



MINUTE FOR MISSION

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A Glimpse into the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren

The Rev. Joel Ruml was a pastor for 23 years when he was elected to the post of Moderator of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren (ECCB) in 2003. As the former pastor of three congregations, Rev. Ruml describes the diversity and the richness of the traditions of the ECCB from their three standpoints.

His first congregation is in rural Lozice. The old, historic church building is well-maintained despite the limited capacity of the small congregation. About one-third (250) of the total number of congregations of the ECCB are small. With the flight of people from the villages, these churches face additional challenges. At the same time, a small number of Christ's followers are keeping the congregations alive. Often, such congregations are very active in preparing cultural programs and lectures that enrich the quality of life for entire villages.



The Rev. Joel Ruml is the new synod senior of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren.

The second congregation in Velké Meziříčí, a small town in southern Moravia, is in a traditional setting where the majority of the residents belonged to the Roman Catholic Church. The congregation came into being in the 1920s, so it is not particularly old. Nor is it numerically large, with 300 members. Nevertheless, its life is extremely rich. As a rule, Bible studies



for families are held in individual villages rather than the church building because over half of the congregation lives in neighboring villages. Another third of the ECCB consists of such congregations. These congregations play an important role in the social and cultural lives of the towns, and they are active in ecumenical programs in conjunction with other denominations.

The third church where Rev. Ruml served is a congregation in the large university city of Olomouc. The nature of the work did not change; however, the number of additional activities increased, such as work with university students, more frequent catechetical work, social work with homeless people, and work with inmates in the local prison. Valuable stimuli for the thinking and work of the members of the congregation also came from these ministries. The disadvantage is that in large cities, such congregations are more likely to wane because of competition with the many other diverse cultural and educational organizations. However, in spite of that, the congregation managed to find a significant place in the life of the city.

The ECCB is both a historical and a contemporary church. It has roots reaching back many centuries. At the same time, it is present in urban centers; thus, it is able to engage the stimuli that are introduced by a modern society. Congregations of the ECCB are profoundly aware of their union with Christians of the whole world by virtue of professing Christ. Rev. Ruml writes, "We are gratefully thinking of you, who have entered into the reality of Czech Protestants through these lines and who are remembering our part in the proclamation of the gospel through your prayers for Christ's Church."

Rev. Joel Ruml
Moderator, Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren

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