

Ministers' Conference, 23rd–27th January 2017 in Prague

The Speakers

Abstracts of talks

Monday, 23rd January

Mgr. Zdeněk Bárta (born 1949)

Minister of the ECCB in Litoměřice

Mgr. Matěj Opočenský (born 1985)

Minister of the ECCB in Prague-Vršovice

Tuesday, the 24th January

Mgr. Kamil Vystavěl (born 1988)

Minister of the ECCB in Česká Třebová

Prof. ThDr. Petr Pokorný, DrSc. (born 1933)

New Testament Professor at the Protestant Theological Faculty, Greek literature scholar, has taught at various universities, his main works concern New Testament Christology, introduction to the NT, the origins of the Gospels, biblical commentaries, took part in the ecumenical translation of the Bible and a biblical dictionary, he was Chairman of “Studiorum Novi Testamentui Societas” 1994–1995, Chairman of “The Learned Society of the Czech Republic” 2012–2014.

Abstract – The kingdom of God and the history of mankind: What does God’s omnipotence mean in the old Christian confessions? What does the Kingdom of God mean in the Bible? What role does the story of Jesus have in one’s orientation? How are history, the resurrection, democracy and Constantinianism connected?

Prof. PhDr. Olga Lomová, CSc.

Professor of Chinese Literature at the Philosophical Faculty, Charles University in Prague, director of the Chiang Ching-kuo International Sinological Centre and of the Institute for the Study of Strategic Regions. She focuses on Chinese medieval literature and translates Chinese fiction into Czech

Abstract – The Power of China: China is generally seen as an old civilization with extraordinary culture and as a great power of the 20th Century which more and more influences the world economy. The lecture looks at the political structure in China in the context of history and culture, especially focusing on two themes which are connected with each other: 1) the possibility of democratisation in China, 2) the expansion of Chinese power and its forms.

Augenblick – the group sings Hebrew and Yiddish songs which are biblical texts sung to the music of Hasidic and Jewish traditional religious traditions. The hope we find in them seems to be deeper than we usually feel. The core of the evening is meeting one another and meeting God.

Members of Augenblick: Rostislav Tvrđík (freelance musician, formally in the Czech radio orchestra and the orchestra of the State Opera in Prague) – double bass, Juraj Stieranka – violin, Alexander Jasiński – accordion, Michal Kitta (ECCB minister in Hronov) – guitar, vocal, Tomáš Molnár (ECCB minister in Trutnov) – commentary and vocal.

Wednesday, January the 25th

Mgr. Jiří Šamšula

Minister of the ECCB congregation in Litoměřice

Alexandr Mitrofanov (born 1957)

A Czech journalist originally from Russia, columnist in the daily newspaper Pravo.

Abstract – What power does the Media have? Mitrofanov investigates the development of domestic policy in Russia. He has been awarded several literary prizes, has written two books and is an active microblogger.

The Power of a Congregation/Power exercised in a congregation – Panel Discussion

of two ministers and two lay people. Two of them are still in active service and two have held the positions of a minister and of an elder (session clerk). How do/did they experience power in the congregation? Do/Did they have too much or not enough power? Do/did they share it willingly? How does one enter service in the Church and, on the other hand, how does one leave it? The members of the panel will share their views on questions raised for them by their service, what kind of power they held and their understanding of it.

Mgr. Jana Hofmanová, (born 1986), minister of ECCB congregation in Brno, spent a year at Leeds University, is active in youth organisations, cooperates on catechesis materials.

Mgr. Jana Šarounová, Session Clerk of the ECCB congregation in Prague-Vinohrady. Šarounová has worked as a speech therapist and an advisor in augmentative and alternative communication, which she also teaches at the Pedagogical Faculty, Charles University in Prague.

Mgr. Tomáš Bísek, (born 1939), retired since 2007, formerly minister in two ECCB congregations (1970–1982, 1996–2007) and two Church of Scotland congregations (associate minister in Cumbernauld: Condorrat (1985–1990) and parish minister in Glasgow: Govanhill Trinity Church (1990–1996)). As a signatory of Charter 77 after his licence to work as a minister was revoked by the government in 1982, he worked as a lumberjack until the family moved to Scotland in 1985.

Prof. RNDr. Aleš Drápal, CSc., DSc. (born 1955), former Session Clerk and summer camp leader of the ECCB congregation in Prague-Braník. Drápal is interested in the causes of tensions between evangelicals and other members of the church. He teaches at the Faculty of mathematics and physics at Charles University.

Mgr. Ota Halama, Th. D. (born 1974), teaches Church History at the Protestant Theological Faculty.

Abstract – The power and the powerlessness of the Czech reformation: Why are theologians so often outsiders? Can God's law be promoted without 'circling the wagons'? Were the Czech Brethren really powerless when those in power protected them? These are the questions we will focus on in the mirror of the origins of the Czech Reformation.

Thursday, January the 26th

Mgr. Martin Sabo (born 1986)

Minister of the ECCB Congregation in Prague-Strašnice.

Doc. Petr Kratochvíl, Ph. D.

Director of the Institute of International Relations in Prague, Chairman of the Academic Council of the Diplomatic Academy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, a member of various international associations. He is an internationally-known research worker in the theory of international relationships, European integration and the relationship between politics and religion.

Abstract – Seize power, persuade or set free? Three views of power in politics: The lecture focuses on three concepts of power in politics. It will show that these three concepts have major practical impacts on both the way society functions and the role of a Christian and the Church in society.

PhDr. Ivan Gabal (born 1951)

A member of Parliament of the Czech Republic (nominated by the Christian-Democratic Party), sociologist, director of Socio-Analytic Companies GAC spol.s.r.o. and Gabal Analysis & Consulting. These companies have realised a number of projects in the field of security and defence, ethnic relationships, education, regional development and environment. He was also head of the Department of Political Analysis in the Presidential Office when Vaclav Havel was president.

Abstract – What happens in Parliament – experience of a novice member of parliament: The aim of the lecture is to share some information about the workings of the Czech parliament as well as give some details of the running and development of the Czech parliamentary democracy.

Doc. Ing. Aleš Opatrný, Th. D. (born 1944)

Catholic priest in Prague-Vyšehrad and Professor at the Catholic Theological Faculty of Prague, teaches pastoral theology, a member of the society for the study of sects and new religious movements.

Abstract – Spiritual leadership and walking together: reinterpretation of 1 Samuel 3:1–18. One can be a gift, a blessing and also a tempter to one's neighbour. Through reinterpreting this text and examining real situations we will try to see the positives as well as the dangers of situations in which one can help another on their journey of faith.

Friday, January the 27th

Mgr. Juliana Rampich Hamariová (born 1987)

Minister of the ECCB Congregations in Černošín and Stříbro

Mgr. Anna Šabatová, Ph. D. – Public Defender of Rights – Ombudsman

As a young student Anna Šabatová was imprisoned for three years in 1971 for distributing leaflets encouraging people to be free and take responsibility at the time of parliamentary elections, the first ones after the invasion by the armies of the Warsaw Pact. She then held several manual jobs and worked as a clerkess. Sabatova was active in the Charter 77 movement, was one of the first signatories and also a spokesperson in 1986. In 1978 she was one of the founding members of the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Persecuted. She graduated from the Philosophical Faculty, Charles University, Prague, in 1996, then she worked in social services and was a consultant to two ministers at the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, taught human rights in the context of social work at the Faculty of Social Work, Charles University, Prague, was chairwoman of the Czech Helsinki Committee, represented the Czech Republic at the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, worked as Deputy Ombudsman (2001–2007) and has been Ombudsman since 2014. She has been honoured by the UN with an Award for her defence of human rights, the Order of Merit by the Czech president, the Alice Masaryk Prize by the Czech Ambassador in the USA and the Order of Merit in Poland.

Abstract – The Power of an Ombudsman – gathered experience: The lecture focuses on the position of ombudsman and how this position is embodied in law, the various facets of his competencies, what tools there are to his disposal, an overview of authority which is, in some cases, the key to pointing out a problem or achieving a right outcome, an evaluation of the relationship between ombudsman and other institutions and how they cooperate.

Doc. Jindřich Halama, Th. D. (born 1952) – Professor of Ethics at the Protestant Theological Faculty and an occasional preacher

Abstract – Is there no other power except the one that comes from God? – The Morality and immorality of power: How is it that power, whether political, economical or spiritual, tends to be misused? What are the ways to gain power and what ends should power serve? Is it inevitably connected with violence and are its roots in sin or even in the devil himself? Is it morally bad (as argued by Chelčický) or neutral (as argued by Lukáš Pražský)? Is it morally superior to try to use power wisely and well or, rather, to avoid using it?