

# Ministers' Conference, 22<sup>nd</sup>–26<sup>th</sup> January 2018 in Prague

## Speakers – Abstracts of talks

### Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January

**Mgr. Joel Ruml (\* 1953)** Minister in the Ústí nad Labem Seniorat, Synodal Senior Emeritus

**Mgr. Marianna Sláviková,** Minister of the Reformed Christian Church in Slovakia

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### Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January

**Mgr. Tomáš Cejp (\* 1961)** Minister in Libčice nad Vltavou

#### **Prof. ThDr. Martin Prudký (\* 1960)**

a Czech protestant theologian, a minister of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren, OT biblical scholar (at the Evangelical Theological Faculty, Charles University since 1990). He is an expert in the questions and interpretation of OT materials, especially from the perspective of literary-critical methodology and in respect of the history of the usage of biblical texts. He is the author of the book *Special People of God – Christians and Jews* (2000) and a co-author of *Difficult Passages in the Books of Moses* (2006), *Difficult Passages in the Books of the Former Prophets* (2013) and *Difficult Passages in the Books of the Latter Prophets* (2016).

#### **Abstract**

##### **How to create 'Israel'? The visions and criticisms of 'God's people' in the material of the OT.**

The Christian Church emerged from Judaism in ancient times. On its journey it has retained a number of essential elements of self-understanding and formation as the 'people of God'; on its journey through history it has developed certain aspects, changing some of these and abandoning others. The Church has returned to some of these in reforming movements and finds a new inspiration in some aspects which up to today had been forgotten. The lecture will attempt to introduce the main ideas, key concepts and metaphors by which the OT material expresses where and how 'God's people' are present and how they can be recognised. A few key witnesses who have something to say on these questions will tell us what creates and edifies 'Israel' and what, on the other hand, spoils and destroys it.

#### **Prof. Dr. Gerd Theissen, dr.h.c. mlt. (\* 1943)**

Prof. Theissen studied theology and German studies, taught at a *Gymnasium* (High School) and later became professor of NT at the University of Copenhagen (1978–1980) then in Heidelberg (1980–1998). He was ordained in 1967. The question of the historical Jesus, Paul, sociology and psychology of early Christianity, and the theory of early Christian religion count among his research interests. Theissen has written an accessible theological account of Jesus for the general public (*The Shadow of the Galilean* (1986)) and on Paul [*Paul as Advocate* (2017)]

#### **Abstract**

##### **Images and dreams of the church in early Christianity and their significance for today** (*Bilder und Träume von der Kirche im Urchristentum. Konsequenzen heute*).

Early Christianity evolved from a reformist movement, which spread with a surprising vitality throughout ancient society. Is it possible today, when we are trying to renew and further develop our church, somehow to learn from the "success" of this small group? It is necessary to take seriously how times have changed, in an era now characterised by secularisation, globalisation and individualisation. Nevertheless, there remain hidden initiatives for a church that, although small, is still open to a dialogue both with itself and with the wider world. Finally, in the lecture I would like to make a few suggestions regarding how to apply early Christian initiatives in today's situation.

**PRANIC** – a folk group lead by Rev. Ondřej Halama. His songs deal with spiritual and biblical themes, among others. More information on [www.pranic.cz](http://www.pranic.cz).

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**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January**

**Mgr. Alžběta Hatajová (\*1988)**, Minister in Sázava

**Mgr. Daniel Ženatý (\*1954)** Grew up in Vsetín, was a minister of churches in Valašské Meziříčí, Nové Město na Moravě, and Pardubice; was also a prison chaplain in Pardubice for seven years. He has been the Synodal Senior (moderator of the ECCB) since November 2015. Daniel likes walking – at least a little bit – to keep fit.

**Ing. Vladimír Zikmund (\*1955)** Has been at the ECCB Synodal Council as the (Lay/Stated/Synodal) Clerk (equivalent to the Synodal Senior) since November 2015. Before accepting this office, Vladimír worked as a developer of roller-bearings for 35 years. He was born in Semily, then lived in Varnsdorf and Vsetín. After graduating from the Technical University in Prague he moved to Brno, where he still lives and is a member of the Husovice congregation. He is married and has two adult sons. Besides enjoying his growing family, he likes nature and travelling. He is also a lay preacher.

### **Abstract**

#### **How to create a wider church**

The Church elects people to work in the Church Council in the hope that they will somehow manage its affairs. For office bearers, as for the Church, a lot depends on the Church constitution and regulations. However, there are often administrative matters which need to be dealt with in order for the Church to function well. Anything more can be called building up a congregation, which is something everybody is called to work towards. Some things are taken from tradition, and some new things are added. This holds good for all three levels in the church – congregation, Seniorat and the wider church. At the level of the wider church, there is a lack of possibility for comparison and cooperation.

**Mgr. Jaroslav Pechar (\*1972)**, minister in Prague-Braník

#### **Prof. Dr. Gerd Theissen, dr.h.c. mlt. (nar. 1943)**

Prof. Theissen studied theology and German studies, taught at a *Gynazium* (High School) and later became professor of NT at the University of Copenhagen (1978–1980) then in Heidelberg (1980–1998). He was ordained in 1967. The question of the historical Jesus, Paul, sociology and psychology of early Christianity, and the theory of early Christian religion count among his research interests. Theissen has written an accessible theological account of Jesus for the general public (*The Shadow of the Galilean* [1986]) and on Paul [*Paul as Advocate* (2017)].

### **Abstract**

#### **Criticism of religion in the catechism: a contradiction? (*Religionskritik im Katechismus – ein Widerspruch in sich?*) and a presentation on his book ‘*A Poetic-Critical Catechism*’**

Catechism should comprehensively summarise the teachings of the Church and should not criticise them. However, people who are interested in religion today consider that religion should be criticised. Unless theologians and churches take this seriously, they will be unable to engage with such people. How is it possible to speak convincingly about belief? In his *Poetic-Critical Catechism*, Theissen tries to formulate theological testimonies by meditative aphorisms which take criticism of religion seriously. The author of these meditative texts is looking for the three essential articles of faith: God, Christ and the Holy Spirit with the help of conceptual, metaphorical or lyrical questions and answers.

**Mgr. Roman Mazur (\*1974)** became a Christian in adolescence under the influence of an ECCB youth group. He has been active as a youth leader, as a deacon and an associate minister in Český Těšín and Ostrava. For the past twelve years he has been the minister in Libeň, Prague 8. His greatest passion is mission.

### **Abstract**

#### **“An open congregation”**

The Libeň church continuously tries to create “friendly circles” of people sympathetic to and friends of the church from which people who are more seriously interested in practising Christian faith emerge quite naturally. They are then invited to take part in preparation for baptism or to become active members of the congregation. A motto for this model of mission is simple: Always offer one step further.

**Mgr. Karel Šimr (\* 1975)** graduated with a degree in Protestant theology and is the minister of two small congregations in western Bohemia: Chrást u Plzně and Kralovice. His Doctoral research focuses on theological reflection in *Diakonie* (Diakonal service).

#### **Abstract**

##### **“An open congregation?”**

As a minister in a rural area, Karel will reflect upon the role of religion, the openness of the church, and mission, based on his experience of creating a congregation in the secularized environment of western Bohemia.

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#### **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January**

**Mgr. Filip Boháč**, Minister in Opatov and Humpolec

**Mgr. Bernard-Louis Martin (\* 1941)** is a Swiss minister at the crossroads between the Evangelical Reformed Church in the Canton of Vaud, the ECCB, and the Presbyterian Church in the Mexican state Chiapas.

#### **Abstract**

##### **Can we draw on the experience and efforts of sister churches in the world? What is essential- the Jesus movement, the institutions, or both?**

False images and nightmares in the Reformed Church in the Canton of Vaud? Return to a dreamed-of past? Or a lively hope in something new? Gratitude for the possibilities of witness and work that can be done today.

**Mgr. Jakub Keller (\* 1971)** minister in Horní Čermná, moderator of Chrudim presbytery.

**Mgr. Tomáš Matějovský (\* 1964)** minister in Děčín, deputy moderator of Ústí presbytery

#### **Abstract**

##### **The end of the Parish Church**

Can/Must it happen? Beginnings and endings, life and death belong to our experience. How can we accompany a congregation in its final period of life? What kind of questions can we not avoid? Tomáš and Jakub will give their contributions and a debate will follow.

**Mgr. et Mgr. Pavlína Kvapilová** has been director of the Czech TV New Media Division, the boss of the Czech TV 24 “specials”, a correspondent for the Czech Radio in Brussels. She has gained experience in big media establishments, in bussiness activities, in cooperation with not-for-profit organisations and with universities (she has led seminars at the Faculty of Filosofy, Charles University and at the Anglo-American University in Prague). She gives lectures and writes, leads workshops, mainly in the field of social media skills.

#### **Abstract**

**How to be seen** – Communication with the wider world. (Lecture-cum-workshop) Have you had a project, put in a lot of energy and now are frustrated that nobody knows about it? We'll take a look at how to make a break-through when people are sated with information, when the most important thing is to get people's attention. How do traditional media and online media work? Why are personal characteristics important? How to work with visualisation? What to do about interaction with the public? What tactic can be useful? All this will Pavlína Kvapilová deal with. She is a consultant, presenter and the author of the project Elegant Czechia.

**Ing. arch. Petr Klápště Ph.D.** is a consultant and facilitator. He works with people active in urban design, territorial and strategic planning, so that they can take part in it. In the not-for-profit sphere he helps with planning processes as much as possible. He has helped in a methodology group and worked on the new educational programme for boy scouts.

#### **Abstract**

**Planning together in a congregation** – How to engage with the silent majority and enable them to speak out. (Lecture-cum-workshop) People prefer to participate in events they have helped to create. With the help of a presentation and a practical workshop I'll attempt to demonstrate how, in a congregation, we can create something together, decide on it

and plan it. We'll deal with the basics of how to prepare a meeting at which something will be created and planned together and also the basics of how to chair or facilitate such a meeting.

**Petr Turecký (\*1974)** minister in Soběhrdy

**Jiří Šimsa (\*1964)** presbytery minister of Brno presbytery

#### **Abstract**

**Once there will be our home** – extracts from both lyrical and underground-style poetry.

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#### **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January**

**Mgr. Karel Müller (\*1992)** Youth minister in Prague Presbytery

#### **Rev. Bokyoung Park, Ph. D.**

Professor of missiology at the Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary in Seoul, vice-president of the International Association of Missionary Studies and the Spiritual Presbyterian Church Mok Yang. She is also interested in the role of women in mission.

#### **Abstract**

##### **How to create a “small church”**

Rev. Park will introduce to us her interpretation of mission ecclesiology in the case of a small congregation in South Korea. The small Korean congregations which in part grew up in reaction to “mega-churches” (which have thousands of members) are, as far as size is concerned, comparable with the larger congregations in the ECCB.

**Ondřej Kolář, Th.D. (\*1978)** Minister of Prague-Kobylisy church where he collaborates with a Korean community and the Middle-European Centre for Mission Studies. He teaches at the Evangelical Theological Faculty of Charles University.

#### **Abstract**

##### **How to create a “small church”**

In his supplementary talk Ondřej will speak about his experiences from his own congregation of coexistence with the Korean Church in Prague and its mission perspective; also about his visit to both large and small congregations in South Korea. He will try to outline the ways in which his experience of Korea and knowledge of the situation there could inspire work in our congregations.

#### **Petr Gallus, Th.D. (\*1979)**

Studied Evangelical (Protestant) theology in Prague, Marburg and Tübingen, graduated from Prague Theol. Faculty in 2005. His dissertation dealt with Paul Tillich's and Karl Barth's conceptions of faith. He was a lecturer at the Theological Faculty, Heidelberg University 2005–2006, an *assistant* in the České Budějovice church 2006–2007, minister of the Sázava Church 2007–2016. He has been a lecturer at the Evangelical Theological Faculty of Charles University in the departments of Systematic Theology and Theological Ethics since 2016. He is also a member of the ECCB Committee for Training for future ministers, of the Theological advisory board, The New Hymn-book Committee and the Committee for lifelong development of ministers.

#### **Abstract**

**The Communion of Saints in the 21st Century** The Church has a special status in the world: it represents God to the world and, at the same time, represents the world to God. There is one Church, but this has the form of many different churches and denominations, and comprises congregations and parishes which made up of particular individuals. It is a community of the chosen and the forgiven, but often the experience of it is in reality often disappointing, being one of discord or division. It is both a professing community of faith and an institution. It sits thus at the intersection of different forces which exist in multilateral tension. Its existence is a struggle on a grand scale to fulfil its purpose to be a place of God's presence for those in it – for believers – and also for the world: that is, for others.