview with the headteacher Ivana Kováčová.

What is the new school year like in Merklín?

We have two innovations. An outdoor school playground, where our pupils will rest and learn. Also, at the start of the school year we baptized a beautiful brand-new nine-seat minibus, with the participation of the Governor of the Pilsen Region. It serves the children for transportation to and from the school and will be also used for swimming, equine therapy and trips. Although our school has been offering transportation to children since the beginning, it has been provided by external companies until now. Today, however, we urgently need our own large vehicle. We have more and more children and the interest in our school grows. We've also grown. In Merklín alone we have three buildings, then detached workplaces in Sušice and Pilsen. Our own car will help us very much in our work.

Merklín school also operates a boarding school. This is not very common in special schools.

This is our specialty, which has since been adopted by some other Diakonia schools. In 1994, when our school was founded, it included a home called "Radost" (Joy), thus it offered accommodation for students. Then, however, the two services had to be separated due to changes in law. The home

“Radost” today belongs to the Diakonia of the West and is declared as one of the few homes in the Czech Republic that accepts adults with severe autism spectrum disorders. However, our school lost its accommodation facility and it is not easy for us at all. Parents wanted not only a school for their child but also some form of a residential service. When we couldn't offer that, they placed the child elsewhere.

Why do parents want a residential service for their children?

To be able to dedicate time to themselves, their work, other siblings. Having a child with a severe disability in the family is extremely difficult. So, if parents want it and if we have the capacity, they can pick up the child from us for the weekends and we take care of them at school and in the dormitory during the week. We also offer after school care and clubs so the children are with us from 7am to 4pm on weekdays and parents can go to work without problems. This is not usual at all; just today, there were parents with me, whose school in Pilsen refused to take their daughter, because she has epileptic seizures and acts aggressively. But it is not possible for such a child to be locked up with her mother right up to the age of fourteen. We agreed that we would try, and the girl will join us.

The dormitory is located in a very well renovated historic building of the old Merklín school. How did you get it?

We searched everywhere and asked in the Evangelical Parish congregation in Merklín. The parish curator Pavel Šalom just reconstructed the house and wanted to rent it, so he offered us one of the apartments. Absolutely amazing space. He had different plans for the rest of the house, but in the end, he changed them, so our dormitory for 12 people is now in his house. We opened another 12 spots last year in another renovated historic building in the chateau. We are also renting it. The building was acquired by one of our employees with the aim of expanding the boarding school. But even that's not enough. We're looking for more locations.

What brought you to the Merklín school?

Coincidence. I never thought I'd work with children with disabilities. I studied Czech and music education for the second and third grade, then I interrupted my studies for a maternity leave and after that I was looking for a job. Marta Mikulová, the founder of the Merklín school and the “Radost” home, is the mother of my high school classmate. She was looking for an educator and I ended up working there. I started in August 1995 and was immediately in charge of an autistic boy accompanying him on the bus journey from home to school and back. It was a baptism of fire. I didn't know how to treat him. I was starting from scratch. I completed my education and became the headteacher only in 2004.

What three qualities should one have to work with your school pupils?

You must like children, be able to work independently, and at the same time must be able to separate work from private life. Educating pupils with severe disabilities or autism can't be done just for money. One must have a feel for it, otherwise it will not last long. At the same time, it is essential that you do not take your work home and be able to rest, so the next day you are full of energy. It is also necessary to have a good team; which I think we have. Our operation is very demanding, we are a big school, we could not work if we weren't willing to help.

Have you experienced any crisis during that time?

The original school was practically composed of so-called unicells. Nothing very nice. And this thing happened to us: without asking us anything, there were parents with an autistic boy who moved to Merklín because of us. Originally, they lived somewhere in Aš and when the experts recommended our

school, they sold their house and moved to our region. However, when they first saw our school, they quite frankly stated that it looked terrible. That was the last impulse for us to undertake proper reconstruction and expansion. After all, we could hardly fit into the original school. We wrote the project, relying on European funds, but they were just put on hold at that time because of suspicions of corruption. The intricately drafted project went to waste. In the end, Diakonie headquarters with the then director David Šourek and the HEKS Switzerland Foundation helped. We rebuilt the school. Not exactly according to the original ideas, but on the other hand it was a breakthrough that moved us further - more children began to come and today we could build more and more schools. Pupils are coming to us from all directions.

The case where the family moved from Aš due to school is the only one, or are there more such cases?

We have three such cases. We are simply famous for loving children and not rejecting even those with severe behavioural disorders or complicated manifestations of autism. Despite all the development and all the changes, we have been the same since 1994. Over all that time, the word about us has spread all around.

Adam Šůra

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The Protestant Theology Faculty of Charles University (PTF) is the successor of the Jan Hus Faculty (1919–1950) and the Comenius Faculty (1950–1990). In the year 1990 it was incorporated into Charles University. The administration of the Faculty is directed by a Dean and a board of Vice-Deans, elected for a four-year term of office. The Faculty offers study programmes at Bachelor's and Master's level in Protestant Theology, Diaconia (Pastoral and Social Work), and Ecumenical Studies, and at doctoral level in various theological fields. The faculty is ecumenically open to all. Pastors of the ECCB receive their theological education here.

The Discovery of a Monumental Judaeon Temple from the Second Iron Age: An Archaeological Expedition by Students and Teachers from the Prague Theological Faculty



In the spring of 2019 a group of students and teachers from the Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University (PTF) set off for the site of Tel Moca in Israel, where they spent two weeks working on archaeological excavations. This was the first year of renewed work on a project led by Prof. Oded Lipschits and Shua Kissilevitz from the Archaeological Institute of Tel Aviv University. Excavations had already been carried out by them on the site in 2012-13, during which they had discovered the remains of a temple which is thought to date from the late 10th century BCE and the first half of the 9th century. The temple was a monumental one, and nothing else like it dating from that period has been found in Judaea so far. Furthermore, the dimensions of the building correspond to the biblical description of the First Temple, which, however, was supposed to have been in Jerusalem, and not in the Tel Moca locality, which is several kilometres away. The discovery thus raises more questions than answers about the historical, social, and cultural context of early Judaea. The PTF has therefore started to cooperate on the renewed investigations into the Tel Moca temple, which will continue in the future and will hopefully provide some answers to the questions that have arisen. It will no doubt be fascinating, not just for the students and teachers of the PTF, but also for the general public, to see the result of these investigations in the coming years.

The archaeological excavations in the Tel Moca locality are part of the long-term cooperation between PTF and the Archaeological Institute of Tel Aviv University which also includes other archaeological expeditions to Israel (in particular the annual excavations in the Tel Azeka locality), the organisation of conferences (most recently in June 2019 at the PTF in Prague), and block seminars (for example in March 2019 we welcomed Shua Kissilevitz to Prague, and in November Alex Wrathall will come to lead a seminar). In this way PTF students and others have the invaluable opportunity to learn at first hand about archaeological investigations in Israel, which provide important information about the history of early Israel, something that is necessary for theologians and especially for biblical research.

Jáchym Šenkyřík, postgraduate student at PTF and member of the archaeological expedition to Tel Moca in spring 2019

100 Years of Cooperation between Czech and Slovak Protestant Theologians



This year two Protestant theological faculties on the territory of former Czechoslovakia will celebrate the first hundred years of their existence: the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Faculty of Comenius University in Bratislava and the Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University in Prague.

Both faculties were founded shortly after the establishment of the new state of Czechoslovakia and began their teaching activities in the autumn of 1919. The roots of both institutions are to be found in the theological faculty in Vienna. The main characteristic they had in common from the beginning was teaching in the local language, Czech or Slovak, rather than German. Nevertheless, there were always differences evident between them, due mainly to the different historical development of the Protestant churches in the former kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary. The faculty in Bratislava represented and served primarily the Slovak-speaking Lutheran churches not only in Slovakia, but also, for example, in Czech Silesia. The faculty in Prague, by contrast, soon assumed the identity of a mainly Reformed (Calvinist) place of learning, as a result of which Hungarian Reformed students came to study there from Slovakia.

In spite of this basic dogmatic difference, however, we can find many common features in the history of the two theological schools, and also examples of fraternal cooperation. Perhaps the most obvious case of this was the founding of a joint specialist periodical in 1948, the new Czech-Slovak journal *Theologia evangelica*, published by both faculties, which was forcibly closed down by the communist regime in 1951.

A new stage of intensive mutual contacts between the two faculties can also be seen in recent decades, effectively since the incorporation of both institutions into their local universities, the division of Czechoslovakia into two independent countries, and a certain generational change among the teaching staff at the two faculties. Today we frequently come across Slovak students in Prague or Czech teachers in Bratislava. Regular meetings between the teaching staff at the two institutions also take place, with a scholarly and social programme. And finally, this year both faculties will be celebrating together the 100 years of their existence, a major anniversary in the history of Czech and Slovak Protestant theology.

Ota Halama