

My Journey Through Life

The Autobiography of Rev. Francis Pokorny, D.D.
1867-1962

Translated from the Czech by
J.T. Pokorny

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Chapter I

My Birthplace, Family, and Youth

I still visualize the farmhouse and yard of my childhood, where I first saw the light of day on the third of January, 1867. The house had a nicely plastered yellow front wall which was ornamented with a shield on which a chalice* was painted. Next to the shield was the front door, then the gate under a brick arch, then a wall. Near it was a brick building, which served as a granary and hayloft. In the midst of all this was a large yard, raked clean every Saturday, which led to the garden, to the machine shed, and the barn. All this was in the village of Habrkovice, county of Kutnohorsko, in Bohemia.

* Communion cup on a shield: an evangelical religious symbol

In the center of the village stood a bell tower surrounded by a ring of chestnut trees. From there, one street led to the lower end of the village, one to the upper end, and a third street led to the mill.

The village lay in the valley of the river Doubravka, about three or four miles where it joins the river Labe. The river winds through meadows, high banks rising on both sides of the river bed. When there were floods, these banks gave way to the rushing waters which flooded the whole village. People had to navigate in tubs, mounted on makeshift rafts, to get to the store.

The water never reached our house, as I recall. When Doubravka was in its normal state, it was the most beautiful river in the world. The water was clear, and on a hot summer day the temptation to plunge in became overpowering.

It was a two hour's walk to Kutna Hora through Nove Dvory; two and a half to Caslava; three to Kolin. My steps measured these distances many times.

The village of Habrkovice had only about 35 houses. Some belonged to farmers, some to gardeners, and some to cottagers. The residents were mainly Catholic; only three households were evangelical. They belonged to the Chvaletice church where one had to walk a good hour over Zelezne Hory (Iron Mountains). There were no troubles caused by religious differences, but there must have been something under the calm surface, because when my brother was elected mayor, he wrote: Habrkovice finally came to the day when it has an evangelical mayor.

Our farm looked somewhat newer than other farms. This is the way it happened. In Habrine, in the Bukovka parish, lived a Pokorny family. Two brothers moved away. One settled in Zaricany. That was grandfather Vaclav Pokorny, for many years pastor in Brno. The other brother bought a large homestead in Habrkovice, which he divided between two sons. One son, Vaclav, received the portion with buildings. The other son, my father, Frantisek, had to build on his half.

Our house was always overflowing with life. There were eight children, a hired man to take care of the horses, and several extra workers during busy seasons.

The three bedrooms could not accommodate everyone, so extra sleeping rooms were built in the granary. Here, in a feather bed, sleeping was good.

I was the sixth child. Five sisters preceded me. Between the third and fourth sisters came a boy, Jan, who died at two months age, to the great sorrow of the family. That may be why I was considered precious. It was understood that the oldest son would inherit the estate, so I was greeted as something of a crown prince.

When I was born, Father was 50 years old, and Mother 40. Following me were two more healthy boys. I brought not only joy, but also a hardship to the family. When I was only a few months old, our mother became seriously ill, and my sisters, the oldest fourteen, had to take care of me. I didn't like to be separated

from my mother and made it known in the same manner as any other child would, especially at night. In later years my sisters sometimes reminded me of what I trial I had been.

Our father was a serious man, respected by everyone in the village. He did not enjoy sitting in the tavern, but did go there once a week to be with neighbors, to take part in business discussions and to hear the latest grain prices. Otherwise, he told us, he would never enter the tavern. He was a good farm manager and arranged for improvements that others did not have.

Among the church publications he subscribed to were Voices from Zion, The Evangelical Journal, and, for the children, The Children's Friend. I have a small leather-bound book -- Religious Prayers for Frantisek Pokorny. The book contains morning and evening prayers, a prayer at the Lord's Supper, and others. As a young man of 24 years, my father had arranged to have a prayer book!

He had somewhat delicate health, although he was ~~never~~ seriously ill. When young, one day he was crossing the river on horseback below the millstream. The miller opened the millstream, and the stream of water overturned horse and rider. My father was badly hurt, and took a long time to recover.

He loved his home and family, and his speech was kind. However he did become provoked twice that I remember. Once he came to the cucumber field and found that I, who had been sent to watch over the cucumbers, had wandered off with the neighboring watchboy to hunt for blackberries in the nearby woods.

Another time he became angry when the man he had hired to mow rye got drunk on Sunday and failed to appear on Monday. These instances were exceptions. He showed much concern for us, and we remember him with affection.

Our mother recovered from her serious illness and during the time of my youth was ^a strong woman. She was from the Kacer family of Chvaletice, a totally evangelical village, where we had our church.

Near Chvaletice there were forests and mountains, where evangelical folks used to meet secretly before the passage of the Act of Toleration regarding the worship of God. After the Act was passed, the entire village turned to evangelicalism and built one of the first evangelical churches.

Mother's father was a strict evangelical. He attended church even when he was over 80 years old. Pastor Fleischer used to say that because of such devotion the Lord would not let him pass away from some prolonged illness. He died quietly in his 86th year.

Our mother was a good evangelical. She would tell things that made Catholicism distasteful to us, but in our Catholic village she still had good friends. Several of the young wives used to come over for advice. Sometimes she was gentle, sometimes strict. She would not tolerate it when her children quarreled or when our conversation became unpleasant. She, more than father, ruled the household.

We children were soon put to work. Our region produced grain, beets, cabbage, and cucumbers. The cucumbers took a lot of hoeing and were picked twice a week. There was always such a load that the horses had difficulty pulling it.

The cucumber fields had to be watched for thieves. When I was eight years old, I became the watchman. It was not exactly a pleasure to be up early and in the field all day, with only a hut to provide shelter. Naturally, a child was not expected to stop a theft, but it was supposed that a child would recognize the thief. The cabbages were also guarded when the heads began to harden. That was a job for a hired watchman, an older man who stayed on the field day and night. The children had the task of bringing him food.

In our village the heifers were included in the herd which the herdsman led to the public grazing fields. The milk cows were led on rope leashes by children to graze along roads and in ditches. An older cowhand had four or five cows in his care; a young one started with one cow and kept adding more as he became more capable.

I remember how proud I was of the cream-colored cow, "Reindeer", that was put in my care. She would let me sit on her, and I was proud of myself when I brought her home so well-fed that she was bulging. Before I went back to school, I had five cows in my care.

I loved horses most of all. I had a wonderful friend named Havel who worked for us many years. It was said that he so adored me that he would have laid down his life for me. Havel could carve a horse's head at the end of a willow switch. On this horse "little Frantisek" would ride all over the yard.

When my sisters would look for me, they would usually find me sitting on a bale of hay in the barn, watching the horses. When Havel put me on Lucky or Roan, that was my greatest joy. If I were to talk in the manner of Karafiat, I would write that the heavenly Lord was getting me ready for the work which was prepared for me.

We went to church in Chvaletice whenever weather permitted. When we stayed home, Father read to us from a collection of sermons. If we went to church, he read to us in the afternoon. We usually walked, but in the winter, when there was snow and the horses were restless from lack of exercise, we rode on a sled.

I learned later that the pastor had in me an avid listener. It was said that I was enthusiastic about what I saw and heard. It was predicted I would someday be a preacher. When we walked to Chvaletice, I wanted to walk with Father. On the way I was always hopeful that he would sing about the sparrow:

"Even the sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young,
at thy alters, O Lord of Hosts,
my King and my God." (Psalm 84)

Winters were festive at our house. In these days spinning and feather stripping were still done. Two or three ladies from the neighborhood would take part. They told stories and sang and made jokes.

I can still hear their voices: "Frantisek, strip feathers with us! You have such nimble fingers!" Flattered, I would toil until sleep overtook me and my eyes began to close.

At Christmas, mother led our devotions with singing. Even the smaller children knew the songs by heart: "Jesus Christ Is Born Today"; "Christ the Son of God"; "Day of Joy and Gladness"; and others. Thus we learned the meaning of the Christmas Season even when we were not always able to attend church. It nearly brought tears to my eyes, out of feeling for the Baby, when we sang: "In Bethlehem town a baby boy lies, on a bed of straw, in a manger, in the cold."

We did not expect, nor did we receive, gifts, except useful items, however everyone received candy, apples, and nuts. Our special joy was when Mother baked each of us our own loaf of Christmas bread. The hired man got the biggest loaf, and the others received a loaf according to their size.

When the youngest boy, Rudolf, was about two years old, my oldest sister, Anicka, who was about nineteen, got married. Thus as soon as our family became complete, it began to get smaller. Sister after sister left home, but were always happy to come home later with their children, and they were sure of a hearty welcome.

Chapter II

Our School and Our Teacher

In the valley of the Doubravka River and south of Zelezných Hor (Iron Mountains), four villages lie close together: Habrkovice, Kobylnice, Lisice, and Bernardov. Kobylnice is on Caesar's highway out of Kutna Hora; Habrkovice is on the left bank, and Lisice on the right bank of the river.

Bernardov, consisting of one street of homes, is actually on the mountain slope. The four villages had a community school which stood at the far end of Kobylnice and somewhat outside the village. Not many children lived close to the school. Those from Habrkovice walked through Kobylnice. From three directions the 'little pilgrims' trekked to school to seek knowledge.

The public school had only one room. In later years another room was added, and an assistant teacher was hired. There were two rows of rough benches, one for girls and the other for boys. In front stood the teacher's desk, behind which was a large blackboard. At one side stood a bookcase, at the other side hung a map of Austria Hungary. Into this room were crowded over a hundred children from six to fourteen years of age.

Our instructor was Antonin Kopac. He was a short, stout man, with black curly hair, a short black beard with only his cheeks shaved, and shiny dark eyes that could see through and under school benches. He was kind and good when all went well, but very stern when something went amiss or when thick heads resisted his teaching skill.

He gave lazy pupils the punishment of writing one hundred times: "Industry brings prosperity." When he became angry with a girl, he would slap the palm of her hand with his ruler until it turned red. He would give a boy similar treatment, but on the seat of his pants.

His jurisdiction reached into all four neighboring villages and beyond. If he found that a pupil had failed to greet an acquaintance, there was trouble ahead. There was a trial and punishment if boys got into a fight away from school. He found it intolerable when his students frequented taverns where there was music and dancing. When he learned that a pupil of his caused trouble in Kutna Hora or Praha, he was never without a reprimand or punishment for the offender.

Sometimes our instructor neglected to investigate and learn the facts. He thus sometimes punished the innocent. So it happened with me. One day I played with friends in the village. The next day a fellow pupil reported that I had hit him with a rock. I had thrown no rocks, but it was impossible to defend myself. I received one blow across each palm, which actually didn't hurt much. What did hurt was the injustice of the punishment and the falseness of my companion.

I was determined to keep out of the fellow's way, but, as it is when you're young, the incident faded into the background. Later when the event returned to mind, I wanted to remind my former teacher about it, but I felt certain he had forgotten about my punishment. During his years as teacher he had dealt out punishments without number. That was the only time during the years in our school that I was disciplined.

There were two other days at school when I shook with fear of receiving punishment from the teacher. The first of these difficult days came in the winter. We were walking on ice covering puddles near the dam. Some of these puddles were deep, and I fell through the ice and one leg got wet up to above the knee.

I arrived at the schoolhouse with a frozen shoe and a pant leg. I knew that if the teacher saw this there would be trouble, because he had warned us about such danger spots. He didn't call me to the blackboard that day and didn't find out about it so I wasn't punished.

The second difficult day took place in the summer. Most of the pupils stayed in the school house during the noon lunch hour, and each ate what he brought. Trading took place: a buttered slice of bread might be traded for a potato pancake. After lunch there were outdoor games -- hockey, baseball, and others.

Some distance from the school was a wide, well-packed area. We called it Riding School because it had been a training field for the hussars when they were stationed in ^KBobylnice. That was our playground. One day we were playing 'cops and robbers'. I was a cop, and I caught Honzik, the robber. He resisted so much that I tore his shirt from neck to trousers. Honzik, the robber, had his back exposed all afternoon. Did the teacher notice it? I don't know, but I breathed easier when school was dismissed for the day.

It was never noisy in our school before teaching started because the teacher's home was on the other side of the hall. When he walked into the room, the children stood up and greeted him: "May Jesus Christ be praised." Our teacher later ruled that we could just stand up when he entered. When the instructor sneezed there would be a loud salute: "May the Lord Bless." It was explained to us that, a long time ago, possibly in a foreign country, there had been a serious illness that announced itself with loud sneezing. It was then that people began wishing good health to those who sneezed. From there the custom spread

all over the world. We were told since sneezing was no longer the sign of a serious malady, our greeting was not required. This disappointed us, the instructor used snuff and sneezed many times a day.

The pupils were divided in three groups. The youngest pupils up to about eight years were in the first group. They had their spellers. Our teacher called this group to his desk ever so often to teach them letters and simple words. He would also write words or numbers on the big blackboard for the children to copy on their slates.

The second group read from the second reader, one by one. The teacher called out names as he saw fit. Woe to him who wasn't prepared to read! These pupils also had a beginner's arithmetic. The big blackboard was used to give examples of writing or drawing, or give assignments in arithmetic which the pupils were to work on.

The oldest pupils comprised the third group. They had the third reader, a small grammar, and an advanced arithmetic. There were no other school books. The teacher had to supplement them, and he did this very well. With ^hHistory, he wrote the day's lesson on the blackboard, and the pupils copied it to their notebooks. These were taken home and studied. This was no problem for the industrious student who copied what was written and then studied it.

With geography, the teacher might draw on the board the map of Bohemia or Morava, with all the rivers, mountains, and larger cities. The pupils had to copy his drawing. They had to practice so they could, without any help, draw the complete map on the board.

Similarly, maps of Austria and other states and lands were studied. He showed us, on a large globe placed on the table, how our whole world looked.

The pupils solved problems in their arithmetic books. The teacher showed them how. The multiplication tables were recited by the whole school, as it was done in Netrebicich, whenever the teacher wished. He stressed that pupils should learn to figure in their heads. He would say, "You certainly won't look for pencil and paper when you want to know how much 5 and 8 and 12 add to." He would call out problems and expect a quick solution.

We also had a song period, which the teacher led on his violin. He was a good musician and also played the piano.

We also had physical training. In winter all we could do was stand next to our benches and exercise our arms in various ways. When spring came, however, the boys were given marching lessons. I don't know if the teacher was a soldier in younger days, but he called out orders like one.

He had several hives of bees and gave talks about them. The older boys were invited to witness the wonder of swarming bees. He spoke about the mulberry silk worm as if he were a silk manufacturer. He taught about harmful insects, and birds and animals were classified as useful or harmful. That was the way natural history was taught.

I recall his lecture about gunpowder -- that it is made partly from charcoal from the wood of the elm tree. As we went home from

school, we saw a row of elm trees and wondered how much gunpowder could be made from them. From his other lectures I learned that Bohemia has enough metal and coal, but that salt has to be brought in from Velicky in Holland.

Our instructor made use of a smaller building where he cultivated fruit trees. He showed us how to graft and inoculate a fruit tree. We had to prove we knew how by doing it. He inspected, then praised or pointed out what was done incorrectly. I became interested, and planted apple seeds, and later grafted the plants. In time the small trees were transplanted to the garden where we already had other apple trees, as well as pear and plum trees. It was a great joy after some years to see my own apple trees bear fruit.

Our teacher even knew how to advise the girls, the future cooks: "If you would have a good beef soup, put the meat in cold water; if you put it in hot water, you will have good meat but weak soup. You should never strain soup or skim off the foam. Skimming removes nutritious material."

It sometimes happened that tiny creatures appeared on someone's head. It was no wonder, with so many children from all kinds of homes. His advice: "Tell mother to put bacon on the griddle, salt it, and fry it well. Rub your head with what is in the pan and leave it for an hour. Then wash with hot water and soap and you will have peace."

Every thing was in order and there was good progress. Even so, our teacher had one real fear -- that was when he was expecting a visit from the diatriet school inspector. For days before the visit, everything was reviewed in all subjects. During the visit, everything was fine when our teacher gave the questions, but when the inspector interrupted, you could hardly tell who knew what.

The inspection always turned out all right, however. The school's hourly plan and the other parts of the insption received a rating of "Praiseworthy".

In addition to the other studies, a Catholic priest from Zabor wsed to come in to teach religion. There were about ten of us evangelical pupils, and we were not included in all of the instruction. When the priest taught Biblical history, he addressed questions to the evangelicals also, but when he taught catechism, we were left out.

During these sessions I learned about many Biblical events, even though the Bible was read in our home. I don't know why it happened, but after a while, the Evangelical boys and girls left the room during the hour of religious instruction.

Some days were sad when the teacher's wife became ill and the teacher, worried, would excuse himself from class. The sadest day of all was her last day. I don't know why he did not send us home. He just asked us to sit quietly and not even move or whisper.

He sat at his desk and stared straight ahead, and corrected anyone who misbehaved. Her death came soon after I started school.

About a year later, our teacher remarried. He married a lovely and very kind lady. They named their first-born son Antonin. I used to see him in the arms of his nurse when they would come to the school during the summer.

I used to stop to see the baby. He learned to smile at me, and later would hold out his hands to me. I don't know why, but we took to each other. When he grew a little and his tongue started to untie, he called me "Popc." This was derived from my name, Pokorny.

Sometimes, at noon when the other boys were playing at the Riding School, I would spend the time with the little boy. One day, when little Antonin was sick and cross, his mother asked to have me excused from class to see if I could sooth him. I have not forgotten him, even though I have not seen him or had news of him for over forty years.

Their second son was named Frantisek. He died when he was just a few weeks old. His mother requestd that I come to the funeral as his 'caretaker'. I was undecided, because I wondered if it was right that an evangelical attend a Catholic ceremony.. My mother decided for me. "You have to do it. After all, they know that you're evangelical, but when they cross themselves in church, do not cross yourself, and when they kneel, do not kneel," she told me.

All this happened in my last year in our school.

Chapter III

A Year at the German School

I believe it was in my third year of grade school when our instructor, Antonin Kopac, started to advise my father to let me go into higher education.

I was not present at these discussions, but I can guess what my father's reaction was. He probably brought up the cost. It was true that everything had been going well -- the income from the farm was decent, three of my sisters had married, and each had received her share as well as a dowry. Still, higher education was expensive, and so it would be necessary to consider the matter carefully. In addition, it had always been assumed that the oldest son would inherit the estate.

The teacher pointed out that education would not cost more than one child's share, and since there were still two boys in the family,

the farm would not suffer for lack of a manager. Mother agreed with the instructor. Father could not decide. The instructor then advanced a plan. "At least let him go into teaching. That would not take many years or very much money."

When Father still could not make a decision, he was told, "Then enroll him in a German school for a year or two. Without a knowledge of German, a Czech boy cannot even become a corporal in the Austrian army."

This latter plan finally received Father's approval. The instructor offered to introduce me to the German language himself, so that I would be well prepared. He performed this service for other pupils as well. He had been tutoring a boy before morning class and later began tutoring a girl at noon.

I eagerly accepted his offer, as I wanted to begin learning and speaking German as soon as possible. I had already picked up a few German sentences from my father.

I remember that, in my eagerness to learn German, I was willing to walk two hours to Kutna Hora for a German spelling book. Our hired man, a good lad, though sometimes a bit of a roamer, offered to come with me. I liked Prokop because he liked horses as much as I did. He fed the horses, groomed them, tried not to overwork them, and sometimes patted them. On one occasion he became upset when my sister Marie had to drive the horses in a gallop to Chvaletice and back for a wedding. He confided his worry to me. "What the horses lost on the road over the long hill, I can't get back on them in a month."

The speller which served as the First Reader for German Schools didn't contain as much as one Czech word. I pressed the book to my side as we started for home. I remember that we made one stop on the way, in Sedlice, where a pilgrimage^z was taking place. There were multitudes of people and vendors of all sorts.

An awful feeling gripped me as I looked around me and saw the streets full of beggars and pilgrims asking for alms. We stopped for a while at the chapel, where the interior, including the altar, lamps, and decorations were fashioned from human bones. It was a beautiful but eerie sight.

I took pleasure in showing off my new speller. Soon after I got it, a woman who knew German visited us. She read out loud while I listened. Suddenly she smiled, I asked what happened, and ^{she}~~she~~ read, "Ich bin hungrig. Mein Magen ist leer." Then she translated: "I am hungry. My stomach is empty." I have never forgotten these words. It is odd how little events can stay in a child's mind and be deeply impressed in his memory.

True to his word, the instructor began to tutor me in the German language. I came to understand German sentences, but I still had to learn how to pronounce German words. The teacher said I read with a Bohemian accent. I started keeping a small dictionary as I studied at home, and eventually I needed a second reader. I continued to study in this manner as long as I attended our school.

It did not take long to decide which German school I should attend.

The school was in Jihlava, a city in Moravia, just over the Czech border. Three evangelical boys from^m Kobylnice had already been there and were ready to return for another school year.

Bohumil Hrubes was going into the fifth grade in realschool*, and his brother Josef and Jan Hajek would be starting their first year. I was to ride to Jihlava with them and possibly share rooms with them. During vacations we got our things ready for the school year -- clothing and feather beds. A feather bed accompanied each student. Sometimes their contents diminished considerably in a year's time when they were partly emptied by unseen hands. More feathers had to be added to make up the loss.

Spring finally arrived and it was time to leave for my new school. I went to say good-bye to my instructor and to thank him, as my parents had suggested, for his advice. He was happy that his plans for me had won out. He gave me final admonishments, and asked me to show him all my report cards.

On the appointed day we went by carriage to Caslava, and from there ~~there~~ by train to Jihlava. Father came with me, and Mr. Hrubes accompanied his sons. Jan Hajek no longer had a father. My father

* Realschool is a German school of two kinds. The higher has a curriculum of nine or ten years to prepare students for university entrance. The lower has a shorter curriculum to prepare students for work not requiring university education.

arranged for me to lodge with another boy from Kobylnice, saw that I was enrolled in the fourth grade in the main school, then set out for the journey home. I walked with Father to the terminal where he would catch the coach to the railroad station. I don't know what came over me. At that moment I lost all my desire for higher education and even for the German language, as a horrible longing came over me. I already missed my native village.

Tearfully, I begged Father to take me home with him. He replied, "It is too late. He who joins the army has to stay in the battle. Furthermore, you wouldn't want to be like 'Peter in a Foreign Country.' "

"Peter in a Foreign Country" was the title of a recitation I gave in school. It was about Peter, who left his village to go out into the world, and no one could stop him from leaving. When he came to a crossroad however, he would not enter the woods for fear a murderer would corner him, and he would not stay in the open field for fear a storm with rain and thunder would engulf him. He turned around and galloped home so fast that he was there ahead of the group that had accompanied him to the first tavern.

Naturally, everyone in the village laughed at him. Remembering that story calmed me down. Father left on the coach, and I took myself to my lodging, but I felt lonely for a long time.

In time I came to the conclusion that Jihlava was not the best place to learn German. After all, it was half Czech, even though it

was under German rule. A person could get along there without even knowing the German language. German people lived there, but most of them knew Czech. My rooming house was entirely Czech, including the landlord, his wife, and the maid. There wasn't a German word to be heard in the house. Even the small curly dog, the landlady's pet, understood only when ordered in Czech.

Our landlord was formerly an army major who was now on a pension. He was an elderly man with a Caesar-type beard (only the chin was shaved) and a badly bent back. He was said to have been badly wounded in battle and left to spend an entire night in a cold trench. From that time he was unable to stand straight.

We saw him every morning at the same hour when he came to wind the clock in the room. That seemed to be his only occupation. He was born a Czech, but spoke only German for many years. His wife was very worried about his health. He was already pensioned when they married, and if he should die, she would not inherit the pension.

Bohumil Hrubes maintained order in our students' room. There was to be no talking, whispering, or fooling around. Even Josef, Bohumil's brother, had to submit to the rules, however unwillingly.

The school itself was not entirely German. There were many Czechs among the students. Some of them came to Jihlava, as I did, to learn the German language. Even our class instructor, a Mr. Honzik,

knew Czech thoroughly, and often helped himself with it in his teaching. Mr. Honzik would have us take German dictation, which he gave in his Czech accent, and all of us would write it incorrectly.

The other instructors were German men. A young, good-looking teacher had charge of physical training. I remember that he came to me one day, put his hands on my shoulders, and after that we talked often.

I did not find the German school difficult. In some studies, such as arithmetic or geography, I was not learning anything new. I thought that there was more to be learned in our country school than in the Jihlava city school. One difference was that here we studied Austro-German instead of Czech history, and we sang the Austrian hymn, "God save our Caesar and our Land."

I learned to understand the German language quite well. A person may learn to read a foreign language and understand what he reads, but it is altogether different when he tries to speak in that language. The mind must learn to properly control the lips and the tongue so they will express the thoughts. My teacher at home was pleased when I came to see him on my vacation. I could answer in German anything he asked in German.

In Jihlava I learned to play the violin, of all things. When Father was on the train from Jihlava, he met a gentleman. This man told Father that every teacher should be able to play a violin or an organ.

It occurred to Father, "What if our boy should become a teacher!" When he arrived home, he sent money to me and wrote that I should find someone who would help me get a violin and give me lessons.

I found a teacher by the name of Krepcik and took lessons once a week, but didn't learn very much. I couldn't practice when my roommates were home -- they didn't seem to appreciate my musical skill. Still, I was thankful for the little I did learn.

I also learned to swim while I was in Jihlava. One spring day when school was over, two of my classmates suggested that we walk over to the Jihlava River and see if the water was warm enough to swim in. The water was still quite chilly, but that didn't stop us. After that we went swimming almost every day even though it was a long walk. The Jihlava River didn't have the same clear water as our Doubravka, but the swimming was still good and my swimming ability improved.

The year at the German school was not very profitable as far as religion went. Evidently there were only a few evangelical students, so no provision was made for their religious life. At the time there were no church services in Jihlava in the Czech language.

I attended a German church service with Bohumil for the first time, and afterward I attended there more often alone. Even though I didn't understand everything in the service, I felt that it was God's Holy Sunday, and that I should go to church. No one invited me to come and no one welcomed the Czech boy when he came.

The school year at the German school was over and I came home. I showed my report card to my former teacher. My grades were "very good" in all subjects except in reading, and there it was "good". The teacher understood why. I didn't read loud enough. "A person who won't read loud will never learn to read well," he said, but he seemed satisfied with me.

I don't know what his thoughts may have been. Perhaps they were that my formal education was now over, and that if I were conscripted I could be a corporal in the Austrian Army, and after that a somewhat educated farmer.

I couldn't believe that I was through with Jihlava. I cannot remember the names of many of my fellow students, but the three boys I lived with are very clear in my memory. We met from time to time in the years that followed, and I saw them when, as a minister, I came from America to visit Bohemia.

Bohumil Hrubes graduated from the preparatory school in Jihlava and the engineering university in Vienna. He sailed the seven seas on Austrian navy vessels and settled as Secretary of Navy in Vienna. He came to see me when he found out I was home.

After the war, when fellow pastor Krenek preached in Vinohrady, Bohumil used to attend the church services. He would sometimes ask about me. He became, Dr Krenek told me, a white haired grandfather.

Josef, Bohumil's brother, did not continue his education, and became a farmer in Kobylnice. On the day I preached in the Chvalstice

church, he came to visit with me in front of the church when the service was over, and we reminisced about Jihlava.

Jan Hajek transferred from Jihlava to Kutna Hora where he entered the gymnasium, and later a business school. After many years I saw him when he served as a manager with the railroad in Kolin.

Everyone's journey through life is unique. Persons may travel together for a distance, sometimes not too far apart, and at points their roads may diverge to take them in very different directions. When two roads diverge, they may never cross again.

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Chapter IV

Two Years in Kutna Hora

There are times in every one's life when he doesn't know which way to turn. So it was with me after I completed the year at Jihlava, I felt uncertain about what I should do next.

Fortunately, a cousin, Vaclav Klepetko*, came over for a visit. He had just completed a year's studies at the Evangelical Teachers' Institute in Caslava. He sketched out a course of action he thought I should follow.

He began by listening to what I had been doing, then looked at my report cards, and, I might add, weighed and measured me, then gave his advice. It would be a shame, he said, if I were to stay at home. He explained that as long as the Teachers' Institute was so close by, I should study to be a teacher. First, however, I would have to attend the upper gymnasium in Kutna Hora to prepare for the Teachers' Institute.

* Vaclav was the son of my mother's sister.

He added that it was too bad that I had gone to the German school. If I had gone to Kutna Hora instead, I would be one year ahead. However, Vaclav believed that now it might be possible for me to pass the tests and enter the second year in the gymnasium in Kutna Hora, I might not pass the test in Latin, but I would eventually catch up in that subject. In two years I could be ready for the Teachers' Institute in Caslava.

Vaclav offered to send a request to the National School Council for permission to skip the first grade. He also suggested that I come with him to his parent's home in Jenikov, where he would start tutoring me.

The invitation was accepted. The Klepetkos had a beautiful estate in Jenikov, near Tremos. Since it was an eight hour walk from our house, we had seldom visited each other. We used to say they lived "in the mountains" as they were closely surrounded by the Zelezny Mountains. They had a good, fertile section of land which was all in one plot.

The Klepetkos' home was a happy one. The four sons and two daughters saw to that. Vaclav conscientiously tried to tutor me that summer. But I remember more about catching fish and crawfish in the creek and looking for mushrooms in the woods.

Father came to Jenikov for me in September of that year. He brought the news that the State School Board had ruled that I would not be permitted to take an examination for entry into the

second year of the upper gymnasium. Instead I would have to take the first year's entrance examinations and start in the first year.

I remember how those entrance exams went. The professor looked over my report card from the year before, and, noting that it was in German, asked several questions in German. Then he asked, "Did you forget Czech?" I assured him I did not.

At that point the school director, a Mr. Zach, walked into the room. He inspected my report card and asked, "Was ist der Keiwen?" It had me baffled, as I could not understand the German word "Keiwen".

The director then smiled and said slowly in Czech, "Vozy strkaji ven."* He laughed and left the room. The professor asked more questions, had me write some sentences on the blackboard, and the examination was over.

I found lodging in the home of the widow of a teacher, where the director referred me. The widow had two sons and a small daughter. Two more students also lived in the house. The students' room was literally packed full, even though it was large. There were several beds and a table where we worked on our assignments.

I was already acquainted with the city of Kutna Hora because I used to drive there when we took cucumbers or cabbage to market. I was

* The several German words and the Czech words sound very much alike.

The Czech words mean: They are pushing the wagons outside.

close enough that I could go home Sundays, and I could send my wash and messages with the milkmaid who drove her dog team to Habrkovice for milk and butter.

Both the Caesar's Royal lower real gymnasium and the upper real school were located in Kutna Hora, In time I realized that it was fortunate that I entered the real school. It offered useful subjects such as calligraphy, sketching, surveying, and mechanical drawing. These were subjects not taught at ^{length} ~~length~~ in the lower gymnasium.

So many pupils registered for the first year that they were divided into groups according to the alphabet. I belonged to section 'P', which had 44 pupils the first semester, and 34 the second. The figures show that 'sifting' had occurred by the second semester. Generally the boys who came from the country were older than the boys from the cities. I was among the oldest and biggest in my class. That had its advantages. I felt I could understand more readily because I was more mature. I also think that the year in the German school increased my ability, especially as I started to study another language, Latin.

I remember the professors we had this first year fairly well. I can almost see them appearing before me. Each one had something special about him. One had black hair and a yellow beard and was known as "Caesar's man" as the Austrian flag was black and yellow. Another, an older gentleman, was badly near sighted; he did civil surveying during vacations.

One was quick and sharp with his words. At least once he called his pupils "A bunch of mangy sheep!" Another was mild and calm, and nothing disturbed him. He was the physical training teacher, and was a small and lively man. The professor I liked best taught German, geography, and history. After two years he was my teacher in Kolin, where he was also my class adviser.

The most important thing about this year to me was that Pastor Dusek came to Kutna Hora to teach religion. Pastor Dusek was able to hold the pupils' attention and win their faith and devotion. In words they could understand, he would explain that they should lead useful lives, serve God and man, and be faithful to Christ's teachings.

For Czech and Latin, we had a young professor by the name of Frantisek Vecovsky. He taught with zest. He took every opportunity to compare the two languages, and he always stressed the beauty of our mother tongue.

It affected me so much that I was determined to speak Czech correctly even in Habrkovice. It wasn't long before I was in trouble. My younger brother Josef ^{and I} were discussing ~~something~~ something, and I used a correct but unusual verb form. Josef objected, and I found it frustrating trying to explain until I saw he was only teasing me.

I realized that people in Habrkovice would consider me stuck-up if I tried to speak Czech as it is written, so I decided to talk in Habrkovice as others did and talk in school the way we wrote in school. It was interesting to observe the differences between the two ways of communicating. I noticed that in the region around Caslava, the people's speech and the written language were much alike.

One of my roommates, a student in the fourth year in the upper gymnasium was Krupka. He composed verses which he would recite for us younger students. I liked his verses and decided to write something similar. It seemed to go pretty well. I read the product to Krupka, who praised it and encouraged me to continue.

Thereafter, in idle moments I attempted to put my thoughts into verse. My patterns were the declamations we learned in grade school or poems that came to my hand. I knew nothing of the rules of versification or rhyme. I wrote verses about our garden, the field, meadow, flowers, and birds. What else would a thirteen year old lad put in verse?

Even Krupka used similar subjects. I bought a large notebook and used it to jot down the "Fruits of my inner thoughts," and filled it completely in two years, but never showed it or read from it to anyone. I was afraid it had many shortcomings and imperfections, and I wanted to avoid criticism and ridicule.

The book was my secret, but later became a secret even to me.

I must have left if somewhere and it became lost. I would like to have it today so I could see how my young mind worked. Krupka left Kutna Hora when the school year ended. I never saw or heard of him after that. He never knew what an influence he had on his young classmate.

If the weather was pleasant on a Saturday, I would set out for my native village. I would look over the yard and garden, go through all the buildings, examine the horses, and ask what happened at home and in the village while I was away. No doubt other country boys act the same way when they come home after being away for a while.

Later in life I read a poem about a man who grew up in the country and left to find work in the city. He described how he had "betrayed the fields and the forests". The poem impressed me and made me yearn for the fields and woods around Habrkovice.

When I came home for the week end I would go to the Chvaletice church on Sunday with some member of the family. That was pleasant, but the afternoon was always short because I had to start back toward Kutna Hora early in the evening and be on the road for more than four hours.

The fifteenth of July marked the beginning of two month's vacation. It wasn't much of a vacation for me, however. Twice a week I had to walk to Chvaletice for confirmation class. During the class Pastor Fleischer taught us and quizzed us on Bible history and explained the more important answers in the Heidelberg Catechism.

I can still remember how cool it was in the parsonage even during the hottest weather. The parsonage stood on the northern slope of Zelezny mountains and was so cool that the pastor used to move his study, even in the summer, to the warmer rooms above. The confirmation class, however, met in the lower and cooler quarters.

The confirmation class consisted of three boys and one girl. I forgot the boys' names. Not too long ago, Dr Milo Filipi sent me greetings from a Mr. Mrstik whom he had met in Cleveland. Mr. Mrstik was supposed to have been confirmed with me. I was happy to hear about this. When Mr. Vilem Mrstik, of Higganum, Connecticut, a native of Chvaletice, started writing for the Christian Journal, I wrote to him. He wrote that he was not confirmed with me and wrote that it must have been his cousin who he believed lived somewhere in the midwest.

Confirmation took place toward the end of August, and the Lord's Supper was served. No examination before the congregation was required, only a promise of faithfulness. This was the last confirmation that was conducted in the old toleration church. The new church was already standing, but had not been completed. The flooring had been removed from the old church for use in the new building, and the confirmation class had to stand, and for a moment kneel, on the sand which now served as the floor.

The pastor later told me about the congregation's sluggishness in building the new church. The church members were not ready to build even though the pastor urged them to proceed. He said that

every Sunday for two years he reminded the members, "Kindly bear in mind that the Chvaletice church is the shabbiest of all churches in the Czech-Moravian Zion." The old church, which stood in the center of the cemetery, was finally wrecked. On its site, a park enclosed by a modern iron fence, was put in for the new church.

At this time I still intended to go into teaching. Jan Kalousek, who was a student at the Caslava Teachers' Institute, understood this. He came from the farm across from ours, and offered to take me to Caslava, where they would decide if I could be accepted in a preparatory class. He introduced me to the school director, who asked me several questions. I answered them and was advised that if I took one more year at Kutna Hora, I would be accepted by the Institute.

In Bohemia it was the custom to excuse a boy going into higher education from all farm work. That wasn't for me, however. I took hold of any work that neede^d to be done, even though I might have been told that I was just getting in the way. I wanted to learn to cut hay with the scythe and to beat out the grain with the flail. Finally I was given some work all my own. That year Father bought a two year old colt, a fine black mare, and put her in my care. I fed her, curried her, took her into the garden to graze, led her over the yard, and tried to mount her.

She gave me one very bad ride later that year which I remember distinctly. It was on Thursday, December 8, the day of a Catholic holiday.

School was closed and I was at home. Father asked me to lead the colt around in the yard since she was restless, and I was glad to do so. When this became tedious, I mounted her and rode about the yard. Everything went well and I was told to ride out into the field.

Before I could do so, something frightened her and she dashed toward the barn. Suddenly she stopped, and I was catapulted over her head and landed on my shoulder. The doctor decided that, if the shoulder had been dislocated, it was now in place, but the nerve may have been damaged. My shoulder hurt terribly and I didn't sleep a wink that night. I went back to school a day late with my arm in a sling.

I told the professor I was sorry I had missed school and explained what happened. He replied, "Let that be a lesson to you. A student should not be riding a horse." If I had never ridden horseback or worked with horses, however, I would not have been able to get around when I became active in South Dakota, Minnesota, and Iowa.

Time probably never goes by so quickly as during vacations. Soon Kutna Hora was calling again. Since the lady at whose house I lived the first year had moved away, Father took me to a new place recommended by the director. It was near the school, and the house was not very big, it had only two rooms, and there were certainly enough of us in it: an older gentleman who was a clerk in the Caesar's Royal Court; his sister, known as auntie, two older sisters of the old gentleman who were seamstresses; and two students.

Evidently the incomes of the clerk and the seamstresses were not too great. It was quiet at the house, even though the elderly gentleman sometimes kept on tilting his glass and felt like talking all evening.

At school we continued in the courses which we began the year before. The change was in the teachers. Some left and others took their place. This sort of change is sometimes good, sometimes bad. All is well when a good new professor comes around, but pupils always regret the loss of a good teacher. We did not receive instructioⁿ in religion this year. Evidently there weren't enough evangelical pupils, and Caesar's Royal government did not appropriate the necessary money. I still received credit in religion in the second semester, "From private instruction by the Evangelical Reformed Pastor, Julius Fleischer of Chvaletice."

I was glad I could go home for the weekend. We had lessons to study on Saturday. If the weather was good on Sunday, I sometimes went to church in Libenice. It was about an hour's journey. The minister was Rev Santrucek, an old man.

On one of my walks to church, I met a student from real school, Skorepa. His father was a basket maker. The lad also attended the Libenice church, and we planned that we would sometimes do the walking together.

Vacation came and my future was again being decided. I probably would have entered the Teachers' Institute if Pastor Dusek from Kolin

had not remembered me. In a letter he invited me to come to the upper gymnasium in Kolin where there was a group of evangelical students. Pastor Fleischer invited Father to the parsonage to tell him that he also had a letter from Pastor Dusek. The letter advised that I should be allowed to come to Kolin.

I went to the director in Kutna Hora to ask him for a certificate of dismissal. He wasn't pleased that I was leaving his institution to go to Kolin, where, in the upper gymnasium, I would be turning to classical subjects. He was a practical person.

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Chapter V

Eight.. Years in Kolin

The composer of the folk song, "Kolin, Kolin, You Stand on a Beautiful Plain," either never saw Kolin, or sacrificed truth to gain a weak rhyme, for Kolin does not stand on a plain. Just the small section of the city that rests on the right bank of the river Elbe is on a plain. The main part of the city is hilly. From the river toward downtown, the streets are on a steep up-hill grade. In the other direction from town, Kourim street also goes uphill. There is only one level street -- the one from Kutna Hora to Prague.

Kolin was always an historically important city. Remains of old fortifications still stand as reminders of its important role in times of war. It is an important business city, crisscrossed by two railroads, the State and the Northwestern, a large section of the city being occupied by the Jews.

This Kolin was important to my way through life. There I spent ^{eight} years, ten months each year, in preparatioⁿ for my life's calling. I received excellent instruction in a wide range of topics, and especially in religion due to the fine teaching of Pastor Dusek. Kolin became the center for evangelical students fro^m Bohemia and Moravia, and we had the opportunity to become active in church and Sunday school projects.

Pastor Dusek greeted us warmly that first year just as he did all the evangelical students, and took care that we would be lodged with evangelical families. He suggested I stay with Svobodas, a young couple who had just established their household. Mr. Svoboda was a saddle and harness maker.

With me was a younger student, Josef Svoboda, son of one of the Svoboda teachers. We had one room to ourselves, which served as a study and a bedroom. Josef's mother was a sister to the well known minister, Karafiat. I was there when she tenderly said good-by to Josef, her only son, as he left for school. One day Josef let me read a letter from his father. It said that I was to be a model of industriousness for Josef, and that he was to be a model of godliness for me.

Professor Frana, who was well known from Kutna Hora, became one of my teachers. He taught our class in Czech, German and History. Greek was taught by director Adam Fleishmann.

For Latin we had evangelical professor Ignac Kadlec. I spent some time in his home when I copied his doctoral thesis for him and got to know him well. Professor Kadlec paid particular attention to the

evangelical students. They, in turn, considered him to be too strict with them. He confided to me later that he was strict with them because he wanted them to be outstanding.

One year there were as many as eighty of us evangelical students at Kolin. There couldn't have been a better place for us. We had regular instruction in religion, and Pastor Dusek was an excellent teacher. He was a man of wide vision and with the ability to explain even contemporary times from a religious viewpoint. We saw how sincerely he worked toward success of the Czech Reformed Church. He loved the Czech nation and lamented bitterly over its shortcomings and humiliations. He was also very down-to-earth at times. He came from a farming background and retained some country sayings and expressions.

It was a student's duty to go regularly to the Lord's church to worship. On Sunday morning we assembled in the gymnasium building. Professor Kadlec then led us marching two abreast into the church, where we had a reserved section of seats. It seemed odd that twenty year old lads should be subjected to such discipline, but it was surely of benefit to us, and as the Catholic students were marched into the Catholic church, it seemed fitting that the evangelical lads should follow similar rules.

In those days Sunday Schools were new in Bohemia. Kolin's Sunday School, which Pastor Dusek started, was one of the first. Although it wasn't a duty to attend Sunday School, most of the students went

gladly. The room buzzed like a beehive when the pupils ~~separated~~ into discussion groups.

Every Friday evening a session, 'Preparation for Sunday School Teachers' was held. Those attending the sessions never forgot them. The pastor explained to us how each lesson should be taught. We became completely engaged by his charismatic style and interesting talk. He widened our interests, knowledge, and understanding of the world.

Many other churches established Sunday Schools, and they formed a 'Sunday School Union'. One year the Union held a meeting in Kolin, and our Sunday School demonstrated how to operate a Sunday School.

The year I came to Kolin, the teacher in the elementary school was Vaclav Vransy, who used to play the organ in the worship service and the harmonium in Sunday School. When he decided to train a four part choir, my roommate, Josef Svoboda, and I joined. Mr. Vransy was not an accomplished musician and his ~~singers~~^{Singers} were not outstanding, but his teaching was thorough and painstaking.

Since we were so occupied with school and church work, the school year passed quickly and vacation began. My former teacher in Habrkovice was pleased when I showed him my report card. I was given the highest marks of the 60 pupils in the first half-year, and again of the 54 pupils in second half-year. The class professor told me later that these high marks were hardly deserved. He noted

that I had not done much studying, not having the feeling for it, but that I had an excellent memory. I didn't care to win special praise, but I always tried to do what was expected of me.

During vacation, I took , as my project, hauling fresh clover from the field for feed for the horses and heifers. I teamed up a pair of three-year-old heifers and hitched them to a wagon. This was accomplished not without great difficulties and all sorts of minor accidents.

Toward the end of the summer I received a letter from Professor Kadlec. He wrote that the manufacturer, Mr. Tumlir, wanted to take a student into his household who could tutor his son, a second year pupil in the gymnasium. He suggested I accept the position, but warned it would not be an easy task. The offer came just in time, because the saddle maker, Svoboda, had moved to Zehusic, and I needed a place to stay.

The Tumlir family welcomed me warmly and was lenient and kind to me for the entire year. At first I felt rather confined. It can't be otherwise when a country boy comes to the city to the home of a higher class family. I had to learn all sorts of manners and formalities. To a country boy, even the words "milost pani" (lovely lady), commonly used in addressing a lady, were difficult to speak. But in turn I enjoyed comfort that would make many a student jealous. According to the agreement, I paid as much for my keep as a student would be charged for the poorest lodging.

Arnost and I had one room to ourselves, which served both as a study and as a bedroom. Arnost wa^s a good boy. He liked me and never spoke a word of contradiction, but he learned only with great difficulty. Latin was almost impossible for him. It was probably not his fault. I heard that in his early years he had a nurse who served him badly.

I found tutoring so time consuming that I had to drop many activities that I had enjoyed the year before, such as singing with the choir. I also had to neglect the Sunday School. I somehow felt responsible for Arnost. Of course I could, and had to, attend church services. Arnost went to the Catholic church with the other Catholic students.

I was still not satisfied with the results of my tutoring. I wanted Arnost to learn more quickly. One time at dinner, Arnost's older sister announced to the family that, in tutoring Arnost, I would never give Arnost the answer, but that I made him work out everything by himself. Fortunately, the oldest brother, Karel, a law student at the University of Prague, was with us at the table. He said that was good, and that there is no other way to teach. I was thankful for the comment and my rescue.

Gone was professor Frana who seemed close to me. Professor Vancura came, and he made a great impression on me and the other students. Professor Zikmund was our class director that year, and he remained so for the next three years. He taught Latin, Greek, and Czech. There were fewer students each year. At the start of

the third year, there were over 60 of us. In the fourth year, there were only a little over 40.

My third year at Kolin began well for me. I went home at Christmas and as usual found the house full of life and happiness. By this time, only one sister, Antonie and two brothers younger than I were still living at home.

When I left to return for Kolin I had no idea that I would soon be called home. On January 10, 1884, we were leaving the school building at noon. A messenger from Habrkovice was waiting for me. He brought the unwelcome news that my father was ill. When we came to my lodging, we received notice that he had died.

I returned to the gymnasium to let my director know that I had to go home, and my messenger and I began the long and sad journey. The day before, Father had decided to go to Kutna Hora and had the horses hitched up for the trip. He then felt a sudden weakness, had the horses unhitched, and lay down. My brother-in-law, Krejcik, in Kobylnice, was sent for.

For a time, it seemed that everything would be alright, but in the middle of a conversation, Father weakened and breathed his last.

The day of Father's funeral was a sad day for all of us. Mother felt that a heavy responsibility would rest on her. The entire village mourned with us and came to bid him good-by.

After the funeral I returned to Kolin. When I announced that this would be the end of my studies, Mr. Tumlir said I would no longer

have to give him anything for my keep. The Tumlirs' generosity thus allowed me to continue my studies that year.

At the end of the school year I returned home again. Everyone felt the loss of our father, but it was necessary to live and to work. I was determined to take part in all that needed to be done, even though it might be contrary to custom. During the harvest, I loaded the grain on the wagon and, at home again, unloaded it from the wagon to the barn where the hired man took over. I also took the cucumbers and the cabbage to market. This was not my favorite chore because I disliked haggling over prices.

Following vacation, I again set out for Kolin and enrolled for my fourth year at the upper gymnasium. The Kolin institution had been up to this time supported by the city. Now, however, it was supported by the government, and became Caesar's Royal Lower and Upper Gymnasium. The first day of this school year began with the Catholic and evangelical students going to their churches.

This year Arnost no longer needed my tutoring because he was placed in a trade school for the malting industry. I found an inexpensive lodging with an evangelical family, the Kratochvils. Mr. Kratochvil was a brakeman with the railroad, and lived in a small house next to the railroad tracks. Many trains passed by, day and night, but a young man gets used to such noise and vibration. I shared a small room with a young man from a near-by village.

To make my education less of a burden on my mother and the farm's

economy, I tried to earn something by teaching younger students who needed help. This tutoring was called 'hours', which indicated that we were to give one hour of instruction each day. I maintained two or three such hours. The work did not pay too well, but it was the only way a student in Bohemia could earn something.

Only the brighter pupils remained from the previous year, and a few more students were added. Next to me sat Jan Dobias, who later became pastor in Bozinek. Behind him sat a new student, Josef Bren. He and I became life-long friends, enjoying many friendly moments together and sharing hardships as well as pleasures. Close to me sat a modest lad, Moric Picha, the present bishop in Kralove Hrady. I still see the faces of the others that made up our ranks. It was a small world from which we looked ahead to the time when we would share in the work of a larger world.

We had some of our former professors and some new ones. Our class leader was Professor Zikmund, who stayed with us a number of years. The subjects taught were: Theology, Latin, Greek, Czech, German, history, geography, mathematics, and mineralogy. From the list of elective subjects, I chose shorthand and English, which was taught by Pastor Dusek.

This year I was entirely free to take part in church activities. I was able to sing in the choir and to attend Sunday School where I taught a class of young students. The preparation for teachers was especially enriching. The pastor captured our minds and our hearts, and broadened our view of the world and life in it under God's order.

The Christmas holidays came, and I went home for my customary visit. There I learned that it was difficult to raise the money I needed each month and to operate the farm without an experienced farmer, so I decided I would leave my studies.

We had a family conference to discuss what I should do. brother-in-law Krejcik from Kobylnice, who was also our guardian, and Horky from ~~Horky~~ Caslav was there. Horky suggested that I should volunteer for the army. At age 21, I would be through with the army and able to take over the farm. He himself had been a soldier before he became a farmer. I went to see a doctor for a physical examination to determine if I could be accepted into the army.

I requested our class leader, Professor Zikmund, to give me a recommendation before I left. When I explained why I wanted to leave, he told me bluntly, "I will not give you any such recommendation. Wait!"

In the afternoon I found my name on the bulletin board with an invitation, actually an order, to see the school director. The director was very kind. He asked about what was happening, and suggested that I wait for a while. In a day or two, I was asked to see Pastor Dusek. He said he was looking for a teacher for Adolf, the son of Mr. Dostal, half-owner of the sugar factory in Podebrady, and for Vaclav Karlik, son of the manager of the sugar factory in Nymburce. The two boys were cousins, and roomed together at the home of Mrs. Cervena, a teacher's widow and sister of Professor Safranek. The pastor assured me I would be handsomely paid.

I was happy to accept the new offer. It rescued me from a serious difficulty, for I was not eager to join the army and felt committed to finishing my course of study. The position of teacher for these boys was a pleasant one. They were bright and well-behaved. All that was needed was for someone to hold them to their tasks, talk with them, go for occasional walks with them, and, in short, be their friend. The boys wanted ^{me} to spend my Christmas and Easter vacations with them. It was arranged this way: One year at Christmas I would be with the Dostals, and at Easter with the Karliks. The following year the arrangement was reversed.

I was happy this school year, because it seemed like I finally stood on solid ground. I knew that I could stay in my studies as long as I had my wards. There are people who maintain that there is no Providence, no God's care over us. If they would review their lives and the lives of others, I think they would judge otherwise. It is true that people make decisions, circumstances change, and new opportunities arise, but this is also true: "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it whenever he will." -- Proverbs 21: 1.

I entered the sixth year of the gymnasium without any major worries. At home brother Josef was running the farm for mother and the youngest, Rudolf, was already able to help. I did not have to worry about making a living, so I continued tutoring my wards.

The Kratochvils were blessed with a new baby and they decided they would no longer lodge students. I moved over to Fialas, where

I shared a pleasant room with a younger student. Mr. Fiala had been a shoemaker, but had left his trade and now had a small business at the edge of the city. He was an active member of the church, sang in the choir, and taught Sunday School. His son, Cenek, was in the first year of the gymnasium.

The professors, with some exceptions, were the same as the previous year. Studies in languages continued, but in place of mineralogy we now had zoology. From the list of selected courses, I selected French.

Jan Dobias sat next to me again in class, even though I told him that I could not tolerate him near me. He often disturbed me as he composed poetry. Even during a tedious mathematics class, he would turn to me and whisper, "Listen, Frantisek, how do you like this stanza?" When I visited Bohemia some ten years later and Jan was Vicar of Javornik, I found out he was still writing poetry. He wrote to me: "Come, I'll show you my collection of poems. It will be like old times."

I also recall that a very refined student, Augustyn Machota, lived near me, and we walked to school together. He became a well-known physician in Nymburce and helped tirelessly when the new evangelical church was established there.

One of our professors was Dr Jindrich Vancura, the well-known translator of the writings of the French historian Denis. One day Professor Vancura stopped me in the hallway and asked that I visit him in his home. During the visit he talked about his belief that

the Slavic nations should link closer together. He also stressed the importance that the people of each of these nations learn the Slavic languages, and suggested that I study Polish and Russian. He praised Polish, saying that it is a beautiful language, softer than Czech, and offered to help me begin my study, and gave me a Polish grammar. It was a pleasant task. I secured a book of Polish literature. In a special notebook I copied snatches of poems that pleased me and short biographies of the poets. I still have the notebook, and only wish I had not forgotten so much of what is written in it. I didn't get as far with my study of Russian. I could barely, even with much effort, read Russian writing. There simply wasn't time to study everything.

I was flattered by the attention Dr Vancura showed me and the suggestions he gave. I am sorry to have to note that he was soon pensioned off from the gymnasium. The director of the public school council complained that Dr Vancura put too much emphasis on the days of Hus and the Brethren when he taught Czech history. He was also in disfavor with some because he had transferred from the Catholic Church into the Bohemian Brethren Church.

I remember an event that caused me great distress this year. I overheard a group of fellow students as they were loudly and heatedly discussing religion. One of them boldly insisted: "There is no God."

These terrible words touched me deeply. It felt as if everything within me and around me was falling into some bottomless pit. No matter what I did, night and day I heard those horrible words echoing

in my mind and unanswerable questions beset me. If there was no God, what would people be? What ^{would} \wedge the whole human existence amount to? Would there be any meaning to human endeavor? What would become of righteousness, love, peace, hope? What would we do with Jesus Christ, His teachings, His Works?

It was several days before I could recover from this dismal feeling. I began to see light when I determined that, no matter what happened, I would hold on to Jesus Christ. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." --John 6: 68. The clouds vanished and I went forth with new energy and a happy spirit.

In June, the convention of the District Union Of Sunday Schools was held on Mount Kank, near Kutna Hora. The largest representations came from Kolin and Libenic. Present were superintendent Vesely from Klaster, Pastor Dusek from Kolin, Molnar from Libenic, Fleischer from Chvaletice, and Mr. Alois Miskovsky who lived in America and was visiting his sister Mrs. Kaderabek in Kolin that summer.

Mr. Miskovsky later became a professor in the Theological branch of Oberlin Seminary. A second American was also present. She was sister Alzbeta Bures from Ely, Iowa, whom we knew later as Mrs. Novak, when after the death of her husband, she returned to Ely to be with her own people.

Pastor Dusek asked me to bring Mr. Miskovsky so the two Americans could meet. I found him strolling in the garden with two young ladies.

It was not until two years later that I found out that one of them was Zanyinka Kvicala, who was destined to become my wife. We didn't meet at the time, We brought the two Americans, Miss Bures and Mr. Miskovsky, together and listened as they talked in English. Thus America came closer to us, and we felt closer to America.

The eight years of study at the gymnasium seemed endless. That is the way a youthful lad looks at it when he steps into the first year, but the beautiful time of youth, like promising spring, passes quickly. Thus came the seventh year and serious thoughts about the future. There were ten evangelicals in our class, and under Dusek's influence, most of us were thinking of theology,

From Brno was added to our number Frantisek Zboril. an active pupil. He lived close to me, at the end of the city, and we walked together nearly every day. He eagerly took his part as a good tenor (the Blucin Nightingale) and often, on the way to school, tried to see if he could reach 'upper A'. After some years, he became financial manager in Meziric in Valasko, was active in the local church, founded the student alumni association, and was a well liked friend of the students. Later he became, until his retirement, a government counsel in Brno.

In those days there were too many theologians in Bohemia, and not enough parishes. This presented a hardship to a theologian without means. If he decided to go to Vienna, where he would spend two semesters, he would have to look for some support. If he thought

about Switzerland, Germany or Scotland, he would have to seek a stipend. I was happy to hear of a government announcement that students would get sufficient support if they would turn to medicine and promise to eventually serve as army doctors for six years. I began to consider the opportunity seriously, and even felt a leaning toward the profession. It would give some security for the future. Ideas toward theology did not leave me completely, however.

In the Austro-Hungarian monarchy it was mandatory to serve in the army. Those who reached twenty years had to enlist for the draft. Those pronounced capable served in the army for three years. However, students in the gymnasium and lower schools could volunteer in advance for one year. If they were drafted, they could choose the year and the branch of service.

My comrade Losa decided that we would go together to satisfy the obligation. I don't know who advised ^{us} to join the fort artillery. We sent in our request and received the order to appear at eight o'clock on a February morning in Caslava for physical examinations.

We started in the evening of the day before our appointment by train to Zabori and then on foot for a night's rest in Habrkovice. It was still dark when in the morning we started walking toward Caslava. It was a threehour walk and we had all sorts of thoughts and discussions. If we are not accepted, it would mean we were not healthy; if we were drafted, we would have many difficulties in the army.

It was soon decided. A young army doctor measured us, weighed us, tapped our bodies, and pronounced the important word. "Fit." We were given army passes and returned by train to Kolin as 'cannoneers'. In school we had a noisy reception. Someone sang for our benefit:

"As Caesar's own, I'll be fed
appetizing army bread."

The Kolin Sunday School prospered. There were enough teachers from the ranks of the older students. The younger ones, and even the older ones, were glad to attend Sunday School. The pastor had the idea that some of those who were more seasoned should visit neighboring villages and teach their Sunday Schools. My fellow students, Bren and Lusa, took care of Tri Dvory, Sendrazice, and other places.

Even in this, the pastor served us well when he would choose one of us to lead the main Sunday School session. That meant being in charge of everything from beginning to end. It was an excellent way to introduce a young man into his future work.

It is evident that the work at school and for the school, and church activities kept my days full. The school year, before we realized it, came to an end. Pastor Dusek called me and told me what I could do during the vacation. Senior* Szalatny, in Velim, had in his home a grandson from^m his wife's side. He wanted to take into his home a student who would teach the boy, be his instructor, and be responsible for him.

*Senior is the title given a pastor who has wide responsibilities in church affairs.

Pastor Dusek advised me to accept the situation. I spent two days in Habrkovice, then went to Velim.

It was pleasant in the Velim parsonage. The Senior was a gentleman, his wife was always kind; the boy Oto, son of Dr Bastecky of Nymburk, was a pleasant lad of nine but somewhat spoiled. His mother had passed away. The vicar of the Velim parsonage, Jindrich Molnar, a new graduate, dealt with me as with an equal. He was about five years my senior.

The hours of the day were carefully allocated. I got up early, and walked around the fine garden before breakfast, which was at seven. Oto got up at nine. That gave me about two hours which I used in reading at least one chapter from the New Testament in the Greek and English, looking into the Czech Bible for translations of unfamiliar words.

The vicar praised the method, saying, "If you are to study theology, you will be somewhat ready with New Testament Greek. If you go to Scotland, as I did, every familiar English word will help you."

From ten o'clock until noon, I taught Oto to read, write, count, draw, and speak as he would at his age in school. Oto didn't care for it, but there was no escape, especially when Senior stepped out of his office to establish order.

In the afternoon, Oto and I went for walks. If someone would have looked for us, he would have found us near the deserted mill on the creek where there was a fine swimming hole. It seemed that, other than ourselves, no one went there. During harvest time we sometimes rode into the field on the hayrack which one of the workers used.

This the lady of the house praised, "Children", she said, "work better when someone from the parsonage is with them." (The Senior had a cottage with a farm and farm buildings next to the parsonage.)

After supper, Oto went to bed, Senior and his wife to their rooms, the vicar and I remained on the porch or in the office. We read some or entertained ourselves in other ways. When the Senior with his wife and Oto set out for Prague, the vicar decided we would call it a holiday. We marched out into the country and to the top of Bedrich mountain and walked all afternoon, even though the vicar was supposed to be getting ready for some affair.

The family worship took place every evening. The maids from the kitchen and the hired man from the cottage were asked to attend. Sunday was a holy day at the Velim parsonage. Even Oto was not allowed to become too lively or to indulge in loud laughter. That is how it had to be when we returned from church services and ate our noon meal.

I never forget how one Sunday, after there had been a small gathering at church, the pastor lamented, "If these people only knew what they are losing when they stay away from church services. Perhaps today God would have touched someone's heart and offered His grace. Many people thus stand in the way of their greatest happiness."

In the afternoon, the senior traveled to Nove Vsi; and I took care of the Sunday School in Cerhenic, a village one and a half hour's walking distance.

Pastor and Mrs. Dusek came to Velim about once a week. Mrs. Dusek and Mrs. Szalatny were sisters. Dinner would be served, and at dinner and afterward the men discussed church and national issues. I could listen in as long as Oto would sit peacefully, which wasn't long, unfortunately.

My tutoring job ended when teaching started in Nymburk's schools. Oto rode away to Nymburk, and I to Habrkovice for a few days. I was entering Kolin to start the eighth and final year at the gymnasium, the class of the "big gentlemen".

Pastor Dusek recommended me to Mr. Kvicala, a dealer in imports and hardware, whose home was near the river Elbe, next to the new bridge. I was given a well furnished lodging, and I was to tutor the son Zdenek, who was preparing to enter the gymnasium, and also, as the pastor reminded me, to be a companion to Jan, who was in the third year.

I was also allowed to keep my present wards, Adolf Dostal and the Karlik boys. I worked with them at the close of the school day. After supper I taught Zdenek, a dear sociable boy, and finally retired to my room where Jan and I studied far into the night.

Zdenek became, after some years, a bank officer in Paris; in the recent war he entered the French army, fell in battle, and rests somewhere in France.

Mr. Kvicala was completely occupied with his business, and was, as a side duty, the church treasurer. With Jan, who had all sorts of disagreements with his classmates, I was able to keep a sincere relationship

for the entire school year. His older brother, a graduate of a business school, was at the time a business assistant in Klatovech.

There were three daughters, Zanyinka, the oldest; Berta, then at the girls' school in Ochránov in Germany; and Marinka, the youngest, and a two year old baby. In the household were maids and a laundress; in the store, young men and apprentices. There were fourteen people to cook for, but everything ran smoothly and everyone performed his tasks faithfully. About two years before, the family had lived through untold suffering. Three of their small children died from smallpox.

During the first few weeks of school, Pastor Vincent Pisek from New York came to Kolin. That was a big event -- a Czech-American evangelical preacher! We often had in Kolin various guests from abroad. Some were preachers or professors from England and Scotland. There were also professors Dr Schaff and Dr Briggs from New York. They spoke English, and our pastor translated, but young Rev pisek did not need an intrpreter. He preached to us on Sunday on the text from Jcb 23, 7: "Why do the ungodly continue to prosper?" I still remember how he began: "I come from America. I am the pastor of the Church of Bohemian Brethren in New York." Everyone listened intently to the message ^{from} a Czech-American preacher.

Some days later, Mr Pisek talked to us evangelical students. "I hear that some of you want to study theology. Czech theologians usually go to Vienna, to Switzerland, to Germany, to Scotland.

I invite you to come to New York. We have an excellent school, Union Theological Seminary. not far from our beautiful, new church. You will help in the church and you will be taken care of." That was a welcome invitation. We formed a trio -- Bren, Losa, and Pokorny -- and decided to follow a new and so far untraveled road for theologians to America.

Pastor Dusek looked even further. He suggested that students of medicine should go to America where there would be need for Czech doctors. However, no one followed his idea.

Our class was fortunate to have, as our Latin and Greek instructor, Professor Jan Safranek. Up to this time, we had Professor Zikmund. He was a good fellow who consciously performed his duties, but a good teacher or professor is one who gets his pupils to take pleasure in learning. Professor Safranek was able to do this. He placed special emphasis on grammatical forms and all that in human lives was part of what we read in those languages.

It is difficult for a young person when he is learning to speak in public. I shall never forget my first real attempt in this direction. There was a Sunday School convention in Chocen. Kolin sent two representatives, Jan Dobias and myself. We arrived in Chocen and announced our arrival to the chairman, Senior Janata.

He welcomed us warmly and gave us money to buy ourselves something to eat, because, he said, the parsonage was full of children. He said we would be called on to say a few words to the assembly.

Jan and I walked over to the Cemetery to discuss who of us would take care of this duty. Jan defended himself. "Why do you choose me? Look at me! You have to talk. They'll at least be able to see you!"

I took a piece of paper and, on the smooth stone of the cemetery wall, made a few notes. At the set time, we entered the church and sat near the front. I hoped the Senior would forget, he finally announced, "We have two important guests, representatives from the Kolin Sunday School, students Jan Dobias and Frantisek Pokorny, and one of them will tell us something."

I didn't know how I could possibly get up and walk forward toward the Lord's table without dropping. My knees shook. When I started to speak, however, I began to feel better. I told what I had heard from Pastor Dusek, that our church needed intelligent, educated people who would not be ashamed of Christ's evangelism. I told about our Sunday School and suggested to parents that they send their sons to Kolin where they would find opportunities to gain knowledge for the good of the church and their good.

When our Pastor Dusek, in the class for preparation of teachers, read a reference to the meeting, as printed in Evangelical News, he smiled with satisfaction. "So the two of you caused a furor over there!" he remarked.

The time came for the inevitable and greatly feared final examinations covering our attainments. We knew they would not be easy.

At first there were written tests. Students brought only pen and paper, and were seated far apart from each other. Tests on some subjects took a whole day. The overall testing lasted an entire week.

The tests decided in which subjects the student should be given an oral exam, if any. The oral exams were looked upon with even greater dread. They were given by the state school inspector or by the director of a gymnasium. The state inspector of that time had the reputation of a very strict person, and it was the hope of the students that he would not show up. We got an even fussier individual -- the director of the gymnasium in Visoky Myto. He didn't find fault with subjects he was not versed in, but when it came to languages, it seemed he tried to confuse the person questioned.

The examining committee lined up four students for each half day. That gave ample time to find out what a student knew or did not know. There was also sufficient time for a student to sweat it out. What a relief when the questions came to an end.

For me all went well except in German, the study about ^{which} I worried the least. The German examiner questioned me severely about German literature I read, how much of it I understood, and what I thought of it. I passed with a fair mark, but not with the best. At that time German wasn't even a required subject.

The oldest daughter in the home was Zanyinka*. Pastor Dusek liked her from the time she was little. She had many responsibilities at home and often took on more. She was a child of the first marriage

* Zanyinka is a warm, friendly variation of Johana. Her legal name was Johana Linhart.

of Mr. Kvicala. Her father, Anton Linhart, died suddenly before his baby daughter^r was born. Nobody noticed anything different in the children except a little in looks, and nobody, especially the father of the family, felt any difference. The younger children loved her tenderly, and she loved them all and was eager to be of help or comfort to them.

I liked this agreeable girl. In time, I found in her eyes something that pleased me. What the eyes of both parties revealed, lips later confirmed. Both of us took the matter seriously. We saw ahead of us years when we would be apart. We also knew that many so-called love affairs did not end happily. Together we selected from the Bible, what was to be our help and comfort: "Commit thy way unto Jehovah; trust in him, and he will bring it to pass." (Psalm 37, 5.) On that foundation we were ready to have faith in each other.

Our years of study at the gymnasium came to an end without any commotion or celebration. We were given our graduation diplomas, and that was all. Fellow students were parting, never to reunite as a group. Some became ministers, doctors, priests or managers of businesses. From 33 that were graduated from Kolin in 1888, after 50 years, 18 were living, and 15 had passed away.

The time of our youth vanished, but not completely. Out of it grew what was sowed, and the memory of what was beautiful and good continues to shine on the road through life.

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Chapter VI

In New York

In the music hour at the gymnasium in Kolin we sometimes sang the Emigrants Song: "Let there be sunshine, golden sunshine when I part with my native land." I didn't realize then that the song would some day have special meaning for me. The tune came back to me often as I prepared for the long trip to America.

Actually, though, I did not consider myself an emigrant. My comrades and I had decided to go to America just to get an education. We did not know that Czech Evangelical churches of the American Northwest were looking for pastors. Not even Pastor Dusek spoke of them.

I don't know what all was said about my going to America, but I heard that some folks were saying that I would not be allowed to leave the country since I belonged to the Austrian Army. Up to that

time, no one from Habrkovice or a neighboring village had relocated in America. From the vicinity, as far as I know, only the Ruml family had crossed the ocean. Mrs. Ruml, nee Pazder, our aunt's cousin, came from Rohoz near Zehusic. This family settled in Cedar Rapids. A large number of people from Kutna Hora and Sedlice had found work and established homes in New York City.

I didn't plan to take many things on this trip, only as much as I could pack in a student's trunk. My good friend and fellow traveler Bren arranged our trip. He always had a special ability for this sort of planning. I visited all my relatives and walked through the fields, meadows, and woods. I composed poetry, mainly for the blue-eyed girl in Kolin.

The difficult moment of parting finally arrived. I said good-bye to Habrkovice. In Kolin I met Bren and in Prague we picked up our friend Losa. From there we were on the way to Hamburg. Upon reaching Hamburg, we went to the Emigrant's Hotel where we stayed until our ship arrived. The ship's name was Wieland. It would take us, slowly but surely to the new world.

We found ourselves among all sorts of people on the ship, some from Germany, Poland, and I don't know where else. Their manners and customs were interesting.

We preferred to spend much of our time on deck. On the third day the sea became rough, sea sickness came over us. That passed and we were happy again as we took in the especially beautiful

sights which appear at sea at dawn and at dusk.

We approached the American shore on the evening of September 22, 1888. The Statue of Liberty and the New York skyline welcomed us. The travelers were happy as they came on deck. Some had changed into their best clothes and were almost hard to recognize. A small boat came to pick us up from steerage and take us to Castle Garden for baggage inspection. The Steamer Navigation Company took care of our trunks and asked us to wait until Pastor Pisek came for us.

We were glad to see him as he greeted us with a warm smile. He led us through noisy crowded streets and up to the platform of the elevated train. It wasn't long before we were in the parsonage, where we were greeted with kindness and offered whatever we needed for our refreshment and comfort.

That Sunday at dinner we were able to get acquainted with the Pisek family. There was the pastor's father, a quiet serious man who was employed by an insurance company. His mother was a pleasant lady who showed pride in her son who was now a pastor. Miss Cecilia was a teacher in a nearby school. ^{Frank}~~Prantisek~~, a law student, was the humorist of the family. He played the organ during church services. Bohumil, the youngest, studied medicine and became in future years a renowned children's doctor, but he died at an early age.

Pastor Pisek became known to us as 'Our Pastor', and watched over us in a truly brotherly fashion. He helped us to enroll in the

seminary and helped us find places to stay. He laughed heartily when the school janitor handled our European trunks and remarked that they must have been made before the great flood. He arranged for us to take our meals at Mr. Machovsky's who was formerly a druggist in Kolin.

Our pastor also took time to go to our first school lectures with us and helped us understand them. Explanations were necessary because starting new subjects in a new language was difficult. The Hebrew teacher called on the Czech students right away -- other professors waited several weeks. I was grateful that Pastor Dusek on Kolin had taught me some English. I could already understand what I read in English, but I still had to learn to understand and use the spoken language.

Our professors were remarkable men. They were scholars, each one expert in his field.

President Hastings was a man of refinement. He gave lectures on Homiletics, a subject which our Komensky called the preacher's art, and on Pastoral Ethics. He was able to draw on a great deal of material from his rich experiences.

Dr Filip Schaff taught Church History. He used to say about himself, "I am Swiss by birth, German by education, an American by choice." He was sent to this country by the European Reformed Church to be a professor in our institution, the Union Theological Seminary of New York. He made many trips to Europe to look through archives and libraries for his books, and he knew his field thoroughly. It was said that he was the best informed person in this country on church history.

Even though he wrote in English, one could tell from his speech that English was not his mother tongue. We Czechs accepted and understood him, and felt that he liked us. We spoke one day of the Heidelberg Catechism, and he said it is an excellent book, but that only Czechs are able to learn it by heart.

The oldest of our professors was probably Dr Prentiss. He lectured on Missions and Apologia, a defence of Christianity. It was said that ~~that~~ in his younger years he had greatly influenced the Presbyterian Church. Now, even in his advanced years, he would argue vociferously with opponents of Christianity. He hoped fervently that Christ's Church would blossom out in all its glory, and that Jesus would be accepted as Lord and Savior by all the nations.

Professor Charles Augustus Briggs, D.D., who taught Biblical Theology, was known to church groups throughout the protestant world. 'Higher Criticism', the practice of putting church doctrine under scrutiny, was popular in those days, and Dr Briggs was its champion. His free-thinking finally caused him to be accused of heresy by his Presbytery. He was found guilty and suspended, and became a member of the Episcopalian Church. Even in this time, and surely later on, many considered him a man of true faith. He was kind to us Czechs, and told us how at one time he was a guest in the Kolin parsonage.

Professor Dr Marvin Vincent was a young man, even though his hair was turning grey. He taught Greek and New Testament Exegeses. He was called to the position when he was minister of a large Presbyterian Church

in New York City. He knew his subject, of that there could be no doubt. He wrote an extended discussion under the title 'Word Studies', in which he explained the meaning of every ^{Greek} word in the New Testament, where and how used, and its interpretation in classical English. That was what he always lectured about, and not all students found it fascinating.

The youngest of our professors was Dr Francis Brown. He was a tall, well-built man. His presence radiated dignity, respect, and seriousness. I don't recall that he ever smiled. He taught Greek and old Testament Exegeses, and was an excellent teacher. It was clear that his chief concern was to make certain that his theological students understood what he was trying to teach. Some years later he became the Seminary president.

He and I met again, years later, at the meeting of the General Assembly in Chicago, in 1910. I was surprised he still remembered me. He said he would like to have along talk with me when time would permit. I regret we never had that talk.

In addition to these professors we had an instructor in elocution. He demonstrated how to speak in public, how to read from the Bible and even how to breathe to make speaking easier. I felt grateful to receive instruction in all these practical and important matters.

Class lectures were held from eleven o'clock until noon, and from two to four in the afternoon. A worship service, led by one of the professors, followed. The students took care of their

own short worship period just before the eleven o'clock classes.

The following year, when there were five Czechs in the seminary, there were enough of us for our own hour of prayer.

Vaclav Dudycha, to this day a vigorous, sociable person; and ^{Frank}~~Frantisek~~ Rundus, the energetic philosopher, had become students at Union.

Many of the students that comprised our class became important people. There were more than forty of us, from all corners of the earth. There were even two Japanese students. Most of the students were older than we Czechs, and many were more experienced. Some had been school teachers or had been otherwise employed before coming to study theology. A few of the students were from German families. We talked to them in German until we found out that they preferred to use English.

Our fellow students were truly a select group of young men. They studied dilligently and were well behaved even though they had absolute freedom. Eventually they became ministers, missionaries, professors, and one of them a college president. All carried out important work.

It was to the credit of our class secretary Dr Kuebler that we knew about each other. Dr Kuebler became from the time of his ordination, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Hackensack, New Jersey, and informed us at least once a year how our class was doing. That usually happened after the meeting of some of the class

members following commencement days at the seminary. I attended one of these meetings in 1916, and enjoyed being there.

In 1941 our secretary announced that 36 from our class were still living and that 28 had died.

The seminary building was new. It stood next to the Presbyterian Hospital near Central Park. In our judgement it was a beautiful and well organized building. It had everything: a chapel, classrooms, professors' offices, a library, and student rooms. By the year 1916, nothing of it remained, however. In its place stood large apartment buildings. A splendid seminary had been built next to the Columbia University's campus. Even in this part of New York, changes came quickly. What was old gave way to what was new.

It was convenient for us Czechs that our seminary was near the lovely new Bohemian Presbyterian Church of John Hus. Pastor Pisek was proud of his church and parsonage, built under one roof. The seminary was on the outskirts of the Czech neighborhood, and was not far from our church and our work. Our work consisted of assisting in church affairs, teaching Sunday School, and visiting families of Sunday School children. The visits often meant going up several flights of stairs to the small living quarters of our countrymen. Many families worked at home, making cigars for tobacco shops.

It is difficult to describe the Sunday School of those days. More than 800 children gathered in the large church basement. When they separated into class discussion groups, the basement buzzed like

a large beehive. At one time I took care of 80 children.

Fortunately, we were given a room of our own.

Following the group discussions, the pastor reviewed the day's lesson for the entire school. The pastor had to ring the bell many times before there was complete quiet. The children were especially noisy during the Christmas season. I learned how American Sunday Schools celebrate Christmas. Never had I heard so many children sing Christmas carols with so much spirit.

Not everything was ideal, however. I often thought that New York City could have had the largest Czech Evangelical parish if at least a fair number of our Sunday School children would have remained active in the church. But, of course, not everything was lost. Several preachers of God's Word grew up in that Sunday School and parish.

Sunday School took place ahead of the worship service. Everything was in the Czech language. There was no thought of having it otherwise, since it was serving the Czech neighborhood. Today the needs may be different and other methods are used, even though the work in that section may still be kept up by people of Czech descent. In more modern times a neighborhood house came in, which later became active with the church.

In our times the congregation during church services was large. The services were conducted in the same way as in our churches in Bohemia. Only the singing of the Lord's Prayer was new to us.

Sunday Schools were conducted in various parts of the city on Sunday afternoons. The students took care of those. I recall how I used to ride to 42nd Street where there was a class organized by a fine, older lady, Miss Proudfit. The songs were in English, and the teaching was in English and Czech. I began to translate English songs to Czech. When I was sent to 4th Street I began, in my last year at the seminary, to conduct church services following the Sunday School session. We had a smaller group in attendance, mainly women.

Choir practice was once a week. It had a great leader, Mr. Krikava, who took over the difficult task out of pure love of music and song. The choir did not sing for church services, but was used to attract Czech people to a Czech church. The concerts became a function of a newly established club calling itself 'Literary Union'.

The aims of the Literary Union were to get together for cultural purposes, to organize a Czech library, and to arrange entertainment and cultural events for the public. The members prepared talks which were followed by general discussions.

The Literary Union was also concerned with the correct use of the Czech language and my fellow members gave me a difficult assignment. They selected me to be a sort of critic. I was supposed to point out any errors made by the speaker or by anyone else in the course of the meeting. I started doing this very conscientiously, but soon gave it up. Not every member was ready to accept criticism. It worked better to let everyone talk the way he liked rather than to cause discord. After my resignation, no one volunteered to resume those duties.

We went to Machovskys for our meals in the first year. Friend Losa deserted us before the year was up. He and another student started going to a restaurant where they said they could learn some English. We met all sort of people at Machovskys. There was a scissor salesman, a guitar teacher, and even a strong anarchist with whom Mr. Machovsky sometimes argued. When the anarchist stated that there was no need for a government or a police force, Mr. Machovsky would ask, "Who would sweep the streets? Would you?"

We heard the views of many people, and soon concluded that the world is badly mixed up, and that it is best to turn to Him who has the world's kingdom in His hands and to endeavor to live according to His commandments.

Several of the boys in our Sunday School began thinking about going into theology: Bazata, Backora, Noll, Ziegler. Vaclav Bazata was the oldest, a lad over twenty years. He asked me to help him with his lessons, and said I could come to his house for meals. I accepted the offer at once. Other students boarded there; among them were Dudycha, Rundus, and in about a year, Kocian.

It was pleasant going for meals to a private home where people were happy together. Mrs. Bazata, a widow, was an excellent cook. I can see even now Mrs. Bazata at her stove, flushed with heat and the joy of being able to prepare a really good meal. When her daughter warned her not to buy frivolous things, she would reply that something has to be just for show.

Life in New York was so busy that there wasn't much time to feel lonely. Still I always hurried to the mailbox to look for mail from Habrkovice or Kolin. My friend, ^{John} ~~Jean~~ Dobias, used to write me long letters when he was in Basil, Switzerland, studying theology. Some of his letters were humorous, some serious, but all of them had a brotherly spirit.

All of us wrote to Pastor Dusek. He, in turn, wrote us to console us, advise us and warn us in an effort to help us along the way.

Following the Christmas holidays, in my third year at the seminary, several of us presbyterian theological students asked to be ordained by the New York Presbytery. Each of us was assigned four topics about which to write. My topics were a Latin thesis, 'Divina Sabbati Institutio'; a critical exercise, Analysis of the Greek Version of the Fourth Chapter of the Book of Job; a sermon on the text from John 21, 15 -- 'The Restoration of Peter'; and a discussion on 'The Love of Christ' based on II Corinthians 5, 14-17.

These topics, particularly the first two, were difficult. They took a great deal of time over a period of several weeks. The New York Presbytery had the reputation of being strict when dealing with students from Professor Briggs' class. When we were taking our oral exams, it was clear that efforts were made to find out if the student held liberal views. When the examinations were over, President Hastings gave a good report about the Czech candidates.

The Presbytery determined that friend Losa and I would be ordained in the Czech church on May 17, 1891. I will not try to detail all the feelings one has when being ordained. The event is too personal and too sacred.

Pastor Pisek preached. He rejoiced in the ordination, the first in his church, and welcomed us as partners in God's work. Words of admonition and encouragement were spoken in English by Dr Alexander, a member of the Presbytery, and a festive dinner awaited us in the parsonage.

The congregation was supportive of the event that meant so much to us. The friends we gained in New York, who got to know us or worked with us, were happy with us. As they said good-by, they wished us success wherever we might be called.

Chapter VII

First Summer in South Dakota

Toward the end of our first year at the seminary, the question came up what are we Czech students going to do during vacations. The question was under discussion for four months. After we talked it over with Mr. Pisek, it was decided that brother Bren would stay with the work in New York; and that brother Losa and I would offer to the Board of Home Missions that we would go anywhere we would be sent, to explain, as well as we could, God's word to our countrymen.

The Board people knew of only two likely places where we could be sent. One was in Angus, Minnesota. They had a letter from Mrs. Brush telling about Czech families around there. She said she was interested in these evangelical families and that it would be well if the Board would send them someone who would preach in their native tongue.

Brother Losa was asked to go to Angus, which he was happy to do. On the way, he stopped in St. Paul to visit the Bocka Family. Evangelical

Czechs, coming to Minnesota, liked to stop at Bockas where they would find encouragement and whatever help they might need, Mr. Losa found out that there were many Czechs, not only in Angus, but also around New Prague and Montgomery, and that there were Czech evangelical churches in Hopkins and Silver Lake. He visited these churches before he went to Angus and tried to encourage the brothers and sisters in their efforts in the Lord's work.

The other likely location was in South Dakota, which was still a territory, not having as yet been admitted as a state. The Czech pastor, Benjamin Balcar, used to come to Tyndall, and also, about once a month, to the brethren around Kimball. That was before he moved to Monticello, Iowa, where he became pastor of the German Presbyterian Church.

The Board of Missions people knew only about the village of Kimball but they didn't have the name of anyone there. They suggested that I go to Kimball and find out what could be done. After I knew more about South Dakota, I suspected it would have been better to locate near Tyndall. It seems that the Board of Missions people were not too well informed. At any rate, the person I dealt with didn't have enough facts.

I accepted the assignment, but all I knew was that I was to go to Kimball. I would have written to one of the brethren there if I would have had an address to write to. It didn't occur to me what would happen if the Kimball people wouldn't want me.

My colleague, Jones, who was assigned to some place in Wisconsin, agreed to come along with me as far as Chicago. We started out on Monday. On Tuesday we were in Washington D.C., where we visited the federal buildings.

We reached Chicago Wednesday morning, and my friend and I had to part company. I had with me the Throop Street address of the Czech newspaper Pravda. There I met Dr Adams, a kind gentleman, and with Mr. Podstata, one of the editors. I asked for names of subscribers who received their mail in Kimball. They gave me these names: Frank Matousek, ^{Joseph} ~~Josef~~ Matousek, ^{John} ~~Jan~~ Mares and Vaclav Junek.

I took the night train to Milwaukee and beyond. It was a long journey, part of one night, a whole day, a whole night, and I still had not arrived.

When the sun came out on Friday morning, I saw through the car window the vast American prairies, the widely spaced farms and the small villages. I had always loved trees, hills, rivers, lakes, and here everything was level ground.

After a long stop at Mitchell we went on toward Kimball and arrived toward evening. Flat country stretched out in all directions -- no trees, no water anywhere.

I walked down the street until I saw the name J. Novotny on a store front. I entered the store and asked if there were any Czech evangelicals in the village. The storekeeper told me about Frank Matousek, a harness maker, and showed me the way to his house. When I explained who I was and why I came, the Matouseks invited me to stay with them. I was told that since the next day was Saturday, there would be evangelical settlers coming to town and that one of them would take me to his farm.

I waited and spent the time preparing my first sermon and repeating it many times. My text was from the Book of Job (36, 22): "Behold, God is exalted in His power; who is a teacher like Him?"

I wanted to tell these people, who were entirely new to me, that they couldn't expect too much from me, that I didn't come to teach them, that I was young and inexperienced, but that together we would try to understand what the best teacher of all, the Lord God Himself, tells us: He teaches us through His Word, the gift of His Son, the remarkable works of His hands, and the power of His spirit which watches over us. He wants to teach us to believe in Him, love and honor Him and live according to His holy will. That is why His faithful people meet together, that is the purpose of His holy Sunday. It is for us to join whole heartedly in this great endeavor.

Brother Matousek came from work in the afternoon. He said that nobody from our people came to town, but that there was an Irishman here who lived close to Juneks and would take me to their home. We rode in a heavy farm wagon through the gently rolling, grass-covered prairie, with here and there settlers' small homes, often a mile apart.

Juneks had a wooden house; the barn and other farm buildings were built of sod. With some exceptions, all buildings in the region were constructed with sod. I shall never forget the moment when I saw brother Junek for the first time. He was a husky, middle aged man. Mrs Junek also came to greet me.

After I told them who I was and why I came, Mr. Junek said,

"That is good, we shall have a meeting at the school tomorrow." The school was about three miles from the Junek home. I met the younger children: ^{Tillie Wencil} ~~Stilla. Vencloek~~, and Edward. Three older sisters worked in the city.

A sturdy boy of about fourteen years drove in from the field. He unhitched his horses and came to meet me. I had just remarked that I was thirsty, and father Junek turned to his son and said, "Son, get some water." I received then a "cup of cold water" from the hand of a boy who years later became my faithful partner in God's work.

Supper was over, night came, and stars were shining. There is probably no other place on earth where the sky nearly touches the earth as in South Dakota. We were getting ready to retire. Mother Junek led the family in a prayer which she recited from memory. The prayer ended with the words from the prophet Isaiah (40, 29); "He gives power to the fainting, and to him that has no might he increases strength." After a long, tiring journey, it was good to sleep in a home like this.

On Sunday morning, after breakfast, I walked to the front of the house to look around. I saw a vast, somewhat rolling country, sparsely settled and surrounded by the low, bare Bijou Hills. I must confess, a loneliness came over me and the thought: "This is where I am to spend four months, and I have strength for just two weeks. But, He gives power to the fainting --"

We seated ourselves in the wagon and drove to the school house. The faithful were already arriving. Brother Junek introduced me and explained that I would lead the service. Services up to that time had been led by Brother Matousek, Sr. He was an honorable, elderly gentleman. He passed away a few years after this meeting took place. I had attentive listeners. I could see them lean forward, their eyes intent. Sunday School followed the worship service. The brethren never neglected Sunday School lessons.

After our meeting was over, the brethren got into a discussion. They decided to tell me that that they were glad I came and that they were unable to pay me anything, but that they would take care of my needs as well as they could. They suggested that I stay with each family one or two weeks.

I was satisfied. I no longer worried about the country.

I saw a hard-working, brave and hardy people who felt the need of their daily bread and also the bread which nourishes unto eternal Life.

"There were giants in that land!"

Brothers ^{Joseph}~~Josef~~ Matousek and ^{John}~~Jan~~ Pipal came to Juneks in the afternoon. We got acquainted and discussed plans for the summer. I found out that many of the settlers came from Opatvosk and Strmes parishes.

The Matouseks came from Humpolec. They settled at first near Cobb, Wisconsin, but, when South Dakota was opened to settlers, they came here to establish a new home. They were given 160 acres to build a

home on, 160 more acres on preemption at \$1.25 per acre, and another 160 acres as a treeclaim, which meant that the settler could claim the land if he planted five acres of trees and cultivated them for a number of years.

The settlers' first years in South Dakota were promising. All they had to do was plow up the sod and plant corn. It grew and ripened. It was said that the first two years, since nothing else was available, some of the folks lived on corn and pork. The housewives ground up the corn in coffee grinders and used the meal in various ways.

My first Sunday in South Dakota was wonderful, and in the evening there was peace such as can't be found anywhere else. Far removed from the noise of the world's activity, all was quiet -- so quiet you could hear your heart beat.

On Monday morning, before he drove out to the field, brother Juneke showed me his modest farm. He told me, among other things, that in last year's snowstorm he lost all fourteen head of his cattle. He took me to the sod barn, showed me several horses and asked, "Can you ride horseback?" I said I loved to ride, and he said I could use any horse in the barn. This made me happy because I saw I wouldn't be tied to one place but could visit families that might be some distance away. It was a number of miles to the post office, where I could pick up mail twice a week. I started riding across the prairie and made visits to several families. There were few roads, and only the pastures were fenced. You rode in the direction that seemed shortest.

Next Sunday the schoolhouse was full. It became evident that there were not enough copies of the Kancional, the superb collection of stately hymns which Czech evangelicals generally used. A brother suggested we use "Songs for Life's Journey." The people had more of this much smaller songbook. Another brother suggested that we learn how to sing.

It was decided that we get together on Thursday evenings for a short service and song practice. This was remarkable. After a hot day and the strenuous summer day's work, the brothers and their families came in their farm wagons. All of them came; there were no exceptions. The singing followed the service. It was great singing! It is no wonder that my voice was going out toward the end.

We were looking for help of some kind, and found it. Brother Nepodal had a violin which he was glad to loan me. He used to say that he first surrendered his violin to the evangelicals, and later himself and his family. I am grateful to this day for what the violin teacher in Jihlava taught me.

The fourteen days at brother Junek's passed quickly, and I was moved to brother Matousek's, then to brother Duba's, then to brother John Pipal's. Brother Matousek was an avid traveler. He enjoyed seeing or showing off the wonders of nature. On the Fourth of July, he took me to the Missouri river, where hot water gushes from the ground, where there were tall trees and various luxuriant plants. Brother Duba was known as 'English Duba', because he did carpentry in the city and

spoke English. That was to differentiate between him and the 'Czech Duba', who came from Bohemia a short time ago.

He still lived in a house made of sod. The inside of his house was nicely plastered, very clean, cool in summer and warm in winter. Brother Pipal was the only one who had barns of wood boards. He was a great breeder of horses, and we understood each other. At Mares's, close to school, it was pleasant and comfortable.

Some of these South Dakota friends of mine were quite blunt, their speech was as open as the prairie. They would tell the truth to your face, and they would accept the truth, but they could also hide the truth. Atheistic literature found its way even to the Dakota plains and it was necessary to know how to defend the faith. The Czech Catholic people had a church about 12 miles from Eagle, but they did not hold regular services. Our people were called upon to hold high the torch of faith against atheism and superstition.

After being on the 'east side' for two months, brother Joseph Novak took me to the 'west' side. Brother Novak said he would like to keep me for the whole summer, but that he couldn't because the westerners would be angry.

Nearly all the western families were related to each other. The oldest of the men were Brother Novak and brother Vasicek,

We were on our way west. From the day I started riding horseback, I would be given any horse that wasn't at the time hitched to something. In two months I used twenty six horses of

various colors and habits. Brother Novak told me that he would let me have a horse, a young pony, that I could have during my stay in South Dakota. "But," he added, "you will have to break him in."

It was a fine horse, a palomino about three years old. He grew up wild and, as a colt, did not come in contact with people. Brother Novak had bought him recently, helped catch him and tie him to the rear of a wagon. They had a hard time getting him home; he nearly choked himself. He couldn't get used to anything new, but finally entered the barn with other horses. He was getting used to the halter, but curved his back when it was touched by a man's hand. He had to get used to a bridle, a saddle and a man. He was called Palo.

Gentleness, kindness, and patience can accomplish much with a horse as with a human. After a few days with the horse, I decided, in spite of Mrs. Novak's warnings to try to sit on him. I was successful and rode him a good many miles. In time he would come when I called him. I could let him run loose on the prairie and he would not run away. He didn't accept anyone else as his master and did not trust strangers. He threw me only once, when I tried to ride without a bridle or saddle.

Joseph
From ~~Joseph~~ Novak's I moved to another Novak family, then to Forman's Vasicek's and Pipal's. Since I had the pony, moving was a little different. My belongings came by wagon, and I came on horseback. Visiting various families and going to the post office was easier and

faster than when I used tired workhorses. I rode only in the afternoon. I spent the morning preparing my sermon, reading, and writing.

As I moved from family to family the houses were small, usually with two rooms. My bed would stand in the corner of a bedroom and would be partitioned off by a curtain hung fro^m the ceiling. I had the feeling the curtains moved with me.

Moving from farm to farm had its advantages, however. I became acquainted with the everyday lives of the families, their joys, their sorrows, their natures and their behavior toward neighbors. The children and I became friends, and we had many happy times together. I helped start evening services in homes that did not already have them. If I stayed with a family a week or two, I would be greeted by the parents and children as a special friend.

I didn't shave for four whole months. I still didn't know how to shave, and it was too far to a barber, so I let my beard grow the same way as everything grows on the prairie. Most of the brothers in South Dakota did the same. I came as far as New York with my soft, fine beard, but I didn't walk around the city like that very long.

I learned a number of things in the four months I spent in South Dakota. For instance, I tried to say a "word at the proper time" to show displeasure at a poor habit. I tried to do this again when I forgot I was no longer in South Dakota. I was walking down the street with a friend who was telling me about an unfortunate happening, and he swore terribly.

I told him calmly, "Think it over if it is necessary to swear."

He answered sharply, "You go and preach to the Dakota farmers. I'm going to swear as much as I like." Then he swore to his deart's content. In South Dakota our people did not have this poor habit. Papa Novak felt badly about some English speaking people who couldn't say anything without adding God to it.

I hoped that some of my dreams would come true. It was decided, when we said good-by and the brethren thanked me for having been with them, that I would come back in the spring. I promised I would if at all possible, and that's the way it stood.

Chapter VIII

Second Summer in South Dakota

In the spring of my second year at the seminary, Pastor Pisek asked if I had promised the Dakota people that I would return. I told him that I promised to return if it would be possible. He said he had news that Cedar Rapids, Iowa, was a good place for my kind of work. At his suggestion, I wrote to brother Vokoun, an elder in the Cedar Rapids church, and received the reply that I should contact Pastor Kun in Ely.

Meanwhile I mentioned what I had learned to my fellow student, brother Dudycha. He confessed it was his hope that he would be sent to Cedar Rapids to preach for the summer. His hope turned to fact, and my return to South Dakota seemed assured.

I was going back to a familiar location and familiar, friendly people. I already knew from letters by the elders that I would be a guest of the western brethren. ^{John} ~~Jan~~ Vasicek waited for me at the Kimball

railroad station. While in town I equipped myself for the stay on the South Dakota plains with a saddle and a bridle.

I am still thrilled when I recall how all the folks greeted me the first Sunday. They accepted me as one of them and looked forward with me to the four months of life and work we would share together. The families I didn't stay with the year before decided I should stay with them this time. One brother, who tried to keep me in his home longer than was agreed, remarked, "They're quarreling over you."

Monday morning, ^{John}~~Jan~~ Vasicek took me to his sod barn, showed me a fine young white horse, and said, I'm loaning him to you for the entire summer. You can train him just as you trained Palo."

In the afternoon of the same day, brother ^{Matthew}~~Matej~~ Novak, Vasicek's son-in-law, came over on a fine black pony. He announced, "Mr. Pokorny, you can have this horse all summer," and he led the pony to the barn. I had to choose not just between the horses, but between the owners as well. I picked the black, and he served me well. We rode every day, even to the church meeting on Sunday.

Everything went well. The farmers had completed their spring work, and corn had already been cultivated for the first time. The folks were coming enthusiastically to services on Sunday and to meetings on Thursday evening. However, difficult days were on the way. The sky remained clear day after day with no sign of rain. If a small cloud did appear, it soon faded away. What was green in the

spring turned grey, burned by the dry heat. People worried about the future as they hoped and waited.

Even the year before the harvest was partly spoiled by dry weather. That year it was not until after the harvest season, following many dry weeks, that there was a storm with a heavy rain.

This summer was even worse. It was impossible to work in the hard, parched fields. Wells were running dry. Brother Matousek put in a drilled well. It was one hundred feet deep and reached only a small pool of smelly water. To conserve what water could be had, he watered the horses in the morning and the cattle in the afternoon. Brother Junek drove every other day fourteen miles to Kimball where he could get water. He hauled it with his wagon in big barrels. And brother Duba drove to Bijou Hills for his water.

"As long as we can't work in the fields, we could build a church." The idea started among the Eastern brethren. In the Church Memoirs of 1910 stands: "At the urging of candidate Pokorny, discussions began at this time about building a church." I admit that I would not have dared to think of something like that in such a bad year, but when the idea grew and spread and became a topic of conversation, it could not be stopped.

Brother Matousek took great pains to convince me it was the right time to build. In later years, he often remarked, "If we had not built then, I doubt we would have ever built." When one of the

western brethren talked against building, saying that the parish might not be able to find a minister, I told him I would come, or, if I couldn't, I would see to it that they would get someone else.

It was decided unanimously to start building. The question now was where to build so the church would be centrally located.

When brother ^{John} ~~Jan~~ Mares offered five acres of land to the church, the question was resolved. The brothers donated toward the building according to their means. Many of them borrowed the money.

Brother Duba, a carpenter, worked out the plan and agreed to supervise the construction, and all the other brothers were ready to help any way they could. Brother Zeman promised to put in the foundation. The stone for this was on the land or nearby. The brothers collected it and started building.

The time came for the men to set out for Chamberlain, thirty miles away, to get the lumber. The wagons made a long line on the road and caused much comment. Some people praised the daring venture; others called it ridiculous.

The work progressed nicely, and the building was beginning to take shape. Unfortunately, the time had arrived when I should be getting ready to return to New York. I was present when the congregation met in the school for the last time. Following the worship service, the brothers decided that we should consecrate the building project to the Lord. We met that afternoon in the unfinished new church and consecrated it with song, prayer, and the reading of God's Word.

When I was already gone, Pastor Pisek came from New York to visit this South Dakota parish. He saw that the church was without a steeple, and urged that a steeple be added. He sold the young people on the idea, and the steeple was added.

Dr Carson, the Synod's missionary in Scotland, was next to come. With his help, the church was reorganized and made a part of the Presbyterian Church Union. Dr Carson was a good man and a sincere friend of the Czech people. He saw how eagerly they worked to change prairie land into successful farms. He was concerned that God's kingdom should spread to this community. The brothers thought, however, that he questioned them too much on local and personal matters.

In the neighborhood were many countrymen, who, from reading articles in some Czech papers, pronounced themselves with great pride as freethinkers. They were ready to fight over the idea. It was said that nobody could get them to come to our meetings -- but some of them did come at least once.

There was a wedding. Brother ^{Joseph} ~~Josef~~ Mares was marrying the oldest Schoenberger daughter. Since I wasn't ordained, I was unable to perform the ceremony, and the couple was joined by the Dunker preacher, who had a farm near Bijou Hills. Nevertheless, I was invited to the bride's house where the wedding took place. The country folk gathered from the whole neighborhood to witness the event.

Toward evening a salesman from Kimball came to tell me that he brought with him a friend of mine, brother ^{Frank}~~Frank~~ Rundus. He came, as he said, just for a visit.

Following the wedding ceremony, many of the guests walked out on the lawn in front of the house. It was a beautiful evening with the sky sprinkled with stars. Brother Rundus soon gathered a crowd about him. He told the name of each star, how far it was from the earth, and how many years it took the light from the star to reach the earth. It was a scientific lecture, and the freethinkers in the crowd said to each other, "That's our man; he's one of us!"

The speaker was given a question, "If heaven is above the stars which are already far away, how long does it take for the souls of the dead to reach heaven.

He answered quickly, "Don't you worry about that!"

It was decided and an announcement was made that brother Rundus would give a lecture in the school on Thursday instead of our usual meeting. All the folks who were at the wedding came, and there wasn't even standing room left. Some stood outside near the door and tried their best to hear. It happened that the group of freethinkers sat down in the side benches to the right of the speaker.

The subject of the lecture was: 'Belief or Unbelief'. It goes without saying that the speaker gave arguments for belief. He repeated

a number of times, "This is what unbelievers say." As he said the words, he unconsciously waved his hand toward the benches at his right, where some faces were turning red. When the listeners were invited to ask questions, nobody spoke out. After all, it was late, and nights are short in the summer, and everyone had a long journey home.

Our people were happy. It was time, they said, to get some hard-heads straightened and have the truth told. I don't care to write here what I was told the freethinkers said about our brother Rundus's lecture. Their remarks proved they were a long ways from being absolute freethinkers.

Brother Rundus was in some ways a very talented young man. He had his particular ideas and ways of doing things. When he was in the New York seminary, he made a trip during the Christmas holidays to Baltimore, Maryland, even though he could hardly afford a one-way ticket. He was that daring. He explained he wanted to find out how many evangelical Czechs lived in the city and if they would unite for worship services.

He began by giving two political lectures and with these he became acquainted with prominent evangelical Czechs. He came back with the news that Baltimore was a good place for missionary work and a church. Mr. Pisek hurried to Baltimore in January, and a Czech Presbyterian church was organized in the spring. That was the result of the daring of a young theologian.

Before his entrance to the seminary, brother Rundus did missionary

work among his countrymen in Montgomery, Minnesota. There weren't many evangelicals there, but he decided to build a church. He secured a location, dug out the trenches for the foundation, and started building the walls with his own hands. He learned brick laying in Park College, Missouri.

A crowd soon gathered to watch and admire his skill. He turned to the group with the words, "Everybody knows how to watch. Some of you could help me." Some came and helped. I don't know what else happened, how lumber was obtained or other details, but the church was built.

I conducted my first funeral service in South Dakota. It was an unusual experience. There had been a big storm with terrific lightning and thunder. That's the way it sometimes is in South Dakota following a period of dry weather.

The lightning took the life of a settler named Makovec. He was the father of a large Catholic family that had just recently arrived. Brother ^{John} ~~Jan~~ Mares came over to give me the sad news. The widow was worried about the funeral. She said that the priest would not conduct services unless he received 25 dollars and that she didn't have the money. Brother Mares assured her that I would officiate without asking for pay.

Almost everyone who heard about it came to the funeral. We sang a song near the coffin as it stood in front of the modest house. I talked about the great loss and sorrow that came to the family, but that we have consolation in God's Word: "Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in His holy habitation." (Psalm 68, 5)

Following the service at the home, we started the twelve-mile drive to the Catholic cemetery. There was a long line of farm wagons. Near the cemetery stood the Catholic church. The coffin was carried into the church, and the congregation followed. I stood in front of the church trying to decide what to do. A man, probably a church leader, asked me to enter and proceed with the service.

Our choir and I went in. We sang and prayed, and I read from the Epistle to the Romans 8, 31-39. I explained the last verse about the same way as Pastor Dusek from Kolin explained it when he conducted a funeral at which our student choir sang. I said that those who belong to Christ have nothing to fear, whether living or dying, in this world or in eternity.

I walked in front of the coffin as we left the church. At that moment several men came between me and the coffin, and began to sing a Catholic funeral hymn. As we approached the grave, one of the men called, "Let us pray for the soul of the departed brother Makovec!" The men kneeled and repeated 'Our Father' and 'Hail Mary' a number of times.

Brothers Mares and Matousek rushed to my side as the prayers were ending and insisted, "Come, leave them. Let them finish this any way they like." We left and all of our people came with us. They told me I might get hurt -- that people cannot be trusted when stirred up.

We found out later that, following our departure, the Catholic folks were divided in two groups. One group maintained that I should

have been allowed to finish the ceremony which I was conducting without thought of any reward. Others disagreed and said an evangelical preacher should not have been allowed in a Catholic church or to conduct a Catholic funeral.

The funeral ended in a big quarrel. There was a rumor that a fist fight took place near the grave. Some of our brethren were badly upset, and some Catholic brethren wondered if their church would need to be reconsecrated. Reconsecration would have been, as I could judge, a foolish act. After all, it is God's Word and a prayer that consecrate anything.

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Chapter IX

The Third Summer in South Dakota

I had just returned to New York from my second summer in South Dakota, when Pastor Pisek decided to visit once more the Czech Evangelical churches in the midwestern states. He left his church services and his Sunday School in my care. I also had something to do with the marriages and christenings. These two ceremonies were conducted by Dr Chapin, director of the boys' academy where Mr. Pisek attended as a boy.

My part was to translate to Czech what Dr Chapin said in English. The Czechs in New York knew so little English that an interpreter was required. There were six or more weddings over a Saturday and Sunday. I was the only one left who could perform these duties because brother Bren had already entered the Chicago McCormick seminary and was conducting services in Caledonia and Racine. Brother Losa was gone every Sunday

to preach in the Baltimore church.

Brothers Vaclav Hlavaty and Oldrich Kocian came to New York in October of that year. Brother Hlavaty, already a full-fledged pastor, was waiting to see where Mr. Pisek would send him. Shortly before Christmas, he was routed to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where he served for many years.

I didn't want him to take it too easy while he was still in New York and asked him if he would be willing to preach every other Sunday. Soon brother Kocian entered the seminary and added to my worries. He arrived after more than two weeks of school had passed and needed help to make up what he had missed. I gave him the needed help, especially in Hebrew.

When Mr. Pisek returned from his trip, he brought pictures of the not yet completed church in South Dakota. Although he acknowledged the zeal and generosity of the parish, he kept repeating that I would bury myself if I should settle in South Dakota.

At some time in the winter, I received a letter from the curator of the Reformed Church in Silver Lake, Minnesota. He asked me to come over just as soon as I am ordained. I answered that I would stop when on the way to South Dakota. He wrote again in the spring, this time to tell me not to come because conditions in the parish were unsettled. I was to wait until conditions improved.

Following ordination, I stayed in New York one more week. The pastor was going away that week and I was again put in charge of all

church doings including weddings and christenings. That was good training in all the duties of my calling.

I said good-bye to New York, the church, the school and the many dear friends. I decided to stop at the parishes I had heard about, before settling down in South Dakota. Brother and friend Bren invited me to stop in Racine where he was already active. Brother Hlavaty wrote that Cedar Rapids would be on my way as I go to South Dakota, and brother Losa suggested that I stop at New Prague and Montgomery, Minnesota, and at Bock's in St. Paul.

My first stop was Racine, where Pastor Bren was working with parishes in Racine and Caledonia. His work was mainly in Caledonia where he seemed to be building on old ruins. In his youthful zeal he wasn't afraid of difficulty or adversity, though there was plenty of both.

Brother Bren advised me to get acquainted with brother Pastor Balcar who was then in missionary work in Melnik. He would be on his way to Muscoda and would be at the Milwaukee railroad station so we could meet and talk. Brother Bren described Pastor Balcar as: 'A typical Czech Evangelical pastor.' He notified Pastor Balcar that I was coming.

I left for Milwaukee, where I was to meet Pastor Balcar. We recognized each other immediately. We had plenty to talk about as we rode on the train to Muscoda. What he told me made me respect him and share his feelings. He had a good education. Years later we tested

each other on our knowledge of Greek. The two of us also tried to converse in Latin just for the fun of it.

In Muscoda, near Blue River, we were guests of brother Pival, curator of the church, a breeder of fine horses and a well known leader throughout Czech parishes. He had a large family with which I had spent some lovely moments.

On Sunday morning, brother Pival took us to Highland where Pastor Balcar was to preach in the German Presbyterian Church. In the afternoon we took care of worship services in the country church near Muscoda. I was asked to preach, and on one of the following days I assisted with a funeral.

After a few days I departed to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where Pastor Hlavaty was expecting me. He had been in the city since last Christmas. We were glad to see one another. We knew each other from the Kolin gymnasium and had spent several weeks together in New York.

Pastor Hlavaty liked Cedar Rapids, the parish, the church building and even the small houses in the surrounding streets. In those days the young people from Czech families didn't consider English churches anything special and gladly gathered in the Czech church to work with a youthful minister. Brother Hlavaty found a pleasant home with the Nemecek couple who liked him and his ways.

Brother Pastor Hlavaty left for Saratoga during the week to conduct church services for a small group of believers in that city. He asked me to take his place in the pulpit. It happened that I also

took care of a funeral before he returned. I had the privilege to meet with a number of families, some of which came from Kolin, and with the Ruml family which I mentioned before. I found out that people who weren't close friends in the old country became good friends when they found each other in this new country.

I was anxious to meet Pastor Kun in Ely. Brother Nemecek hired a team and took brother Hlavaty and me to the Ely parsonage. Pastor Kun told us about the parishes in the several states where he had served. He was glad that younger pastors were becoming available. He hoped that the Czech Evangelical churches in America would become a branch of the Reformed Church in Bohemia.

We spent part of the same day on ^{Joseph} ~~Josef~~ Bures's farm. He was at the time a robust man, and his farm was a delight. I wondered how long it would take for the Dakota farms to look like the Iowa farms.

While in Cedar Rapids, I received a letter from Pastor Pisek. He wrote that he had a message from the curator of the parish in Silver Lake, and that I should go over there to take up the work in that village. I answered by return mail that I was on the way to South Dakota and that I wasn't interested in Silver Lake, but would stop there for at least one Sunday. The next day I had a telegram from Pastor Pisek. It read like this: "Go at once to Omaha. The Czech parish is without a pastor. The seminary is looking for an instructor in Hebrew."

I answered the telegram with a letter which said that I am anxious to get to South Dakota and would go to Omaha at some later date. I added that I wasn't interested in teaching Hebrew and that the Omaha seminary could easily find a Hebrew teacher but that there was a shortage of Czech preachers.

It must be confessed that I was selfish in my decision. This is the way I looked at it: A Hebrew instructor sits back of a desk in front of his students or he writes Hebrew words on a blackboard. A Dakota preacher lives the way he chooses, remains close to nature, and serves God and His people. It was not a difficult decision.

Before proceeding to South Dakota, I wanted to finish what I had planned. I journeyed to New Prague, Minnesota, to the home of the Brener family. As I was instructed by brother Losa, we assembled the neighborhood children and went over the songs he had taught them. From there I went to Montgomery, where I preached on three evenings in the church which brother Rundus had started. That church served the whole community. Church services were conducted there also for Swedish people in their native tongue.

In St. Paul I visited the Bocek family, well known to many Czech evangelicals. I was told that I should stop in the Hopkins parish where Pastor Kun would occasionally visit. Several Oberlin students had been conducting services there during the summer months. I stopped and preached on Sunday. The elders asked me to stay the following Sunday and conduct the sacraments. I stayed, christened some children,

and served the Lord's supper to a sizable congregation. Oberlin's Professor Miskovsky was present, and we spent several pleasant days together. We enjoyed visiting the families in this part of the country where people loved God's word, their parish, and their church.

A visit to the Reformed Church in Silver Lake still remained. I was confident I would be welcome. The brethren had met with some difficulties and^d as a result a number of families broke away to form a new church. I had planned on staying one week, but the elders urged me to stay one more week to teach the confirmation class. The class had already been meeting regularly, and it was decided to receive the confirmants into church membership. This was done, and the Lord's Supper was served.

While in Silver Lake, I stayed with brother Hudec with whom I had been exchanging letters. I took my dinners with the Fajman family. I roomed about five miles from the church and rode to town every day on horseback. There were seventeen in the confirmation class. The members came faithfully every day. I found that it was necessary just to review the Heidelberg Catechism and to explain the meaning of the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's house was packed on Sunday and the congregation followed what was taking place. It was the first confirmation I ever conducted, and I followed the same procedure used in our Czech Evangelical churches. It seemed as if the church and the entire

congregation had been brought from our native land. Following the services, I met many of the elders. All of them pronounced the same hope, "Stay with us!"

That was also the wish of the elders who met for a discussion. I gave everyone the same answer, "I am on my way to South Dakota, but I hear that Pastor John Linka is planning to come to America. I have asked Pastor Pisek to send him to you just as soon as he arrives in New York, about the first of November."

"What if he doesn't come?" asked the curator.

I answered, "In that case, I will come."

I was reasonably sure brother Linka would come, and, if he wouldn't, that some arrangement could be made so I could return to South Dakota, at least until a spiritual leader could be found for Silver Lake. I felt sorry for the Silver Lake people. I could see that some of the families would leave the church if it remained deserted too long.

In the middle of July I finally arrived in South Dakota. It was a beautiful Sunday when we gathered together in the new church built with many sacrifices. I was promised 650 dollars by the Presbyterian Board. Neither th^e Board or I expected anything from the people for the time being. Evidently, Dr Carson gave the Board a full report about the drought the settlers suffered in 1890.

So I wouldn't have to move from farm to farm, and so I could do some studying, I decided to live on the western end of the parish with

They
the elderly Novak couple. ^A had just built a new frame house next to their old log house. The log house became my home, even though the inside had not been plastered. The eastern brethren wondered why I wanted to live in the west, but finally understood and were satisfied.

John
Brother ~~Jan~~ Pipal gave me a fine, three-year old horse, and said, "He will be yours as long as you stay." He was an excellent horse and could easily run twenty miles straight without getting overly tired. I found it hard to part with him when I finally had to.

Because of the great distances, it was necessary to hold church activities only on Sunday and Thursday. Sunday morning we had worship services and Sunday School; in the afternoon we held the young people's meeting. On Thursday evening we met for the Bible hour and song practice.

Everything was going nicely. I had my books, a place to keep them, and the time to study. I was able to visit nearby families and those at some distance. I was welcome wherever I went.

Papa Novak and I would sit in the shade of the house and he would tell me about his experiences when he was a teamster in Bohemia in his younger days. He loved horses and marveled that my horse could not be kept in the pasture but would leap over the gate whenever he pleased.

He confided in me that his biggest wish is to die ahead of 'mama'. I asked why, and he answered, as if he had mulled it over before, "Because it will be difficult for the one who stays behind."

I replied, "Think it over. Because it will be difficult for the one who remains, you would rather it would be hard for 'mama' and not for you."

He had no answer but sat deep in thought. Some time later, as I sat at my desk pen in hand, I saw, through the window, Papa Novak strolling through the yard, occasionally shaking his head as if absorbed in some deep problem. When he met me in the evening he told me, "Just look at it, that's how a person is! He loves his mate, but still wishes her to have hardships rather than himself. Yes, that's the kind of person he is."

I don't know if he continued to hold to his same wish, but the Lord called him two years later

After I had been in South Dakota about two months, the parish near Tyndall (now called Tabor) asked me to come to preach and conduct the sacraments. I knew the brethren there because I had visited them twice before. I decided to go, and at the same time fulfill my promise to visit Omaha.

It wasn't far to Tyndall directly, but it was a long journey by train. In Scotland I was fortunate to meet and consult with the wise Synod missionary Dr Carson. In the stone church near Tabor, I saw again a crowd of God's people yearning for regular church services. I saw that the time was ripe that they should have their own permanent minister. It was clear that "The harvest indeed is plenteous but the laborers are few." (Matthew 9, 37)

For the time being, the brethren did faithfully what served to promote the kingdom of God among them. As we parted the brethren expressed the hope that they would call for me again.

I came to Omaha. Here, again, was an area inviting spiritual work and service. Pastor Paulu had just left Omaha for Wahoo and there was no replacement preacher. Many of the brethren were anxious to have a permanent leader. The American Presbyterian ministers were interested in work among the Czechs and promised to give financial support. I understood why Mr. Pisek had urged me to go to Omaha and why he sent them the first preacher who came from Bohemia, Pastor Pipal.

There was a large congregation on Sunday, and many bright children in Sunday School. I came to stay for one Sunday, but stayed for another so I could serve the Lord's Supper. I became acquainted with brother Bastel and his wife. They were on their honeymoon and on the way to their mission field in Iowa City and had come to Omaha to visit relatives.

I returned to South Dakota and was glad to be home. My horse had become fat and restless in my three weeks' absence.

A letter came from Pastor Pisek to tell us that brother Linka would not come, that he would be delayed another year. The letter urged that, for the good of all, it was imperative I go to Silver Lake or the parish there would suffer. I felt sick. Our people felt sick when I told them how matters stood. They blamed Pastor Pisek for the situation, and some were angry with him.

I tried to plan how I could return to South Dakota or at least come back occasionally to see the friends with whom I spent many months of work on those wide plains under clear, blue skies, I can still see myself surrounded by those people who were able to find so mach joy in Chriet's^s gospel. With all this in my mind, I left for Silver Lake.

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Chapter X
My First Year^S in Silver Lake

I used to write letters about my experiences and these letters were saved. They tell clearly about my observations and thoughts.

Silver Lake, Minn., Oct. 7, 1891

I am again by the beautiful Silver Lake. It is not as nice as it was in July because the edges have overgrown with tall grass. Swan Lake, about a half hour's ride from here, looks better. Still, it is nice here even though I didn't want to part with South Dakota. Of course, I am more useful here.

Last Sunday, the folks who separated from our congregation, consecrated their new church. Mr. Prucha, the new minister, was ordained at the same time. I didn't attend the ceremony because I

had to travel to Minneapolis to meet with Mr. Pisek. Among those at the consecration was Mr. Bastel whom I had met in Omaha. He stopped to see me, and I took him and his colleague for a ride around the lakes. Mr. Schaufler joined us as we were finishing the ride. I took the three gentlemen to a farm where they were invited to dinner. I didn't regard them as belonging to an unfriendly camp, but rather as belonging to a regiment of the same army.

I am going to be in a rather difficult situation because I don't care to desert other churches. As early as June, the elders in Hopkins decided to have me take care of both the Silver Lake and Hopkins parishes. The people here want me for themselves only and would take care of my pay. They are willing to build a parsonage just as soon as I decide to stay. Yesterday I told Mr. Pisek I am planning to visit Bohemia. He smiled and said, "So that's the way it is, and I won't be able to perform at your wedding!"

He told me among other details that brother Pipal from Opat would be arriving. I would like Pipal to go to South Dakota if I am to stay here, but Mr. Pisek wants to send him to Omaha. Oh, well, what's the use! In that case, I would like to occasionally visit the South Dakota church, 'My First Love', as the American ministers regard the first church they served,

Following some cold rains, the weather is agreeable again.

It is pleasant in this small Bohemian village. There is always some activity and hum of daily life, and from the woods close by comes the chirping of a thousand birds similar to our starlings. However, the peace of South Dakota had its charm, and it is a hard decision. There is just one measuring stick -- where is the greater need?

When I talked with the American preachers in Omaha who wanted me to settle there, I told them I had many offers from which to choose. They laughed and said it is like a man who decides to marry and too many girls want him. I objected to the comparison and said it isn't like that. A man marries one girl and forgets the rest; but calls from parishes are more difficult to set aside.

I am noting that I am calling this place a little village. There is nothing too beautiful about it. It is only necessary to imagine a Czech village of about twenty homes situated at the edge of a fine lake and bounded on the other side by thick woods. That is the village of Silver Lake. Before starting the last page of this letter, I walked out toward evening to see the lake. It occurs to me that whoever called it 'Silver' must have viewed it in the evening and under a clear sky when the stars are mirrored on the surface of the peaceful water.

I am living with the family where I took my meals during the summer. I have greater comforts than I had in South Dakota. I have my own room where no one is allowed, and it is a great advantage. We have the post office in the house, and I have been a 'Second Assistant Postmaster' when it was necessary. It seems I shall stay here, at least until Christmas. (Here the letter ends.)

I will not write in detail why the congregation became divided. When I stopped in Silver Lake for the first time, the foundations for the additional church were being laid. When I came in October, the building was already finished. The chief reason for the split seems to be that our people, who came from the Czech-Moravian plateau, were brought up differently than were the Oberlin students, who came to conduct services during the summer months. There was a lack of understanding, and the separation was the result of the underlying difficulty.

I looked at it this way -- the people who banded together for church services, before they had a minister, had a right to choose whichever minister most of them preferred. If some were not satisfied with the choice, they had a right to separate and take care of themselves. As far as I was concerned, I made it a rule not to judge even though I had to listen to all the misunderstandings. It was better not to spread bad feelings.

At one time there was a division in the kingdom of Israel and God allowed it. It is admitted that the worship of the true God in Judea would not otherwise have been saved. In the New Testament, we read that Paul and Barnabas separated because they did not get along. The result was that the gospel was preached in more places.

I tried during the whole month of October to come to a decision. I know now that I tried selfishly to avoid responsibility. I wrote to the Board of Missions that sent me to South Dakota, told them how matters stood, and asked for advice. The answer was that I should think it over

and do whatever I thought best. I also contacted Dr Carson, the Synod's Dakota Missionary. He wrote that I should go where the field for service is greater, but he mentioned that he was interested in having the Lord's work in South Dakota carried on.

I wrote to Pastor Pisek and he promised that he would send to South Dakota the first minister who came from Bohemia. It was decided that I should stay in Silver Lake. The elders insisted that I sign a written agreement. They promised the same pay as I would receive in South Dakota, and they decided on their own to build a parsonage.

I asked them to let me go to South Dakota for two weeks every two months. They thought it over and one of them said. "That means that we will pay you and you will serve the South Dakota people."

I answered, "That's the way it looks, but you don't have to accept my idea or me. It doesn't matter who would pay for my trips." They accepted the idea and offered to provide the fuel to heat the parsonage. This part of the agreement was cancelled when I found out that one of the church members talked against it.

I wrote to the elders in South Dakota that I could be with them for two weeks every two months. They answered that I should wait until spring, because the weather was usually uncertain in winter and sometimes dangerous. They mentioned that the snowstorms sometimes came suddenly. They promised that they would meet for services every Sunday if at all possible and requested that I write them sometimes and send them my sermons. I was glad to oblige.

On October 26, 1891, I wrote: Everything is now **definitely** arranged. I am staying in Silver Lake, Lord willing, and will be making trips to South Dakota unless the people there decide they no longer want to see or hear me.

Many people are attending church services, some who have not been coming for a long time. Recently a man came to see me and, without any opening words, asked if I needed money and handed me a bank note. I didn't want to accept it, and said, "I don't know what I ever did for you that I should deserve this."

"But I know," he answered and started to cry.

When I returned to the village after a short absence, an elderly, grey-haired gentleman came over to ask if I would stay. I said I didn't know and he complained, "It seems that you are going to desert us." His eyes filled with tears.

Frankly, I don't know why it is that people care that much about me. I am often dissatisfied with my sermon-- after the sermon. I know that I don't deserve all that confidence and affection. Tomorrow I am marrying a couple and in a week another couple. I do this in all seriousness. Today my landlord laughed when he found out I would be performing a church wedding and said I am helping others and could not help myself.

I like it here well enough, even though I get lonesome for South Dakota. If I could at least have brought my horse with me! The children often entertain me; they keep saying I must not go back to South Dakota. I have a small dog who is fond of me and

likes to go on walks with me. He somehow reminds me to ask
Pastor Dusek's forgiveness for not having much love for his
small aggressive dog. Occasionally I walk to the woods to hunt
for squirrels or rabbits. I think I should stop this sport even
though it is good exercise. I shall stop after I get my books
from South Dakota.

We now have in this small village two Czech Evangelical
ministers! Mr. Reitinger arrived two days ago. He is replacing
Mr. Prucha, who is going to school for a year. So far we haven't
met. I hope and pray the two congregations will live together in
peace and forget former difficulties.

November 9, 1891. I just wrote several official letters to
ministers asking them to come to my installation which will take
place on December 22. I don't care for any celebrations, but
when the congregation wanted to see once more the ederyly Rev Kun
who used to come here from Ely, Iowa, for many years, I couldn't
resist.

However, it is good for a person to meet with and talk with
somebody who has the same calling, the same joys and sorrows, and
more experience. As long as the new Independent Reformed Church
recently celebrated the dedication of a church and the ordination of a
minister, it won't hurt if we in turn put on an impressive ceremony.

We would like to have with us Rev Kun, our close neighbor
brother Hlavaty, and Mr. Balcar from Melnik, Wisconsin. I sincerely
hope that brother Hlavaty will come. I have doubts about brother Bren,

even though I invited him and would be glad to see him.

The church is full every Sunday. I am proud of the Sunday School. All day Saturday I teach children to read and write in the Czech language. It is a pleasure rather than a hardship.

The children where I live -- three-year-old Ben, five-year-old Ed, and ten-year-old Annie -- are well behaved. Ben often gets angry when I am writing too much and he can't be with me as often as he would like.

Now and then the small Havlis children and Christine Totusek come over. Jealousy breaks out at times, but Christine won at least once when she said she liked me as much as the Polish steeple is high. The steeple on the Polish Catholic Church is pretty tall.

This is interesting: Brother ^{Joseph}~~Josef~~ Havlis is the secretary of our church, godfather of postmaster Fajmon, son-in-law of godfather Totusek, son of godfather Havlis, Sr., etc. Much of our congregation is made up of godfathers, godmothers, fathers-in-law, uncles, aunts, and I don't know who else, until I can't keep it straight.

November 24, 1891. The days of enthusiasm and excitement, and also the day of my installation are over. It seems like a dream after which a person feels worn out and lonely.

I shall start from the beginning. Mr. Balcar came on Tuesday evening. We entertained each other and had much to talk about. Several other brothers came other evenings to meet the Melnik minister. Brother Balcar preached to a large congregation on Friday evening,

Rev Kun came Saturday morning. He is a fine, elderly gentleman, much liked by the people. I can understand why they waited eagerly to be comforted by him from the Word of God.

So many people came Sunday morning that the church overflowed. Mr. Balcar preached on the text from the prophesy of Isaiah, chapter 62, verses 4 and 6; "You shall no more be termed Forsaken and your land shall no more be termed Desolate. Upon your wall, O Jerusalem, I have set watchmen; all the day and all the night they shall never be silent."

He told how badly the Czech Evangelical people felt in a foreign country because they did not have preachers, but that now this congregation is entering a new era in which it can be grateful it can work with a spiritual leader toward building a sound church and the kingdom of God.

Rev Kun followed with the installation ceremony and used for his introductory remarks the text from the Epistle to the Hebrews 12,1-2: "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance that race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith." It was an admonition to the preacher and to the congregation to be faithful in the tasks for which the Lord called them and joined them together.

The two ministers left early Monday morning. I feel that I have a big piece of work before me, but that I am not alone.

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Anyone who would see Silver Lake today for the first time would find it difficult to imagine how it looked fifty years ago. He would scarcely believe that there were no sidewalks and that the streets became muddy after a rain. The houses were modest and few in number. The largest building was the Polish Catholic Church, which was not far from our church. The most solid house was the Polish parsonage.

I decided to teach the children the Czech language. Since the church was hard to heat, my landlord suggested that I have my Saturday School in the space above his store. There was probably no school as inconvenient as this one but it was a happy one. We might not be able to sit comfortably, but we could sing until the windows rattled, and people stopped in front and listened. The place was short on light but there was still good progress in reading because Czech was the language families spoke. Since there were no lamps, there could be no reading or writing when it turned cloudy, but there would be recounting of Bible stories or of Czech historical events.

In the beginning, I had my work divided the way I described in one of my letters: On Thursday evening we have Sunday School teacher training in our dining room. There are five teachers. Friday evening we have the Bible hour, where I explain portions of the Bible. After that we spend some time singing church hymns. On Saturday I teach children from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. | Sunday we have divine service (10:00 to 12:00), Sunday School (12:00 to 1:30), and youth fellowship (3:00 to 4:00)

I would like to have grown-ups in the neighborhood join with the youth group.

The holidays are coming. I am going to preach four days in a row, from Christmas eve through Sunday. That will make five sermons, because I shall preach twice on Christmas Day. At this date (December 17), I am preparing the second Christmas sermon. In a week from now, at New Year's, it will be like this again. The people are anxious to hear the Word of God.

I don't mind the work, I only hope the holidays will bring warmth and light. Thank God that there is a great deal of life in this congregation!

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The schedule of worship during the week and on Sunday had to be changed because, following the installation, the brethren from Hopkins asked me to conduct their services every fourth Sunday and the brethren from the Jan Hus branch wanted me every third Sunday afternoon. The latter agreement had to be changed to every other Sunday to equalize the time with that given to the Hopkins church.

Singing in the church^y was from the Czech hymnal, the Kancional, without organ accompaniment. The singing was led in those days by brothers Zbitovsky and Travnicek. They sat in the balcony and their leadership was excellent. No wonder! They had been singing this way with heart and soul for many years. On palm Sunday the sound of

weeping was mixed with th^e song: "On Sunday, on the Day of Palms, our Jesus Christ did weep; His sacrifice was near at hand, His promise He must keep." It was the same with other hymns.

The sons of those fathers and the daughters of those mothers no longer sing those same songs. They sing other songs, and some may be beautiful, but it is doubtful they can sing as mightily as their parents who, after a week's heavy toil and many worries, had on Sunday their moments of joy, encouragement, and hope. Today there is much going on and there are many diversions, some of which may lead away from or overshadow what is important.

At funerals, conducted from the home, the songs were called out by the leader. The leader would read one line, and then he and all present would sing it together. He would then call out the second line, then the third, and so on. He used a collection of funeral songs, some printed and some hand-written, which he brought from Bohemia.

At funeral services in the church, the whole congregation sang from Kancionals. There were no undertakers or hearses.

Just before Christmas, one good brother Travnicek loaned me a fine, young horse which he did not need in the winter. I fed and curried him, and the horse either carried me or pulled my buggy wherever I needed to go. He was mine up to the time when field work began.

That winter one of our families, the Vondraceks, had a serious

misfortune. Several members of the family were driving home on a sled from the afternoon services. They were crossing the railroad tracks and a train hit into them. The train was passing by at an unusual hour and could not be seen from the road. The father and the oldest boy lost their lives, and one daughter was badly injured. It was a bad blow for the family, a loss for the church, and shocking news for the neighborhood.

Weeping and sobbing filled the home during the funeral, and weeping filled the church and followed to the cemetery. All we could do for the sorrowing family, and for ourselves, was to leave everything to the Lord and learn to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.

I used to visit this family quite often. I came one day and was told that the boys were chopping wood. I went to the forest nearby to see how they were doing. One of them, about sixteen years old, was splitting logs either for fuel or for posts. He appeared proud of his work, and was eager ^{to show} what he could do. He aimed the ax as carefully as he could -- and missed. He stopped splitting, turned toward me, and said gravely, "A person doesn't always hit the mark!"

That comment by the young lad stayed with me all my life. The boy spoke the truth. I would see a freshly plowed field and some of the furrows were not straight. I would see a field of grain, and here and there were bare spots. Someone didn't hit the mark. We preach the Word of God and do not always hit the mark. We try to teach and sometimes don't teach anybody anything. We talk to neighbors and sometimes

say the wrong thing. We deal with people, and mean well but sometimes we miss. We have good ideas and good intentions, but sometimes make mistakes. "For we all make^{many} mistakes." (James 3, 2) -- and when we miss, we may cause a great deal of harm that cannot be easily remedied.

I watched and saw how the young woodchopper tried to hit the mark every time. All of us should try as he did in whatever we are doing. Every miss should teach us to try harder to do better in what we are called to do, and thus in all duties of life fulfill the will of God.

From Silver Lake to Hopkins was only forty miles, but it was a long journey. The mixed train left Silver Lake in the morning, and arrived in Hopkins at 10:30. From Silver Lake to the railroad station was a half hour ride. From the Hopkins station, which didn't even have an agent, to the church or to brother Jan Empanger's farm, where I used to stay, took another half hour. However a person gets used to inconveniences when it is necessary.

No doubt everyone who saw Hopkins and the surrounding territory would wonder why people decided to settle where it was hilly and wooded. Much of the soil was gravel and the valleys were swampy. I was told that the newcomers settled where they found wood for home construction and for fuel. One of the first settlers told me that there were Indians around when he came, and that he was offered for a small price eighty acres where in time the Minneapolis business district was built. He didn't care for the land; it was sandy and without trees. He preferred

to settle among the hills and trees ten miles from the place where the city grew up. Anyway, it was good that Minneapolis expanded in a hurry. It became an excellent market for farm products.

I used to set out for Hopkins on Friday morning. We had the Bible hour in the evening. Saturday I had school for the children. On Sunday, we congregated for divine worship, after which we had Sunday School. I would start from Hopkins at 5:00 P.M. on Monday, and would arrive at home at about 10:00 P.M.

When in Hopkins, I was able to visit families on Sunday afternoon and on Monday. I got to know them as I listened to their joys, sorrows, and hopes. I like to recall the dedication of the brothers and sisters, most of whom have now passed away, and their kindness to me. On Sundays, when I couldn't be there, the elders took care of the worship service and the Sunday School. Train connections were time consuming, but otherwise convenient. I could go to Hopkins quite readily for funerals and weddings.

In the Jan Hus branch, six miles west of Silver Lake, the brethren had built a modest log building. They had planned to use it for Sunday School meetings. Some of the brethren were all of ten miles from Silver Lake, and wanted services of their own. I used to go out there every other Sunday afternoon. In winter, when there was snow, I hitched my horses to the sled; in the summer months, I came on horseback. The only way to go when roads were muddy was on horseback. Brothers Telecky and Plihal lived close to the meeting place. I used to leave my horses in a barn with one of them.

The singing was led by brothers Pohanka and Ondracek. They sat in front in a wide pew. The song book was again the Kancional. It was said that they knew the newer city tunes. These brothers used to walk four miles to church nearly every Sunday. As long as there are any who remember these times, the faithfulness of those two and the faithfulness of all the other brothers and sisters will not be forgotten. It used to be late in the day when our meeting was over, and in winter, I would come home in complete darkness.

In the second half of March I agreed to set out for South Dakota for a two weeks stay. I was to conduct worship services and sacraments, and help dedicate the church building to its intended use.. Following some warmer days, a storm came up toward morning of the day I was to start out. I tried to decide what to do when my landlord offered to take me to the Glenco railroad station (12 miles) with his mule team.

We started out early in the afternoon even though the train didn't go until at ten o'clock at night. The roads were full of large drifts and we turned off the road several times to drive through the fields. In one place where we were crossing a ditch, the wagon upset and I fell into the water up to my knees. What got wet froze before we reached the city, but dried on the train at night. It's a wonder I didn't catch cold.

I reached South Dakota, and the home where I was staying by evening of the next day. We had two weeks of meetings full of inspiration and joy. Two American ministers came for dedication services and did much to strengthen this small group of God's people.

I had to promise the members of each family that I would visit them during my stay. This I tried to do, and I was welcomed everywhere. I recall the difficulty of going from farm to farm during the first two days. One of the good brothers had a new, expensive, and big saddle. He loaned it to me and with it a workhorse with an extremely wide back. I couldn't ride comfortably unless I sat in the same manner as the ladies of another day used to sit.

The fourteen days passed quickly and it was soon time to part. I assured the brethren that the Omaha minister, brother ^{John} ~~Jim~~ Pipal, would come for a visit as I had asked him to do. I hoped some theological student would minister to them during the summer months, and that some day soon they would have a permanent minister. I told them I would like to see them in the fall, Lord willing, when I come back from Bohemia.

I was thinking about the trip to Bohemia and was getting ready for it, but I had some apprehensions. I didn't know what sort of welcome the Imperial Austrian Royal Government would give me. My pass had expired.

I wrote to the district captain in Kutna Hora, but did not get a reply. I did not know, and no one told me, that such matters could be arranged through an ambassador or a consulate. I had also sent proof of my ordination and of my occupation as a minister to the army commander. I finally received a notice that I was removed from

the artillery division and placed in reserve as an army chaplain. I would have to give a yearly report where I was performing as a minister. I was also given a strict order to join the Czech army if I should read in the newspapers that Austria-Hungary was at war. The papers would serve to identify me and might serve as a passport.

Meanwhile the Silver Lake elders worked out a plan for a parsonage. They tried all sorts of ways to keep me from going to Bohemia. They told me they were afraid I might drown in the ocean or decide to stay in Bohemia. By March everything was arranged so I could leave. I had Oldrich^{Kocian} a theological candidate, replace me. Professor Miskovsky, from Oberlin, offered to come with me, but was unable to settle his affairs in time to meet my schedule. In his place I found another travelling companion, my old-time fellow student and friend, brother Pastor Bren.

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Chapter XI

Trip to Bohemia in 1892

I was getting ready to continue writing my autobiography when I received a letter from our son. He wrote, "I was interested in your account in The Christian Journal of the 'First Years in Silver Lake'. I am hoping you will soon be going to Bohemia to get mother." So we are on the way, and we still hear the sincere good wishes from the Silver Lake and Hopkins friends, "May the Lord provide a safe journey and a safe return."

It was a beautiful spring. I conducted church services in Hopkins on the first Sunday in May, then started for Racine on Monday. I was to meet friend Bren so we could get ready to leave for New York and Europe. We spent two days in Racine.

Brother Bren had everything organized, not just the tickets for the ship but also paid up tickets for the trains and boats in Europe.

He also arranged for rooms in hotels in the various cities. He had the whole journey planned. Anyone who heard that my friend had studied law and had passed the lawyer's requirements would wonder why he did all this since he did not intend to practice law. I can tell what he told me. When he started his work in Racine, he met with a great deal of opposition and someone told him to his face that he was a minister of the gospel because he was unable to do anything else.

We stayed at the parsonage in New York. Our ship "Majestic" (White Star Line) left for Liverpool on May 9. I still feel how happy we were to start out. We were free from all cares and worries, and were eager to see, after four years' absence, our loved ones, our native land, and the places we knew in our youth.

The sea voyage was peaceful, the ocean was calm, and we had our cabin. We often talked far into the night. Not even a touch of sea sickness could spoil our feeling of well being. Several ministers traveled with us, and we had a church service on Sunday.

We told each other more than once that the ship and the sea provide the best possible rest. Even if a person has all manner of worries, he has to set them aside because he can do nothing about them. He doesn't know, and doesn't care, what goes on in the world. He lives for the moment.

We also found out, however, how one person can spoil the good of a whole group. Taking meals at the same table with us was a man who found nothing agreeable. He was against everything and satisfied with

nothing. He talked like an anarchist and an atheist. It was clear that he was unhappy and did not care to add anything to the happiness of anyone else. He became angry when someone tried to exchange words with him. He always hurried so we wouldn't have to spend much time with him. The other travellers hurried also, and he was always the last to leave the table.

We gained some good from this -- the lesson showing us what a person can be, or what he can do for his fellow travellers on a ship, or in life, to promote good feelings or bad.

The journey to Liverpool didn't take long. We docked in the afternoon of May 18. A number of boys begging for money met us. That made a poor impression on us because we didn't see anything like this in America. We took the train to London, and when morning came, we looked out over the beautiful English countryside.

Brother Bren had arranged in advance where we would stay. It was in a home where tourists could spend a few days. Someone he knew suggested the place. We didn't spend much time in the home, but rode all day in the upper deck of a London bus. We saw what tourists want to see: Westminster Abby, the Parliament Building, the Crystal Palace with its unusual tropical plants and trees, the bridge across the Thames river, and I don't know what else. We saw also what we didn't care for -- the London fog, which kept us from going anywhere for almost a whole day.

On Sunday we walked to Temple City, where the famous preacher, Rev Joseph Parker, was preaching to a large congregation. In the

afternoon we went to Hyde Park and were surprised by what we witnessed there. A man stood there, surrounded by a group of listeners. He talked about religion and zealously urged people to turn to God. A short distance away was another speaker with his audience. He talked about politics and explained what is wrong with the government and the laws, and what corrections should be made.

Not far from that, could be heard a lecture how workers should stand up for their rights, and a short ways farther, an anarchist voiced his complaints. To him nothing was sacred, and he was ready to tear down everything and run matters in his own way.

The public stood by calmly as if nothing was going on. Some folks stopped to listen; others walked on by. We walked from group to group to find out what was being discussed, and we saw what freedom of speech meant! We recalled what Pastor Dusek used to say, that a well established monarchy is better than a poor republic. He used to compare England and France which he called a republic without republicans.

Brother Bren and I agreed that in Central Park in New York everything was peaceful while in Hyde Park in London there was noise and shouting. We decided there must be a reason and need for the commotion. On May 19, 1892, I wrote from London: "There would be much to write about our joys and difficulties, our wandering and straying, our walking and riding." We tried to see in several days what should have taken a month. It tired us out.

I think we were glad to leave London, cross the Channel, and reach Antwerp. I remember this city for its harbor full of all kinds of ships. There were masts everywhere. We didn't stay long, but left for Brussels where we stayed a day and night, I received the impression of a beautifully built, clean city. Something else comes to mind. We were waiting for the train when we noticed that all the travellers were looking toward the station. A bearded man of about middle age was standing there with his wife. We were told that it was the Prince of Wales, who later became the British King Edward VI.

We didn't know where the Prince was going, but we were going to Cologne above the Rhine. We were eager to see this busy city, and especially the great cathedral which every tourist tried to visit.

In Cologne, above the Rhine, we took a boat that sailed up the River Rhine. It was a pleasant trip on a nice, clear day. We sat on deck and had a good view of wooded mountains and vast vineyards, and, here and there, of ruins of Knights' castles. We sailed through the ancient cities of Bonn, Koblenz, and Mohuc.

We had intended to go further, but decided we had seen enough and that it was time to hurry on to Bohemia. We took the train to Carlsbad. We said we had to see the renowned health resort. From there we rode to Prague, the city of one hundred steeples. Prague will forgive us that we gave it only a day. We made it a promise that we would return. I deserted my colleague Bren the next morning, and hurried to Kolin.

My beloved and I had become engaged through letters some months ago. As I now came up the steps to her home, I was met by a son of the Kvical family. It was Zdenek, who used to be my pupil. How the lad had grown in four years. He had his shirt off, and his back was painfully sunburned.

He didn't bother to greet me but ran to call the rest of the family. After four years in America, I spoke Czech with an English accent, though I didn't notice it myself.

I hurried to Habrkovice on the following day. I knew from correspondence what experiences our family had lived through, and now I heard it all over again, from my mother and my sister. When the time had come for my brother Josef to be taken into the army, his commander tried to get his release on the grounds that he was the manager of a farm and the support of his widowed mother.

He applied to the district sergeant. The sergeant suggested that brother Rudolf, eighteen years old, should volunteer for the army, and that it would then be easy to get Josef deferred. Rudolf joined the army and the sergeant sent the deferment request to the commander. The request was not granted, and, when spring came, Josef was notified. In the fall he was taken into the army. It thus happened that both brothers were in the army at the same time. Mother and my sister, with help from hired hands, managed as well as they could. It was an unhappy situation.

The mayor and the citizens of Habrkovice were interested in our family's affairs and had all sorts of ideas. When they heard that I was returning to Bohemia, they wondered if the merciless Austro-Hungarian State would put me in an army uniform, also. They didn't know that I had become an army chaplain in reserve and that I would not be called except in time of war.

I wanted to be of some help in the family difficulties, I set out, on someone's advice, for Prague to see the Assistant Commander, with the hope that the deferment would be put through. I was able to get a hearing from one of the officers, and explained how matters stood and asked politely that my request be granted. He looked at me and blurted out, "Do you think that we cook up these difficulties over here?" I realized it was no use to try further. I told him, "I just came from America where authorities do not treat the public this way." His face turned red with anger, and I walked out.

It took a long time to get a reply to the deferment request. When it did come, it maintained that the farm was productive enough and would not suffer if operated by hired help for three years. It also said the mother could be supported by her oldest son who was not in the army but was an evangelical preacher in America.

I visited my brother soldier Josef in Terezina, where my bride's brother was also stationed. Josef's thoughts were always with the farm which he was to inherit. After about two years in the Army, he wrote, "From the time we were on maneuvers in the

mountains, this soldier's life has been making me weaker."

Naturally, it was of interest to me what happened while I was away -- who died, who got married, who moved in. I was sorry to hear that some farmers lost their farms because of pride or intemperance, or that someone met with a misfortune. I was glad to hear about those who were doing well. I could feel that the village was like a small world where people worked, rejoiced, grieved and suffered together.

It was pleasant to see familiar faces and hear words of welcome to my native village. There were moments when I relived the same feeling I had when I came home from school for vacations. It seemed that the house and garden, every field, meadow, forest and even the river Doubravka welcomed me. All of it seemed to ask, "Where have you been so long?"

I marveled how our formerly dappled grey mare had lost much of her dark color. The black mare was still spirited, but the small colt she used to be was now full grown.

Pastor Dusek received me with a warm welcome. He was pleased that I was bringing good news ^{from} New York about his students. He was glad to know that they were happy in the important work they were doing. He asked about many things and tried to give helpful advice. However, not all reports he heard agreed with what he had formerly considered America to be. It is necessary to see how things are before they can be understood.

He was much interested in what I told him about Czech settlements in America and about the hopes of our countrymen and fellow believers.

He asked particularly about South Dakota. He smiled when he said, "You have the reputation of a good trainer of horses."

Pastor Dusek invited me to preach in the Kolin church, and I was glad to accept. He was particularly happy that, besides myself, he had, for two Sundays to help with the services, brother Bren, professor Miskovsky, and my fellow student, candidate Skalak. Candidate Skalak became in time pastor in Vsetina in Moravia. Pastor Dusek was thus tasting the fruit of his painstaking efforts to develop capable preachers.

Senior Pastor Fleischer, of Chvaletice, greeted me with much kindness. My mother went to school with him. He had christened and confirmed me, and encouraged me in my student years. He invited me to preach from his pulpit on some future Sunday. He understood that there was need in America for Czech spiritual leaders. His wife, who was sister to the Texas minister Jindrich Juren, advised me not to settle in America permanently, however. She said that my family would never see me again just like she no longer saw her beloved brother.

It was somewhat my duty to pay a visit to Pastor Kocian in Horatev because his son Oldrich was substituting for me in my church. I preached in Horatev one Sunday, and in the afternoon, following the afternoon service, talked about America and our parishes. Oldrich's parents and his brothers and sisters asked many questions. They were confident that their son and brother would make good in America.

He eventually completed his studies, spent a short time in Cuba, Kansas, became ill, and went to his parent's home where he passed away.

I also drove out to Velim to see Pastor Szalatnay with whom I had spent a vacation. This man had been in America some years ago when he received an invitation from folks around Cedar Rapids. He became acquainted with Rev Kun in Ely, Iowa. Mr. Sinclair, a good friend of Czechs, asked Pastor Szalatnay to take over the Cedar Rapids parish and offered to support him financially. Mr. Szalatnay did not accept because he had important work in Bohemia. He was from an aristocratic family and was used to life in Bohemia. It would have been difficult to adapt to American ways.

I used to see and listen to Senior Janata when I attended Sunday School conventions and other church affairs. I can't forget how fervently he recited in the Caslava church his poem: "Caslava, you lovely city, your beauty must last forever!" I had heard about this from other pupils: Bren, Dobias, and Svoboda. They agreed that he was like a father to his parish, a loving friend of children and young people, and a willing help to theological candidates. I considered myself fortunate that I got to know him.

It so happened that the theologian Josef Svoboda, son of the Bobnic teacher, passed away in Chleby. I roomed with him for a year when I was in third grade at the gymnasium. I also knew his father. They came from St. Mikulas, a village near Habrkovice. I decided to go to Josef's funeral. On the way, I met on the train Mr. Bastecky,

the Prague bookseller, who had written and translated many delightful hymns. I answered his many questions because he showed a real interest in religious work.

I also met on the train two students from Kolin. This was the first time I met Alois Barta. I knew Jaroslav Dobias when he was a beginning student and roomed with his brother Bohdan. I used to visit the two brothers in their apartment. The students asked many questions. It might be they were already thinking of keeping up their studies and moving to America. They were amazed that I don't have a senior or a superintendent over me. I didn't realize, and neither did they, that we would some day be joined together in life and in work.

We arrived in Chleby. I don't know how Senior Pastor Janata found out that I would be in the crowd attending the funeral. He found me, took me to the parsonage, gave me a cleric's robe, and asked me to read a few lines of scripture and give a short talk. I agreed and, in my part of the service, I read the twenty third psalm and told how the departed Josef and I used to read the same words before retiring for the night. I added that it was evident that he was versed in religion, had a sound faith, and was eager to accept God's promises in life or in death, and in this there was comfort for grieving parents and a lesson for all of us to hold fast to the Lord.

I met some brother ministers and theologians after the funeral. The ministers were kind. The theologians talked as if they tried to say, "Can any good come from America?" This attitude was what they

picked up from the faculty in Vienna. They didn't know that it was necessary to really study when in an American seminary.

Senior Janata insisted that I preach in his church. When Jaroslav Dobias and I were about to start walking to Nymburg, he called a carriage.

We went inside the railroad station and read from the bulletin board when the train would leave for Kolin. Since we had over an hour's wait, we decided to look around the city. We found, when we returned to the station, that the train had already gone. The train schedule had been changed that very day.

What now? We didn't care to return to Chleb. I suggested we go to Bobnice for the night or stay in a hotel. Neither idea suited my young companion, so I said jokingly that we could walk to Kolin. The idea was accepted with delight.

We braced ourselves with a good supper and started out. It was a beautiful, mild and clear night. We began at a fast pace. When the road came to an intersection, and we didn't know which way to go, my friend assured me that our choice would work out all right. We walked and talked from ten in the evening until five in the morning. I suppose we walked about twenty miles.

When we arrived at our destination, we had to wait for Kolin to wake up. I could eat breakfast and go to bed, but my fellow traveller had to go to school. I haven't forgotten the walk even though fifty years have gone by.

Our elementary school teacher was still teaching but his retirement was almost here. He was now teaching children of his former pupils. He was proud of 'his boys' who had gone out into the world, and was glad to see me. I had gone farthest from home except the engineer Hrubes, who was serving on a ship somewhere near China.

The teacher's wife was also glad to see me. She was interested in what I could tell her about my experiences in a foreign land. Our teacher demonstrated his concern for an unusually gifted pupil. He told me, "I have in school a well behaved, very intelligent boy who should be enrolled in the gymnasium. When he was six years old and started going to school, he had already read the entire Bible. His father is a tailor in Lisice (the mother passed away) and cannot afford to send the boy to an upper school. I would be glad if you would look into it to see if something can be done. The boy is evangelical. It would be a shame if he should follow his father's occupation.

When I talked this over with Pastor Dusek, he asked me to bring the father and the son to Kolin. He said he would like to see them. He was glad he found a bright evangelical boy whom he could help bring up and support. I walked to Lisice and asked the father and son to come to Kolin if the lad was really interested in higher education. They came one morning, and I took them to the parsonage.

After a discussion, the son was enrolled in the gymnasium in the fall. I heard about him as years went by. Pastor Dusek added this note to one of his letters: "Your ward is doing well."

I had a chance to see him when he was in the seventh grade. He gave the impression of a good and modest person. He became Counsel for the State Statistical Bureau and a member of the Synod of the Bohemian Brethren Evangelical Church. His name? Dr Antonin Bohac.

Concerning my wedding, first there had to be announcements as requested by Austrian laws. They had to appear for three weeks in churches where the engaged attended.

We wanted to have a quiet, modest wedding but had to go along with Mr. Kvicala who didn't wish to give away his beloved stepdaughter without a fitting ceremony. It was on Saturday, June 2, 1892. There was a light rain in the morning, but the day turned bright and clear. The church was already packed when we arrived. It may have been the first time that anyone from America came to Kolin to claim his bride. Pastor Fleisher was a witness and friend Bren was best man. America was represented by Professor Miskovsky from Oberlin.

The church choir sang a wedding song. Pastor Dusek gave a talk which he wrote down for us so we could review this important moment of our lives. I am relating the speech as it was given, with the exception of a few word changes to clarify the meaning:

Book of Ruth 1, 16 & 17. "Where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God; where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if even death parts me from you."

The entire ceremony was conducted in a serious and dignified manner. The conversation at the wedding dinner was also serious. Evidently the idea that the newlyweds would be leaving for a far country was in the minds of many. It was difficult to erase sad thoughts when I saw tears in my bride's mother's eyes.

The weeks before we left Bohemia were devoted to visiting relatives and friends. Many visits were spent in saying good-by, and it was soon time to part with those in Habrkovice and Kolin. We were going far away and for a long stay. Was there a chance we would meet again?

In August we set out on the journey to our new home. Before getting on the boat in Hamburg, we had the pleasure of looking at the curiosities of the city. An unexpected surprise was waiting for us as we boarded the boat. We had reserved and paid for a cabin for the two of us, but when we came on board we were told we would have to separate because of the large crowd of passengers. My bride was put in a cabin with three other women, and I was given a cabin with five other men.

My bride understood the emergency and did not complain. We spent the days on deck where we could observe what was going on. We were glad neither one of us became seasick.

Of the fellow travellers, I remember Mr. Langer, a Chicago salesman returning from a visit to Bohemia. When I sailed from America, I was taken for a Swede. Now on the return trip I would be taken for

something else.

Mr. Langer had a beautifully printed and bound book of prayers. A page in the book would be in Hebrew, and the page opposite in Czech. He showed me the book, and I read out loud the Hebrew version. An Israelite lady sitting nearby cried out in German, "You can't always tell from his appearance what a person really is." She evidently thought I was a Jew because I could read Hebrew.

We were hosted in New York by Pastor Pisek and his delightful family. We couldn't stay long because we had a letter from Pastor Balcar asking us to stop at Melnik, Wisconsin, where they were planning to consecrate a new church. I preached at the ceremony in Czech, and Mr. Balcar in German.

We also had an invitation to stop on brother Pipal's farm near Muscoda. We were glad to relax, after so much travelling, in the home of this fine family. Toward Sunday we finally arrived in Silver Lake, where a sincere welcome awaited us. On Sunday morning my substitute, theologian Kocian, gave the sermon. In the afternoon, the two of us performed the funeral for Antonin Nunvar, one of the first settlers in the neighborhood. He was one of the brothers who had great concern for getting God's people organized.

Because the parsonage wasn't completed, we were moved in with the Fajman family, where we were given two rooms. On the day we came over, mother Fajman took my wife to the cupboard to show her the cooking utensils and other needs which the sisters of the church had collected to start us in housekeeping.

The minister's new wife was loved by the Fajman family and by the church people. I caught six year old Eddie Fajman holding her by her hand or holding on to her skirt. I told him kiddingly, "What are you doing, Eddie? It is I who brought her from Europe."

He answered, with tears in his eyes, "No, it is I who brought her from Europe."

I marvelled at the ease with which the pastor's wife became used to the new surroundings. She must have been won over by the love of all those aunts and godmothers that she got to know. She never complained of loneliness and never felt sorry she ventured to a new land beyond the sea.

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Chapter XII

Silver Lake 1892--1899

The most pleasant task that newlyweds have ahead of them probably is furnishing their new home. When the parsonage was finished, we started buying furniture through the village merchants. Because they didn't have the needed pieces in stock, we ordered them from Minneapolis firms from catalog descriptions. Some of our citizens didn't praise this method, but we did win the good will of many and were happy with our selections.

The good brethren helped us nail the wall-to-wall carpeting which was so popular at that time, and assisted us in other ways. When by the end of October we were settled in the parsonage, whole families would come for visits to shorten the long evenings.

A delightful project awaited us in the spring when we decided to landscape the land around the parsonage. We decided to have flower beds

and a lawn in front of the house. That was something new for the village and for the farm home. That was years ago when there were no sidewalks in the village and the streets turned to mud after a rain.

For appearance sake, I planted hard maples at the sides of the house; and, in front, two basswoods. I also put in poplars in back of the church. Following that, I planted a row of apple trees between the church and the parsonage.

"They won't grow for you." we were warned, "others have tried, and nothing came of it."

"Well," we answered, "it won't hurt to try a good thing one more time."

When the trees grew and brought forth fruit, other folks decided to give apple trees another chance. One year we stored forty bushels of beautiful apples in the basement. All of them disappeared by spring.

I soon found out that I couldn't expect the branch church brethren to come for me on Sunday, nor could I expect someone would cart me around so I could visit families or call on the sick. I wanted to buy a horse and needed a barn.

Brother Totusek had a building around the corner from the parsonage. We used to hold Czech classes in the building. He gave a section of the structure as a sort of an addition to the church. The brethren pulled it to the back of the parsonage and made it into a barn. In those days everything was homely and poor, but still so pleasant! Someone suggested using sawdust for the floor, saying, "The horse will pack it down; and it will be

a hard floor." The horse did pack it down, but he always dug a hole in front of the trough, and the hole had to be filled from time to time.

I bought a four-year old horse ^{from} brother Lauzer. He told me I would have to teach the horse to pull the buggy alone, not in a team. I would also have to break him to the saddle. When I hitched him for the first time to a buggy with a high top, he became frightened, started to run, and leaped over a four feet high stone wall. The buggy lost its top and also the seat.

We measured it later and found that the jump, diagonally across the wall, was sixteen feet long. Even so, I was able to hold the horse. I had in the buggy with me a four year old girl, Antonette. She fell out and didn't get hurt but cried because her dress got dirty and her ribbon got crushed. I had to ride to the west church on horseback.

The horse was actually a mare ^{and} was called "Jinny". She was very lively and quick and could not get used to walking as she had to at the head of a funeral procession. It was not until four years later, after she raised a daughter and the two worked as a team, that she slowed down a little.

I recall with pleasure the good times we had when we went for rides around Swan Lake or for a visit to a church family. We never went riding in the morning hours. Those were reserved for studying, copying a sermon, reading, or writing letters. Even when we visited a family in early afternoon, we generally had to stay for supper.

Often, as we were coming home in the dark, we would decide not to let ourselves stay that long next time, but it was hopeless because we were always told, "Your horses will be fed and watered. All you'll have to do when you get home is to unhitch and put them in the barn."

They were good-hearted people in the Silver Lake parish. The salary wasn't big, but the people shared with us what they had.

Singing in church took place without organ accompaniment. Because some of the younger women, my wife included, could play, there was a desire to secure an organ. The brethren who had been leading the singing agreed, but with the condition that the organ be installed in the balcony. I secured a hymnal from Bohemia and selected the easier tunes. A group of us met one day each week to practice the new hymns.

However, the congregation soon became homesick for the old familiar songs of their native land. We decided to invite one of the song leaders to the parsonage and had him sing the beloved Czech songs. We wrote down the notes of the melody and later added the harmony. It was a good thing that brother Pastor Losa had brought me from Bohemia a book on Harmonizing. With the help of the book, we were able to accomplish something. It wasn't professional or perfect, but the songs could be played and sung.

The organ in the balcony did not meet with success. It was hot there in the summer and the sister organist could not stand the discomfort. The organ was moved downstairs to the front -- against the

wishes of the veteran song leaders who were being replaced by younger members. I asked the younger members to learn to sing in four-part harmony. About twenty volunteered, and with them an older brother, a trained tenor, who was tremendously helpful.

They came one evening per week and practiced faithfully and patiently. The joy of accomplishment was evident when they sang at the Christmas celebration and found out how much the congregation enjoyed them. It didn't occur to anyone that the choir could sing during Sunday services or at other church functions.

It so happened that a child died in one of the families, and the parents requested that the young choir sing at the funeral. The choir was then asked to perform at other funerals, so the choir members started to learn funeral songs and were so faithful in this that they knew in time all the funeral tunes in 'Songs for the Way through Life', 'Songs of Zion', and 'Collection of Funeral Hymns'. The money they earned was used to buy things for the church building. When Christmas drew near, ^{they} ventured to learn some quite complicated selections.

The children of the parish were happy to attend our newly started Czech school. The school benefited them and the church. They learned to read and write Czech and to enjoy singing. They also learned something of Czech church happenings, Sunday School work, and confirmation. They later became Christian Endeavor members, and finally, to our joy, sincere and faithful church members.

In addition to the Czech school and the four part choir practice, we also had one evening each week, a Bible hour and a Sunday School teachers' training class.

At the beginning, when I didn't have to go to Hopkins on Sunday or to the Jan Hus branch, we held evening services. For a time we held Youth Fellowship only when I could be present, but later the Christian Endeavor folks met by themselves every Sunday afternoon. Adults who lived in the city or nearby used to join the group. If any of the young people lived far from church and wanted to attend the meeting, they would be invited to dinner by one of the village families. It was a delightful congregation of God's children. New families developed from this group, and the number of worshippers increased.

The Sunday services were always well attended, and the church was full when the weather was good, and overcrowded on important annual holidays. The members had migrated mainly from the Czech-Moravian highlands where they learned to value God's Word and God's church. They were sometimes told that they went to church purely from habit because they never recounted any personal religious experiences. Habits, however, are indications of good resolves, and often guide life's decisions and cultivate character.

It is certainly a good sign when people try to be in church and in the company of God's faithful people every Sunday. Many of the believers possessed true faith for everyday living, and a solid trust

in God which strengthened them in their struggles in the new homeland and gave comfort in days of affliction.

Up to this time no doctor had located in Silver Lake. After some years, an older doctor came to the village to open a drug store. His name was Van Krevelen, a Hollander, and he began to practice medicine in the neighborhood. During my wife's illness, he used to come over twice a day to treat her. When she started to recover, he confessed that there were days when he was afraid for her.

Dr Van Krevelen was a very religious man. Even though he didn't understand a word in Czech, he came to church every Sunday dressed in his dark suit and high hat, He said he wanted to be in a gathering of God's people, that he felt he needed to be there.

Eventually we started a Sunday School in the English language for the doctor's children and the school superintendent's children. The doctor brought to church with him regularly a young man, a German, who 'happened' to arrive in our village. He liked it here and stayed for the summer.

This young man had a father in Germany, a rich merchant. The lad ran away from home because his father urged him to become a merchant while he wanted to be an expert violinist. To accomplish his goal, he practiced eight hours every day. He was friendly with the doctor, and with us, and did not look anywhere else for company. He used to bring his violin to our house and play for us like the real master he was.

The doctor didn't praise the young man's idea and suggested he

forget the violin and make up with his father and, as long as he did not care to be a merchant, to study medicine. It seemed that the man might follow the doctor's advice. Anyway, he left in the fall, bound for Germany. The newspapers gave accounts of concerts he gave in cities along the way. It appeared he was earning money for his trip home.

Dr Van Krevelen stayed in Silver Lake just a few years. It was said that he failed to diagnose a sickness correctly, and earned a poor reputation. Soon afterward his drug store burned down, and he moved to the State of Michigan where he had relatives.

Not everything in our parish was as it should have been. Some of the brethren brought from the old country the unfortunate habit of heavy drinking. I realized I couldn't constantly discuss this evil in my sermons because the congregation would tire of it, so I tried to bring the erring ones to the better road by talking to them in private.

As a result of my efforts, some of them tried to fight the bad habit. One of the men, in a Christian Endeavor meeting, asked the group's forgiveness for his actions and promised to reform. Others gave up the uphill struggle, but they understood I was trying to help them and did not get angry with me.

One of these intemperate fellows asked me to pay a visit to his friend who had been painfully and dangerously hurt in a bad accident. The friend, who also drank, was to undergo an operation and wanted me to be present in the operating room. I suspected the accident was his own fault, and lost my patience and said, "I have already gone through many hardships for you and because of you!"

He answered, "You are right -- I have been troublesome, but come anyway."

So it was, but I told myself, "If people were angels there would be no need for ministers, and my work is therefore important. It helps people turn away from those habits and acts which cause sorrow, and leads them to a new life which brings joy and happiness to individuals and families.

There was an upheaval among the church members, and at the annual meeting when a motion was made that the minister should not officiate at funerals for families that did not belong to the church. The motion was made for what seemed to be good reasons. It was said, "Why should anyone who didn't live by the Word of God be sent on his last journey with the Word of God? Should the church be of service to them who in their lifetime disliked Christianity and the church?

The motion gained support and was passed. How did it work out? Very well. when the deceased didn't have relatives or friends or neighbors that belonged to the church. Soon there were such misunderstandings, however, and the minister was finally given the right to make decisions according to his conscience and best judgement.

It was a good move when it was decided that the sacrament of baptism be performed during church services. It was dignified and worthwhile for the worshippers because it reminded all of them what baptism means.

It was an important innovation when a church record book was started. The record book was to list the members of the church and

to give dates of births, baptisms, confirmations, and deaths. This book was open to all members of the church, and became an official record of births and other personal events.

The founding of a church library came about when some brethren and I donated books or gave money for the purchase of new books.

The misunderstanding and bitterness that was evident when the congregation split in two faded away when each group attended to its own business. When Rev Reitinger and I became better acquainted, we were on friendly terms, and especially so after I refused to accept new church members without a letter showing release from another church. We had friends among the members of the Independent Reformed Church and were glad to visit with them whenever we could. I was told that one of the members of the Reformed church concluded, "I used to think that the division of the parish was a misfortune, I found it wasn't when I realized how our good members brought with them sound training from the older group."

The Polish Catholic Church stood across the street from our parsonage. The pastor's name was Rev Tyskiewicz. The story goes that he came from a noble family that took part in the revolt against the Russian government. One of his brothers was executed, and another fled to Holland and lived in Breda. The present priest was an eighteen-year boy when he ran away to America to study for the priesthood. He disliked the way some Poles lived, and often brought up the Czechs as examples of better behavior.

The priest was a good neighbor. He came over for visits and invited me to his home. It was evident he craved company and the exchange of ideas, and he was delighted that I was interested in the Polish language and literature.

One morning his housekeeper came over to tell us that the priest did not get up for breakfast and that she was afraid he might not be alive. I walked over with her and found that he had died in his sleep. We went to his funeral.

Rev Tyskiewicz was replaced by the Czech priest Rev Jiranek. He also conducted services for Czech catholics in a nearby small country church and was having them build a church in the village. He used to come to our house once a week. We didn't always agree, and we almost quarreled about Komensky. Once we had a discussion about temperance after which he exclaimed, "You might make a man of me still!" It didn't happen. He was an unfortunate man, had no control over his appetite, and was soon transferred from Silver Lake.

The Catholic Church was given a new priest, Rev Zaleski. The Czech Catholics built a church under the leadership of priest Rev Cermak. We were at peace with both priests, and kept up a mutually friendly relationship.

The work in Silver Lake, the Jan Hus branch, and Hopkins took up much of my time and strength. Even so, it became necessary to fulfill requests from various other places for the preaching of God's Word.

Seven evangelical families had their homes in Waconia, a small

village halfway between Silver Lake and Hopkins. They had close at hand a church of Moravian Brethren, but the services were in German. The Czech brethren didn't speak German, so they asked if I would stop on the way ^{from} Hopkins and conduct services on Monday evenings.

I used to arrive in Waconia at noon, and we would hold evening services at Kuceras or one of the Zemans or at Cermaks. Kuceras had two small daughters, one of whom is now the wife of Pastor Burian. One of the Zeman families had several boys who were always proud to show me what they caught in the woods-- a racoon, a flying squirrel and other animals.

On Tuesday the brother at whose home I stayed would take me to the railroad station about eight miles away. There was a long wait before the train came, and I sometimes walked to the next station to pass the time away. It didn't matter if the stop in Waconia took time and effort. I could see that the brethren were grateful that I could bring them the comfort of God's Word.

I was called also to other places where brethren met in homes for services. One such location was Chatfield, Minnesota. Other requests came from individual homes or groups of families who lived too far from church and could not set out with their small children they wanted baptized. There were trips by train or by horse and buggy to the villages of Olivia, Jordan, and Hector.

I made trips to Tabor, Minnesota, as long as the brethren didn't have a steady preacher and had student ministers during the summer.

I was again at Tabor at the installations of brother Dobias and brother Vavrina. It was a long way from home. The journey took a day and night, but the zeal and dedication of this small Tabor church gave me strength and erased any feelings of fatigue.

During those first years, before there were many ordained pastors, I was called quite often by even distant parishes to take part in special occasions. In autumn of 1892, I was called to South Dakota for the installation of Pastor Linka. During the week I was there, we rode horseback from farm to farm because brother Linka wanted to visit the homes of his parishioners.

He was the right man for the place and the position. I liked his answer when I asked him what impression the country made on him: "It gave me courage when I saw how much the country needs both physical and spiritual effort. The region needs to be improved, and the group of Godly people are eager to build the Kingdom of God."

I became convinced, after some years, that it was a good move that brother Linka came to Eagle (now Academy) church rather than myself. When the dry years came, especially in 1894, this practical pastor suggested that the farmers build a creamery.

The creamery was constructed, and the pastor operated it. It helped to tolerate the difficult time until better crops could be had. The pastor's wife was modest, bright, and patient. She did much to keep the church facilities in harmony. I liked what one of the brethren said to me, "I used to think it was a mistake that you wouldn't take over our church. Today I see it didn't matter that much."

The country was waiting to be developed, and so it became in full measure. An expert who came from another state said that no Czech settlement

made so much progress as the one near Acedemy. It is too bad that there were some years of drought and one summer when grasshoppers invaded the area, but the settlers always looked ahead with new hope.

From the spiritual standpoint, in spite of the shortage of Czech ministers, the Lord's work progressed under the leaderships of neighboring English pastors.

The year 1893 is memorable for all of our parishes. That was when we had the first convention of all the Czech and Moravian ministers and theologians. It was an interdenominational convention, and those present included Pastor Motycka from the Texas Czech-Moravian Church, and brother ^{John} ~~Jan~~ Rundus from the Congregational Church. Also present was an elder, brother ^{Matthew} ~~Matěj~~ Pipal, from Muscoda, Wisconsin.

The main purpose of the meeting was to gather inspiration from God's Word and to get acquainted. It was suggested that we publish the newspaper 'Unity' and 'Story Time'.

A bigger and more organized convention took place in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1896, when the Evangelical Union was formed. The convention members took time out from the meetings to visit the mother church near Ely and the west branch. I preached at this west branch at its dedication.

In the year 1893, when Pastor Kun asked me to preach on the 22nd of October at the dedication of the enlarged and newly decorated building, he wrote that in this way I would be ~~repaying~~ repaying him for his part in my installation in Silver Lake. I remember the dedication day as 'one that the Lord had made' a day filled with joy and hope for the pastor and the church.

It didn't dawn on me, as we visited in the evening, that my talk with Pastor Kun would be the last. We talked far into the night about Czech parishes in America. He was concerned about the welfare of the various groups of the faithful, scattered throughout the midwestern states, which he had served. He felt that the separate groups could grow and join to form an Independent Reformed Church Union. He told me how he warned Dr Burkhalter, "It's all right to support the Czech Evangelical Church in Cedar Rapids, but don't you buy it."

I never forgot his almost final words to me, "I brought this parish this far, as you saw it today--about as far as I had hoped to take it. But I feel that I won't be here long and I beg of you to take care of it after I'm gone as much as you can."

About three months went by. It was on January 6, 1894. We were having the annual Silver Lake Church meeting when a telegram came that Rev Kun passed away and that I was to preach the funeral sermon. I started for Ely that same afternoon, but not before I received a warning from the curator, "The Ely folks will want you to take hold of their church, but please don't desert us."

The funeral for the meritorious minister took place on January 9, 1894. I gave a talk in the parsonage for the family members, and preached in church on the text: 'Well done, good and faithful servant, you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' (Matt. 25, 21) Dr Burkhalter, pastor of the Cedar Rapids First Presbyterian Church, and friend of the deceased minister, spoke in English. Pastor Hlavaty had the final words at the cemetery.

It was touching to see the church members part with their minister of many years. Many of them wept as they looked into his face for the last time. It was a moment when the men were not ashamed of their tears.

Rev Kun was a modest man who loved simplicity. He requested to be buried without any caremony. He used to say, however, that he liked to see the hearse pulled by a team of black horses. For this reason there was a team of black horses to take his earthly remains to the cemetery.

Immediately after the funeral, I was asked by the elders if I would be willing to take over their church. Later on, the request came in the name of the congregation. In the event I wouldn't accept, I was asked to suggest someone who might be available.

I suggested Pastor Balcar of Melnik, Wisconsin, who was anxious to devote himself to a wide field of activity. The congregation sent him an invitation, voted him in, and the Ely church had a new minister that same year.

In those years I was ^{often} away from home and from my regular work. I helped in the dedication of churches or in the installation of pastors in Ely, Iowa; Muscoda, Wisconsin; Saratoga, Iowa; Tabor, Minnesota; and I don't know where else. The Silver Lake people were always willing to let me go to those places.

When I was in Hopkins or somewhere else, the brethren would conduct a service at which they read a message from 'A collection of Sermons'. I wasn't, of course, present but my wife always told me that the service was dignified, impressive, and well attended. For these meetings there was an enclosure around the pulpit and the Lord's table, where no one was

allowed. There was an ordinary table, covered with a red cloth, in front of the enclosure. The lector, the unforgettable brother ^{John} ~~Jan~~ Jerabek, who had been a leader for many years, sat next to the table and faced the congregation. The choir took seats at his side. In these services, the people would review their years without a permanent pastor when they kept up their meetings and thus received the comfort of God's Word.

Such dedication on the part of the brethren laid the foundation in many locations of our churches and brought light to those who did not care to walk in darkness. At one time brother Bren and I were in a meeting with some English speaking ministers. We gave them the question: "How long would an English congregation hold together if it had no minister and conducted its own services?"

The answer was: "Scarcely three months."

A brother minister from another state came for a visit. When he became acquainted with the location and the people, he declared, "You have it nice here, but it seems to me that where I am we are more in the center of the world. I like it here, but it is too much out of the way." However, we never supposed we were away from things or that we were deserted. We had many guests. Students who preached in Tabor during vacations used to stop at our place. Among them were Alois Koukol, Smetanka, Bazata, Havranek, and Pastor Jaroslav Dobias. One winter we had with us brother Otokar Utikal, a theologian and medical student. I suggested he serve the Hopkins church during the summer. He moved to Hopkins, but died after a short stay.

Brother Klapus was with us one summer. He also stayed in Hopkins for several weeks. One year we had Jenny Bazata as a guest. Her brother Vaclav, who was preaching in Saratoga during the summer, wrote us that his sister was coughing and that there was the danger she might get tuberculosis if she didn't stay where there is plenty of air. She stayed a whole year, then moved to New York, got married, and moved to California.

We corresponded with our people in Habrkovice and Kolin. That somehow helped to keep us from being too lonesome for them. We had letters of advice and encouragement from Pastor Dusek, and there was a constant exchange of ideas between the Kolin parsonage and the one in Silver Lake.

We were pleased when, one summer, friend Bren, his wife, and their little boy came over. We recalled bygone days, some a long way back, and shared in each other's experiences. Later, brother Pastor Dudycha and his wife arrived to visit with us a few days. We were not deserted.

Joseph
~~Josef~~ F. Kun, son of Rev Kun, a bank executive in St. Paul, used to come to be with me when I was visiting Hopkins, and I sometimes spent some time in his home. I later helped him edit his book 'The Faithful Servant'.

When I found out that Rev Kun was going to attend the St. Paul Synod, I invited him to stop and spend a few days with us. I pointed out that the entire congregation, remembering his services over many years, would be encouraged by his visit.

Rev Kun's promised visit was not fulfilled. The life of this devoted minister of God came to an end a short time later.

The Silver Lake parsonage was seldom without a guest. Several girls came regularly to have the minister's wife teach them handicraft or give them piano lessons. Eventually she acquired a permanent resident. It so happened that one of the sisters in the church died and left four small girls. The oldest was ten years old, the youngest about three. The father was in the grain business and could not take care of his daughters. The dying mother expressed the hope and the confidence that, "The Lord would watch over the children." We decided to adopt the youngest; the next to the youngest was adopted by the ^{Joseph}~~Josef~~ Havlis family that already had several children.

So we acquired little Sophie. She soon got used to us and her new home. She kept wondering for a long time why the new mother didn't go to the woods for fuel and why I didn't go to work every morning. It was interesting to observe how her young mind worked. She could play with and talk to her doll Katie an hour at a time and still know what was going on and said around her.

We were surprised when she told us that her "Katie is so practical." We recall how she expressed some of her thoughts such as: "We are glad that we're glad; that we love one another and love mother," and her wise discovery: "We're doing all right, we have what we need; and what we don't have we don't need."

The years went all too fast.

Chapter XIII

Second Journey to Bohemia

Toward the end of 1898, reports were coming from Kolin that my wife's mother was not in good health. It is understandable that the news upset us. It is always sad when a person becomes ill and has dear ones so far away they cannot come to the bedside.

It was natural that my wife would want to go to her ailing mother as soon as possible. For a while it seemed she would go in the company of a young woman who was anxious to visit her relatives in the old country. However the young woman changed her mind about going. Sometimes we ^{had} better news from Kolin, and sometimes somewhat worse. When in January the report came that her sickness was worsening, we decided that the two of us would go.

Preparations for the trip took some time. I found a substitute for myself, a student for the doctorate at the University of Chicago.

He was Alois Barta, who had the pick of any three months of the year for his vacation. Brother ~~Adolf~~^{Adolph} Kadlec and his wife decided to take care of our new, young family member. ~~Adolf~~^{Adolph} and Sophie were cousins. Brother Kadlec had been minister in Saratoga for a short time, and now owned the bank in our village. He promised to take care of our horses. Everything was now arranged so we could undertake ^{the} journey with an easy conscience.

We set out on February 8, an extremely cold day. The thermometer stood at 36 degrees below zero. It was cold on the way to the railroad station and in the railroad car. We had to wait in the St. Paul station until evening, and, while waiting, several Silver Lake girls, who worked in St. Paul came to bid us good-by. It was also cold in Racine, Wisconsin, where we stopped to visit our friends, the Brens.

We couldn't worry too much about the weather if we were to get to New York on time. In New York we found a different kind of weather. The entire city was covered with a heavy layer of snow. The street cars weren't running, and the only way to get anywhere was on the elevated trains. The trains were crowded at this time of day because folks were leaving their offices and factories at the upper end of the city. There was nothing left to do but to board an uncrowded train to the lower end of the city, and then another still empty train back. That's the method we used to get to the home of brother Pastor Pisek where we would be guests.

The next day I rode to the steamship company's office to find out when the ship Pretoria would sail for Hamburg. The clerk told me that the ship had run into a storm and was not seaworthy, but that another ship

owned by the same company would sail in about ten days. He offered to refund my money if I did not care to wait, and I accepted his offer. The evening paper carried the news that the Pretoria lost her rudder and would be brought to dry dock for repairs.

It so happened that Mr. Pisek had in his home at the time a guest by the name of Vladimir Novak who had tickets to Bremen on the steamer 'Lahn'. We were able to secure tickets on this same ship, and he and we were soon on our way to Europe.

Dr Novak was a young man. He was assistant to a physics professor at the Prague University and was sent by the Austrian government to England and America to get information for a report on conditions in schools of higher learning. He stayed for a while in Baltimore at the home of brother Pastor Vanek and told us jokingly that he had been replacing the church janitor. He traveled as far as Chicago, and then visited Ely, Iowa.

Dr Novak was a pleasant person and an excellent companion. It was easy to get acquainted with him. He told us about his widowed mother and how kindly he regarded her. She was born in Hana in Moravia, but even though she lived many years in Prague, she retained the customs and speech of her birthplace and her people.

The day finally came when we docked at Bremen. It was toward evening, and we left the ship and immediately took a fast train to Prague. We arrived in the morning. We'll never forget what happiness lay in store for our fellow traveler. Two of his dearest people came to meet him -- his mother and his betrothed. They found him in the

railroad station and took him home with them.

We boarded the train and departed for Kolin. We began to realize how short distances are in Europe compared to those in America. From Bremen to Prague is about as far as across Iowa from north to south. However, the ride from Prague to Kolin seemed long enough. We were wondering what would be awaiting us.

When we entered the home, the father and the oldest son were there to greet us. My wife's youngest sister also came to meet us. She was clothed in a black mourning dress. We knew what had happened. The mother had died. She had been buried a month ago. The news had come to Silver Lake but we were already on our way, and the letter had not been forwarded to New York where it might have still reached us in time.

It was a sad surprise, but what could be done? All we could do was to weep over it and leave everything to God. The conversation turned to what happened to the family and to us during the seven years we had been away. What a change in the household! The house was almost empty compared to former years. One daughter had married and two sons were in the army. Only the father, the oldest son, and, the youngest daughter were left.

The next day was Sunday. We were greeted warmly by the minister, and we talked to many friends as we were leaving the church service. As I was walking from the afternoon Sunday School, I noticed a small group of men strolling down the street. It turned out that they were walking to pass the time away before the train came. One of the men was brother Pastor Kozak from Caslava. He introduced me to the other men and told

me they were on the way to Jimrava to attend the funeral of the Moravian Superintendent Totusek. They asked me to come along, and I would have done so, but our luggage with heavier clothing had not yet arrived. It was a cold day, and I wasn't dressed for it.

We were soon on our way to Habrkovice. After several difficult years, my mother decided to turn over the farm to her son Josef, and live with him in retirement. Josef had returned from military service and was in poor health. Army life had not been good for him, but he was happy with his wife, and the farm was prospering. They had with them my sister's threeyear old boy. Strangely enough, our mother let him do whatever he liked -- things her own children would never have been permitted to try. It has been said that grandmothers are often more tolerant with their grandchildren than they were as mothers with their own children.

He was bright for his age, and when he knew us better, would come with the plea, "I am asking you, uncle, and I am asking you, auntie, take me with you to that America.

Brother Rudolf was also doing well. After he returned from the army, he married into a farm in Habrkovice. The mother of his wife lived with the young people in peace and love.

We also visited the families of all my sisters when time permitted. Some of their children were almost fully grown.

Our "teacher" had retired. He was in good health, but his hair and beard were white as snow. His wife, being younger, was very capable, and they were living on a farm operated by their son, and were enjoying

the peaceful years of the autumn of their lives. We talked about 'our school', and about the former pupils and how they served in many walks of life.

Senior Fleischer arranged an excursion for our benefit. We rode with him to Prelouc where we picked up Pastor Bohumil Mares and continued to Bukov to visit Pastor Josef Dobias. This gentleman was glad to see us and to get news from America, particularly about his son Jaroslav, who was minister in Tabor, Minnesota. The two daughters were also glad to know that we had been visiting with their brother quite often. It was a pleasant day, and we spent it resting and talking in the parsonage, and later strolling in the garden adjoining a small lake.

The parish in Nymburg had just finished building a new church and parsonage and were ready to choose a pastor. Mr. Dusek was the administrator for the parish, and was expected to preach there every third Sunday. He asked me to preach there in his place, so I started going to Nymburg quite regularly, preaching to a sizable congregation morning and evening and serving the Lord's Supper at Easter and Whitsunday.

I enjoyed going to Nymburg, where I used to be the guest of my fellow student and friend, Dr August Machotka, a renowned doctor and a good son of a good mother who managed his household. It was nice to talk with him about our school days and our former schoolmates.

It was an unexpected honor when the Nymburg brethren asked me to be their spiritual leader. The elders of the church came to Kolin

to see me, and promised to wait as long as two years so I would have enough time to make a comfortable move. They also wrote me when we were back in Silver Lake. I could not have stayed in Bohemia immediately, because I had made a promise to return to Silver Lake. Also, I was not too anxious to leave America. I realized the importance of what needed to be done there. On top of that, there was no telling how the Supreme Church Council in Vienna would consider the situation in view of the established rule that a Czech Evangelical minister must study in Vienna for at least two semesters.

Pastors Dusek, Janata, and Fleischer urged me to stay in Bohemia or to move in as soon as possible. When I was getting ready to leave for Prague, Mr. Dusek suggested I visit Pastor Karafiat and find out what he thought about this whole affair. I stopped in Prague to see the bookseller Mr. J. Bastecky, who was horrified when he heard I was on the way to see Mr. Karafiat without a written announcement. On top of that, he said, Mr. Karafiat went out for a walk at this hour and did not receive anyone.

I didn't care about the well-meant warnings and knocked on the door of Mr. Karafiat's dwelling. In spite of everything, I had a good reception, and I was invited to have lunch.

Mr. Karafiat asked about many things, and I told him of my experiences. He advised me to disregard the Church Council's ruling and to accept any position where I would better myself. He would count my eight years in America as sixteen, the same as it is figured in time of war, two years for one. He said he counted his own twenty years in Kutna Hora as forty.

Some time later the Czech Evangelical newspapers started publishing a dispute concerning ministers sent to America. There was an article in 'Hus' by Dr Cisar about an 'Exported Luxury' in which he criticized Pastor Dusek for exporting theologians into a foreign country when they were needed at home. He offered a plan by which they would be brought back from the foreign land. Someone on the Church Council suggested they be reordained.

Pastor Dusek replied to the article in a column he published in 'Jednota'. He pointed out that there was actually a surplus of ministers in Bohemia, and a shortage in America. In regard to the reordination, he wrote: "Naturally our Czech Council with its 10,000 ministers would be better able to ordain ministers than the American group with its barely 100 members!"

Mr. Karafiat also wrote about this matter in his 'Reformation Papers'. I have the complete editorial, but will quote only three paragraphs:

"Sometimes we talk as if we still did not have any missionaries. It is true in a sense, because we don't support these workers in foreign countries by ourselves. But, as far as their work goes, the ministers in North America are our missionaries. That is the way we always regarded them and we always valued them highly.

"Recently, some unfortunate remarks were made about our missionaries who are our 'pride and glory'. They were also written about as 'products of Kolin' and as an 'exported luxury'. Even though the remarks should not have been taken literally, they did hurt many a person's feelings. It was

also stressed that the return of our preachers to the homeland is next to impossible. We regret very much that this should be said about our most successful people. We believe that nothing should be written about any difficulty they might have in returning.

"It is likely that there are in Vienna people who are 'willing' to block the return of our missionaries. But it is also likely that some of our parishes are 'willing' to accept these missionaries as their ministers. There is no reason to doubt that our parishes would prosper better with the ministers outside the Church Council's authority. Actually, our churches could get along without Vienna."

After the country became an independent republic, the Czech-Brethren Church was glad to accept American trained spiritual leaders, and one of them (Dr Krenek) was elevated to the office of the Senior of the Synod.

One day I drove out to Prague at the invitation of Dr Mark Novak. According to our agreement, I found him in the University's physics laboratory. He demonstrated some of his equipment and told me how he came by the blue marks on his face. It was when he discovered a new compound and tested it in various ways. In one of the tests he placed a small piece of the new substance on the anvil and hit the fragment with a hammer. There was an explosion which shattered the windows and nearly blinded the physicist. The new compound was known to scientists as "Novak's Superoxide".

We went to his home for dinner. His dear mother greeted us. She was boarding several university students because Dr Novak's pay was not

enough to support a household. As we sat down to the table, the son announced, "Mother, today we shall pray before we eat because we have a preacher with us." She replied with feeling, "I would like to have you know, Mark, that I would be glad if we said a prayer before every meal."

Dr Novak was an old-time friend of Pastor Suster of Opolan. They had been fellow students at the gymnasium. The young Mark Novak used to spend parts of his vacations on the Suster estate. Dr Novak felt that I should get to know Pastor Suster, and wanted all of us to spend a day together in friendly discussions, so we rode on the appointed day to the Opolan parsonage. Dr Novak came with his betrothed named Anna. Pastor Suster's household was managed by his sister. We made a nice group of people who understood each other and enjoyed an interesting day.

We met with Dr Novak again when he came to America as chairman of the Czechoslovak Y.M.C.A. for their international meeting and to the World Conference of Mathematicians.

Professor Novak and I wrote to each other faithfully. We read about his children, his grandchildren, Anna's death, and his retirement. We always looked forward to news from him or about him and his family.

We spent three pleasant weeks on the estate Lhota near Trebice in Moravia. The estate was being leased to Matej Dobrovolny, husband of my wife's sister Bertha. They had been together for four years and had two boys. Jiri was almost three years old, and Emil was just three months. Brother-in-law Dobrovolny was cousin to Pastor Karafiat. His sister was married to Pastor Kocian in Horatva.

It was pleasant in Lhota. It was interesting to notice how much work and patience were required of both husband and wife to manage such an expanded farming venture. There were forty families employed and living on the estate. All of them were kept busy because there were forty yokes of oxen and four teams of horses.

We enjoyed ourselves in the home of our kind relatives. We sensed a feeling of affection and harmony. Little Jiri took to us and completely captured his aunt.

At the time of our visit, the Trebic worship services were held in an upstairs hall in a building in the city. I was glad to preach there on the first Sunday of our visit. On the second Sunday, we attended services in Brno. I wanted to get to know the pastor, who was Vaclav Pokorny, my second cousin. Unfortunately, we could talk together only a short time after the service. His wife was seriously ill and he had to hurry home. We wrote back and forth when he urged me to take over a position working with our countrymen in Russian Poland. Some years later, his daughter Milena paid us a visit. She was a graduate nurse and worked in American hospitals. She followed her profession in Prague, Nebraska, and, for a shorter length of time, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

I was hoping that we could donate the third Sunday toward a visit to the Javoraik parish where my former fellow student Jan Dobias was the vicar. I was anxious to learn something about the parish which

was known to have retained a distinctive character of its own. I knew it would be confirmation Sunday. As it turned out, there was a terrific rainstorm early Sunday morning, and there was no way we could get to the Trebic railroad station.

One day we set out for Mysliborice, where brother Simunek was employed as a gardener in a castle. As we agreed with Pastor Jaroslav Urbanek of upper Vilimovic, I was to take his place and baptize Jiri, the young son of the Simunek couple. I had no idea that this Mysliborice castle would some day be an important seat of Czech-Brethren churches and that the baptized boy would grow up to be a Czech-Brethren spiritual leader.

Our departure from Bohemia had been arranged for the first days of June. The time of parting had arrived. We paid final visits to as many relatives and friends as time permitted. It was a sad moment when my mother predicted she would never see me again. When Senior Szalatny learned we intended to leave Sunday afternoon, he quoted with feeling, "Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabath." (Matt. 24, 20) Senior Fleischer, and his wife even more so, urged us to return to the homeland.

We didn't know that in just four short years, the days of the Senior would be over and that I would receive a cablegram saying, "Telegraph if you would accept the position in Chvaletice." I didn't send a telegram. I had no intention to leave Silver Lake. Perhaps it was just as well that I didn't care to be a 'Prophet in his own country." (Matt. 13, 57) (minister in his native parish)

However, Mr. Fleischer was a minister's son, and was born in the parish where he preached.

When I preached in Nymburg on our last Sunday, I was asked by Senior Janata if I would conduct, following the afternoon gathering, the funeral service for a departed evangelical who had no home or close relatives. As I started the afternoon sermon, the Senior himself walked into the church, so we conducted the funeral rites together. He spoke at the hospital where the man passed away, and I spoke at the cemetery. As we left the cemetery, the Senior Pastor told me, "You preached very well." Such a comment from an expert was to be remembered.

The Senior suggested we walk into the park for a moment. We sat down on a bench and talked. When it was time to say good-by, the Senior said several times, "My dear son, my dear son, I don't know how I can part with you." We parted. In just five years he was called to the place where there is no parting. He was a sensitive, generous, and kind man.

I preached in the Kolin church on our last Sunday morning, and we left in the afternoon. We decided to take with us my wife's youngest sister. The mother, on her deathbed, requested that we take care of the girl at least for a few years. The father was a widower and her oldest brother was still single. She would not have had a good home or supervision with them. She lived with us until she finished grade school. After that she stayed with the family of brother Josef Bren in Warren, Minnesota, where she could attend high school. She returned to Bohemia when her father remarried.

We arrived in Bremen a day before the boat sailed. That gave us plenty of time to look over the city and to visit the botanical gardens.

Nothing unusual took place on the ship we sailed. The sea was calm and the passengers occupied themselves or amused each other any way they could. Our ward also found a way to be entertained. She tossed a bean bag around with another girl and a boy, but their fun did not turn out too well. The boy tried to ^{show} \wedge off and threw the bean bag into the sea. The girl, whose bean bag it was, wept as if her heart would break.

We docked in New York harbor on June 18. It was terribly, almost unbearably, hot. Everyone's clothing was sweated through.

It was hot and sultry in Mr. Pisek's parsonage. Sleeping was out of the question. However, our two days in New York were easier because of the kindness of the pastor's family and the Bazata family. It was not until we boarded the train in Hoboken that a storm sprang up and cooled the air.

We made the long ride from New York to Silver Lake without any unusual happening. We arrived a little after 10:00 o'clock at night. It felt good to know we were safely home from our long journey. Our friends were expecting us, and were glad to see us.

I went at once to Kadlec's to see our little Sophie. She woke, jumped out of bed, dressed, insisting on coming home with me. Our horses were in good shape. We were thankful to our friends, the Kadlec's, who took care of everything during our absence.

My substitute, theologian Alois Barta, had replaced me well. The people liked him and his ways. He liked the people, was happy, and felt at ease. He stayed with us several days. A new semester at the University of Chicago was beginning in July, and he had to go back to continue his studies.

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Chapter XIV

In Silver Lake 1899-1910

After we returned from Bohemia, we talked a great deal about our trip, our stay in our native land, visits with relatives and friends, and other experiences. The trip did something for me, as one of the brethren told me. He said I preached with greater courage and conviction.

Even though I decided definitely, and made it known, that I would not accept the position in Nymburk, the elders from that parish sent me a letter asking me to reconsider. Even Pastor Dusek seemed to hope I would change my mind.

I resumed my work and kept the same schedule that I followed before our trip to Bohemia. My time was divided between Silver Lake, the Jan Hus branch, Hopkins, and Waconia. Soon, the Hopkins parish felt the desire to have a steady minister. The parish wasn't strong

enough to support a pastor, however. It was at the time contributing only \$150 to Silver Lake and paying my traveling expenses to the last penny. It was finally decided that the parish would ask for admission into the Presbyterian Church Union, where it would receive financial support.

Up to that time I had been a member of the New York Presbytery. I requested for a transfer to the Minneapolis Presbytery. I had written, prior to this, to Dr Adams, the Synod's Minneapolis missionary, who was willing to offer his advice and help.

Dr Adams was a man of impressive appearance; his manner and his speech created confidence. He had been a general in the Civil War, where he was wounded so that he limped the rest of his life. However, he was still able to march proudly in parades celebrating national holidays. He was ahead of the times when he suggested that Czech churches should start using the English language in some services.

Dr Thayer was at the time the head of the Minneapolis Presbytery. He was already advanced in years and in retirement, but he still preached where he was needed. He would rather walk five miles on a Sunday than take a train, but he did hold on to me for support when we walked down the street. He told me that something was missing in his head that kept him from facing straight ahead when he walked. At the Presbytery meetings he was known as "Father Thayer".

These two men, Dr Adams and Father Thayer, took care of the Hopkins parish's request, which carried 92 signatures. The Presbytery appointed

a five-member committee, composed of three pastors and two elders, which came to Hopkins to meet with the congregation.

There were no complaints about the beliefs or teachings of the Hopkins church, but there was one member on the committee who argued against the admission because he felt the parish was more concerned with financial gain than the Lord's work.

I became angry when I heard this and reminded the committee that this parish had carried ^{on} its own worship services for many years without a spiritual leader. I added that it would be difficult to find a group of about 100 people born in this country which could not conduct its own affairs; and still the Presbyterian Church would donate money and help such a group establish a church.

Following this controversy, the committee voted to have the Hopkins parish accepted by the Presbytery into the Presbyterian Church Union. The acceptance took place on March 2, 1900. When the committee meeting was over, Father Thayer came over to ask me to forget what the elder said about the main reason the Hopkins parish asked to be joined to the Presbyterian Church group. He said that the elder was against anything that meant spending money.

Now the Hopkins parish could elect a full-time spiritual leader. It pleased me very much when, as a reward for my nine years of work with them, the Hopkins brethren asked me if I would be willing to move to Hopkins and serve their church and the one in nearby Waconia.

After I turned down the kind offer, the brethren issued a call to Pastor William Siller from Saratoga. He came to get acquainted

with the parish and was elected unanimously on March 10. He began his work on July 1, and was installed on August 3, 1900.

Pastor Siller was an excellent pastor, a proud leader of his flock. He was totally devoted to the Lord and directed his efforts toward the growth and prosperity of the parish so it would become a blessing to the people and the community. The people liked their new leader, and went along with his ideas. The children and the young people found in him a good example to follow. With so much enthusiasm in the congregation, it wasn't difficult to finance the building of a nice parsonage.

Brother Siller brought to the new position experience gained in his former locations in Cliburne, Kansas (now Blue Rapids), and Saratoga, Iowa. He kept up his interest in the various Czech churches in this country and put in much effort organizing a Czech interdenominational convention, becoming also the editor of the Christian Journal.

He became our neighbor and friend. He came to Silver Lake often so we could discuss common difficulties and solve some of the problems in his new position. He would come in the fall of each year, arriving on Monday and spending a whole week with us. He didn't care to sit in the parsonage to read or talk, but wanted to spend entire days roaming through the woods. Hunting rabbits was just an excuse, because we seldom found one. It seemed that all he wanted was fresh air and a week of total freedom from his usual occupation.

After a week of relaxation, he was ready to go back to his usual schedule. We looked for his visits, and especially to the week in the fall.

It was a painful blow when news came that brother Siller suddenly passed away after a short illness. I was asked to come to Hopkins, where I found the whole parish mourning his death. I learned that Brother Siller had become violently ill as he prepared to lead a Bible study hour in a home three miles south of the church. He was forced to spend the night in the church member's home. When morning came, he was taken to the parsonage and a doctor was called.

Evidently the doctor did not recognize the symptoms of a ruptured appendix, and brother Siller passed away within several days. When in his final days, some of the brethren suggested they call me to his bedside. He turned down the idea, saying I had troubles enough. I would, of course, have gladly hurried to his side if I had been called.

The funeral services took place February 2, 1904. Several pastors from the Minneapolis Presbytery took part. Dr Thayer was among them. The Czech pastors in attendance were brothers Hlavaty, Bren, Trcka, Prucha, and myself. The Silver Lake choir sang. The Hopkins parish seemed overwhelmed as it mourned the loss of its beloved pastor. He was laid to rest next to the church he had served so well.

The presbytery decided to let me take care of the now orphaned Hopkins parish. It was imperative that a new spiritual leader be called as soon as possible. I knew that brother Bren was not happy with the climate in Racine, Wisconsin, even though his work there was bringing good results. The sharp, cold winds off Lake Michigan were injurious to his health. He told me a number of times that he might be forced to abandon his location and his position.

With the consent of the Hopkins elders, I invited him to come and get acquainted with the congregation. The result was that brother Bren was elected and was soon making the move to Hopkins. It thus happened that the two of us, who used to sit next to each other in the Kolin gymnasium and again in the New York seminary, became neighbors as ministers in Minnesota.

It meant a lot to us when we could visit each other and talk over our common hopes. It is universally known that a neighbor influences a neighbor and a friend influences a friend, even though the two may not notice it. It is certain that friendship enriches a man beyond measure.

A great happiness came to the Silver Lake parsonage-- a daughter came into our family. We had been waiting for ^{her for} almost ten years, and she seemed for that reason all the more precious and welcome. We now knew the joy that parents have when a new addition comes into their home. I used to say that the Lord gave us a daughter because we took over, a few years back, the care of a little girl when her mother died, but our new mother did not agree with me. She said we didn't deserve the baby, and that it was a pure gift.

The whole parish shared our happiness. The ladies brought small gifts for the little one. Friends nearby and some far away let us know how glad they were about our good fortune.

It was becoming evident for some time that the church was not big enough for the congregation. This was noticeable on special holidays when many young people had to stand throughout a lengthy service.

As happens in similar situations, some members were for building a new church and some were against it. It seemed, from one of our meetings, that it would be impossible to come to an agreement. One of the older brothers maintained that a larger church was not necessary because he had never had to stand during a service. Another brother reminded him that he would have had to stand if a younger person had not surrendered his seat to him.

So it went until a young and new member of the church took the floor. He and his wife had joined the church recently and were glad they did because it was a step toward a fuller life. The man had been sick for some time, and seemed to be getting weaker as time went on. I can visualize him now as he stood up from the pew and spoke: "Brethren, I beg of you, build! I won't be with you much longer, and I would like to see the new church before I go." There was an intense silence for a moment. Some members were moved to tears. Then someone made the motion to proceed with the construction as soon as possible. The motion was passed unanimously.

The name of the ailing man was Frank Penaz. May he be remembered for the part he played in this difficult discussion.

The congregation appointed a committee which was to take a look at neighboring churches and decide what kind would be best for our parish. They saw a church in Minneapolis which they liked, and found out who the builder was. The builder was hired to draw up a plan according to our needs and wishes. The people pledged generous amounts of money, and it was seen there would be at least \$10,000 available for construction.

Much of the work was done by the brethren themselves. Some hitched their horses to scrapes and dug out the pit for the basement. Others began hauling stone for the foundation. Still others brought the lumber and bricks when these materials were needed. Two talented brothers volunteered to build the stone foundation.

All work was done with so much willingness and joy that I like to speak of it. The foundation was built before winter and the floor was in place. The cement work was now covered with straw for protection against frost.

Construction resumed in the spring. The cornerstone was laid with a worship service and appropriate ceremony. The brethren were definitely opposed to having a contractor bid on the entire building, but preferred to hire a man at four dollars per day to direct all phases of the operation. They were able to secure the services of a skilled Danish workman from Hutchinson, and insisted on perfect work. Our own skilled workers helped, and learned a lot in the process. There was much activity next to the present church all summer as the new church was taking shape.

The building was completed before winter, and the inside was completely furnished. The young people of the parish equipped the chancel with the usual Lord's Table, pulpit, and pastor's bench. The church was dedicated for the worship of God on December 17, 1905.

Frank Penaz, the slowly dying brother who swung the vote toward immediate construction, did not see the completed building. He lived only long enough just to see what was started in the fall.

The branch church also started building. After all, the log building did seem crude, even though it had served well the people who had been gathering there to seek comfort from God's Word. The new, fine looking building was up before the summer was over.

I used to say that it was probably the smallest Czech church in all America. It was equipped with the pews from the old Silver Lake church, which was to be demolished. The small congregation was happy when the new building was consecrated with the Lord's Word and a prayer. Pastors Bren and Prucha took part in the ceremony. Services were to be conducted in the afternoon every other Sunday, and sometimes in the morning during holidays.

Pastor Prucha was minister of the village's Congregational Church. I was glad to have him for a friend. We understood each other. His wife was a mild mannered woman, and they had two lovely girls. Since there was harmony between the pastors, there was also harmony between the two congregations, and we were sorry when the Pruchas were transferred to another location.

We also had good relations with the new congregational minister, brother Edmund Wrbitzky. He used to come over every Monday to visit and talk over what we preached about on Sunday. He was a sociable person, and had the gift of humor.

I knew Mrs. Wrbitzky from the time I used to be a guest in her parent's home in Blue Rapids, Wisconsin. The Wrbitzky children used to play with our children. They told at home about the good times they had when I took them for a horse-pulled sleigh ride over the snow drifts. We still think about these happy times, which seem like a pleasant fairy tale, and have been delighted to get news of how the children fared in later years.

A number of children were left behind when brother Penaz passed away. Fortunately they had a good grandfather and grandmother who helped their widowed mother take care of them. We used to visit this family. They lived close to Swan Lake where swimming was good, and we used to leave our horses in Penaz's barn before going to the lake. We took the Penaz children with us, and they swam with our children. There was generally only swimming on Wednesday and washing with soap on Saturday.

Even though the Czech Evangelical Union had decided to meet every third year, it failed to call a meeting for a greater number of years. The main reasons for this were that the parishes were far apart and the ministers' salaries were too small to allow for much traveling. Somehow, however, a desire from all sides developed that there should be a closer

contact between the parishes. As a result, the Omaha parish under the leadership of Rev Bohdan Filipi issued an invitation to all the parishes to gather for a convention open to anyone who would be able to come.

The Omaha convention turned out to be a great success. There was some discussion and the groundwork was laid for the organization of a Czech Presbytery. With me, in Omaha, as a representative from Silver Lake was brother F.H. Hakel. When a decision was made that the Evangelical Union should meet every year, brother Hakel, enthused by what he saw and heard, offered Silver Lake as next year's meeting place.

It was finally decided that the convention would be hosted jointly by Silver Lake and Hopkins. While at the Omaha convention, the various ministers took part in services in neighboring churches. Brother Hakel and I drove to the neighborhood near Clarkson, where Pastor Svoboda had charge of two congregations. I preached in both the Zion and the New Zion churches.

From that time, the Czech evangelical parishes felt well acquainted and helped one another toward spiritual growth. It is difficult to evaluate the good influence the conventions had on all that attended.

The year went by, and the convention of the Evangelical Union was taking place in Silver Lake. The parish was ready to receive the many delegates and visitors. Several teams were routed to Glencoe to meet the Dakota representatives arriving on the night train. Friday was devoted to organization and a general get-together. On Sunday, the meetings were

held in Hopkins. There was a worship service followed by **discussions** about forming the Czech Presbytery. It seemed that the **Presbytery** would be firmly established in the next convention, which was to be in Cedar Rapids and Ely.

The convention in Silver Lake was attended by many ministers. Among them was brother Novak from Wahoo, Nebraska, and brother Krenek who charmed the people with his oratory. Brother Krenek brought with him a recommendation from Baltimore's Pastor Vanek asking us to use Dr Krenek's unusual talents.

The convention was visited by two elders from Ely, Frank Lorenc and John Telecky Sr. They brought sad news about their parish, and asked me to come over to see if the serious disagreements could be straightened out. The Ely pastor also came to the convention, but stayed only half a day after the two of us had a discussion. Evidently he found himself in a difficult position.

I was a longtime friend of the Ely parish, and up to that time a friend of their pastor. I felt I had to do what was possible so God's work would not suffer. It was discovered, following my first visit to Ely, that there was no hope of restoring peace. Perhaps I should write in detail about the causes of disagreements, but there are matters that a man prefers to forget.

The Ely parish asked me to be their spiritual leader. I admit that there were difficult moments for me and the Silver Lake people. Could I desert my present location and all the dear brothers and sisters? At times I thought I could hear the voice of Rev Kun when he asked me to take care of his parish after he was gone. To whom should I go for advice?

Friend Bren told me it was my duty to rescue the Ely church. The Silver Lake brethren didn't go along with the idea, and some objected to the very end. Others were more resigned to it when they found out that brother Krenek would be available as my replacement.

Dr Barta of Dubuque made several trips to Ely, where he took charge of the election of a new minister. I handled a similar election in Silver Lake, but there was no pleasure connected with it. Brother Krenek accepted the call to Silver Lake and I to Ely. Pastor Krenek was pleased that he would now be serving his countrymen who came from the Czech-Moravian highlands the same as he did. We agreed to change places at the beginning of the year 1910.

Our last Sundays in Silver Lake were gloomy, as if a dark cloud hung over us. Even the Christmas season wasn't as happy as it used to be on other years. The feeling seemed to show how closely knitted a parish and a minister can become. Anyway, we had to look ahead.

On the last Sunday of the old year, we had the usual evening service. We were expressing our thanks for all the good things the Lord bestowed upon us. As I was finishing my sermon, Rev Krenek and his wife, and two brothers from Ely, ^{Joseph} Josef Becicka and ^{Joseph} Josef Vavra, stepped in. Brother Krenek was here to take over the management of the parish, and the two men from Ely came to help with the moving.

Brother Krenek came in time to preach the New Year's sermon. He talked about: "We have this ~~asa~~ sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf." (Hebrew 6, 19)

He preached in the branch church in the afternoon. I was there also, but only to say Good-by.

It was intensely cold that winter, and there was plenty of snow. Brother F. Nunvar packed our belongings. He knew how because he owned a furniture store. The two men from Ely helped him. Friends, mainly church members, came to wish us good fortune in our new location and home. The most touching were the parting words from a woman who had a devoted feeling toward us: "God be with you, Daddy; and God be with you, little Mother."

The Congregational Church, led by Pastor Wrbitzky, attended the final going-away meeting.

The annual congregational meeting took place on January 6. I opened the meeting, but the rest was taken over by Pastor Krenek. We were to leave that afternoon the house where we spent many happy years and received God's richest blessings. As we stepped through the door and faced the bitter cold, our four-year old boy warned his mother, "Don't cry, mom; your tears will freeze!"

We passed the night at Travnicéks, whose home was near the railroad station. Several young people were at the station in the morning before the train came to say a last good-by. Finally, accompanied by brother Becicka, we went to St. Paul and from there to Ely, Iowa.

Joseph
Brother ~~Josef~~ Vavra, from Ely, rode in the freight train which was transporting our belongings. He spent most of his time

taking care of the horses that were riding in one of the cars.

He suffered a great deal along the way. It was bitterly cold and there were delays during switching operations. What he had to eat froze in the uninsulated railroad car, but he did not complain, saying it was an unusual experience.

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Chapter XV

Near Ely 1910-1938

Moving to Ely did not mean that we were transferring to an unknown neighborhood or among strangers. I had been in Ely on several occasions, once with my wife, and again with the whole family for several weeks. I had preached in the west branch in 1906, and also in the east branch for several evenings.

Even so, it was still necessary to get used to the new location. We were especially surprised by the climate. We were used to the cold Minnesota temperatures, but found the warmer, more humid Iowa weather hard to take.

Many brethren of the parish were waiting to meet us at the railroad station. Our furniture had not arrived, and we were invited to live for the time being with the Frank Lorenc family. We stayed there an entire week, and made frequent trips to the parsonage to get our things

in order. We were well taken care of, but our younger boy was not completely happy. He would beg, generally in the evening, "Let's go home, Mom, we've been here long enough." We hoped he would be happier after we would be at the parsonage surrounded by our belongings.

We were surprised by something that we hardly expected to find. The school close to the church was not being used. There were not enough children in the neighborhood, and the few that were around had a long vacation. It was necessary to get in touch with the school board so a teacher would be hired and the school opened. Meanwhile our children were taught to read and write in the Czech language.

It was important to get acquainted with the church members as they gathered for worship services, and also to visit them in their homes. Many of the brethren helped us. Some took us over the territory, or showed us where the various church members lived. They did all they could to make our first days in a new location easier and agreeable.

One young, unmarried man was particularly happy to transport me to the west branch. The service there somehow appealed to him, and these words became for him a reality: "He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord." (Proverbs 18, 22)

When one of the horses became sick and died, the brethren surprised us with the gift of enough money to buy a new horse, and, without being asked, they decided to furnish the corn, oats and hay.

They also built a new barn so there would be enough room for the buggies and sled as well as for the animals.

Everything was handy. I was even able to raise two colts that made a good team when they grew up. All this was possible because our good neighbor, brother Bures, let our animals use his pasture. Grandpa Bures, as we lovingly called him, was our good friend for seven years up to the time when the Lord called him away.

To the side of the house was a small one-room building. It may have been used as a summer kitchen at one time, but we used it for all sort of small tasks. Back of the parsonage grounds flowed a small creek which was appealing to the children in the summertime. During our first summer, with the help of brother Lorenc, we built a dam to raise the water and form a place to swim. Our children were friendly with grandpa Bures's grandchildren, and all of them liked to go swimming. There was a definite time for that--starting at 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon. I usually went in with them because I tried to finish my work by that time.

So that was where we found ourselves. Some of our friends told us we were located too far from anything and two whole miles to the tiny village of Ely. Rev Vanek came to visit us one summer. As we sat on the front porch in the quiet of the evening, he suddenly jumped up and said, "My dear people, I know that the parish wouldn't care to have me as its preacher, but I certainly would not want to be here. This quiet would kill me!"

Then there are individuals that cannot stand the constant activity and noise of a city like Chicago. It seems that is the way it has to be--different people like different situations and places of employment. I had the opportunity to observe children growing up on the streets of New York and felt sorry for them. I knew that all they could see of nature was some grass in the parks, a few birds in trees, and a number of animals in cages. Perhaps the children were happy, but it is easier to breath, to live, to play and to work under a blue sky, where the grass is green and flowers bloom. Fortunate are the children that can grow up in a country environment.

My work was divided between the mother church near Ely and the two branches. Services were held in the mother church every Sunday for three Sundays in the morning and one Sunday in the afternoon. In the west branch, the order was one Sunday in the morning, followed by two Sundays in the afternoon. The east branch held services every fourth Sunday, and in the afternoon. The worship was always followed by Sunday School, which was attended by everyone. The order of services was later altered to give more time to the east church.

The morning service ^{always} began promptly at 9:30 A.M., and the afternoon service at 2:⁰⁰ P.M. The minister had to hurry with his lunch so he would get to the afternoon service on time. Everything was easy when the roads were good, but quite difficult when they were muddy or covered with deep snow. The horses suffered when the weather was bitterly cold, and the minister had to get used to all sorts of discomforts. Even so, he was seldom late to conduct a service.

The branches and the mother church had to decide when to celebrate holidays like Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, because it was impossible for all churches to celebrate each holiday on the exact date.

A few members of the west branch gathered in homes to learn Christmas songs. The meetings would take place once a week for six weeks prior to Christmas. The east branch followed the same arrangement. There were separate Christmas programs in each of the three churches. The children, of course, contributed with recitations and songs. Many people in the neighborhood came to the programs, particularly at the west church.

During our first years in Ely, I tried to hold evening services in the middle of the week, especially during lent. The attempt was unsuccessful because the families had too far to drive and the roads were bad in the spring and farm work too pressing in the summer.

It was evident that the brethren were very much concerned that the Lord's work should prosper. The elders took care of all their duties faithfully. There were always teachers for the Sunday School classes, and we had teachers' meetings every week. Some of the teachers served for many years. John Kriz played the organ in the mother church, and John Telecky in the east church. Each served for about forty years. The second one named is still serving and the first one served until a few years ago. In the west branch the organ was played by women, at first by sister Amelia Rohlena, and later by sister Lizzie Vavra, as long as the church stood.

The young people's Christian Endeavor was organized, and also a church choir after the younger folks expressed the desire to sing. We also had a quartet that sang at funerals, of which there were many, some outside the church families. The quartet held together for I don't know how many years.

Since I found it so popular in Silver Lake, I also started a Czech school in Ely. During the summer vacation, the school was in session every Thursday; in the winter it met every Saturday. The school was held at first in the church building, and in later years in the nearby public school. The children learned to read and write. They also learned something about the Bible and about Czech history. They loved to sing. The older^{pupils} spent much of their time in getting ready for confirmation. One summer we had forty pupils. Each summer, usually on the Fourth of July, we put on a program of songs and recitations, some serious and some humorous.

The creek with its dam became an important part of the Czech school. We had instruction until 3:00 in the afternoon, and this was followed by swimming. The boys usually had their swim first, and the girls followed. It often seemed that the school was so popular because of the swimming, but even this part of the school was important. One of the former students joined the navy. He was delighted when he could write on his application that he could swim.

I was pleased with the large congregation that gathered in the Ely church, and I was installed as pastor in June. It took place in the most pleasant time of the year but the date was actually set by

Pastor Vanek who promised to bring for the occasion brother L. Marek of Kralovsky Vinohrady, who was at the time a delegate to the Sunday School Congress in Washington D.C.

This valued guest preached the installation sermon. We had an especially happy day, because Rev Krenek brought with him a number of our Silver Lake friends. This visit was repaid when a number of Ely brethren attended the installation service ^{of Rev Krenek} in the Silver Lake Church.

The Cedar Rapids church and their minister, brother V. Hlavaty, also joined our celebration, and so did Rev Bren from Hopkins. That day the Ely parish and I entered a covenant that bound us over twenty eight years. It was a memorable day.

In the September of that year our parish entertained the convention of the Evangelical Union. The meetings were divided between our church and the Cedar Rapids church. There were no automobiles in those days, and going from one church to the other, a distance of ten miles, was accomplished by horse and buggy. There was also difficulty transporting guests to and from farms where they were lodged, but as a result of the efforts of our people and the patience of the guests, everything went well. New friendships developed, and the Lord's blessing rested on all who attended.

The second half of the convention was moved to the Presbyterian Church in Cedar Rapids. It was there that the Czech Midwest Presbytery was organized. We already had our Evangelical Union, but the Presbytery was much more. The parishes thus joined made their own decisions

about important matters, including the training and examining of new spiritual leaders, establishing parishes, and appointing pastors to vacated parishes.

The Presbytery sent delegates to synods and to all meetings of the Presbyterian Church. We can see the value of our own Presbytery when we study the difficulties Czech parishes met when they tried to join English-speaking presbyteries.

I accepted with fear the chairmanship of the committee dealing with Home Missions, and served in that capacity for many years until my eyes could not take the strain of so much correspondence. Our work in home missions showed splendid results, however. We had many applicants, and the Board of Home Missions had many resources and gave us good support.

It was my duty to correspond with the Board and with the parishes and ministers involved. I was particularly happy when the ministers and theologians with whom I dealt showed confidence in my efforts and am thankful for their cooperation.

Our first year in Ely was not without its difficulty. It was during the Christmas season that my wife, "our mother", became seriously ill. We called our local doctor, who, after two days passed with no improvement, brought with him a doctor from Cedar Rapids. When there was no relief in sight, they decided to operate. It was a very cold winter day when we took mother to the Ely railroad station on a horse-drawn sled. She was then carried on her bed into the railroad car, and the train took her to Cedar Rapids. A horse-drawn ambulance transported her from the Cedar Rapids

station to St. Luke's Hospital. The surgeon decided he would operate the next morning.

When I came to the hospital in the morning, I found the surgeon waiting for me. He told me it was a dangerous situation, and that he hardly knew what to do. He said the patient's color was turning blue, and showed me how her finger nails had also changed color. He added she would not last through the day unless an immediate operation was performed. The symptoms pointed to gall stones.

A moment of terror siezed me when the anesthetist, who kept track of her heartbeat, told me tearfully, "I would like to leave everything and run away. It seems like murder."

Four doctors anxiously awaited the result. A turn toward recovery came the next day. The doctors and nurses said it was a miracle. The surgeon was still uncertain. He warned that one of his patients in a similar situation died after three weeks of seeming recovery. The highest and best Physician had mercy on us, however, and we were able to take our mother home in five weeks.

It was said that the congregation was led to tears when I didn't show up for one of the services. For five whole weeks I tried to spend part of each day at home and at the hospital. Brother Frank Lorenc was willing to transport me between the parsonage and the Ely railroad station. In the final days, when my wife was allowed visitors, there were so many callers that the nurse complained, "It is sad when a patient has no visitors, but it is bad when there are too many."

Cedar Rapids friends invited me to stay overnight in their homes, but the greatest deed was done by sister Marie Lorenc, the wife of Frank Lorenc. She lived in the parsonage with our three children for five whole weeks and took care of them and our possessions. She did more than even a real sister could have done.

When mother came home, she needed to rest to regain her strength. Fortunately, our ward Sophie, who worked in Minneapolis, offered her help. We accepted her offer, and she came to live with us for three months.

Because I was in work among Czechs, I had no idea I would be asked to take part in American educational institutions. So it came as a surprise when in 1911 the Huron College president wrote that the college would like to give me an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree. He asked me to tell him if I would accept the honor. I thought it over a number of days, and then answered that I would accept the honor as a fitting tribute to the Czech Evangelical people for what they and all other Czech immigrants contributed to the development of the State of South Dakota. I suppose that I was awarded the degree through the efforts of Dr Carson with whom I became acquainted in my visits in South Dakota and of the secretary of our seminary graduating class. Friend Bren also had a part in it.

That same year I was asked to speak in behalf of Czech Evangelicals at the dedication of a new building for the College and Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. Soon after I was elected to that institution's Board of Directors. It was the time when the German Seminary was being broadened to a School of Theologians of various nationalities,

The change began when our Professor Barta was asked to the teaching staff and the first Czech students were enrolled. The institution grew, more buildings were put up, and students of various nationalities were registered. President Dr Steffens was skillful in securing funds from his many rich friends. In the Czech division there were at one time twenty students.

It was my duty to come to annual meetings at the close of each school year, and to ^{other} meetings called for special purposes. The journey from our parsonage to Dubuque was not easy. Someone had to take me to Cedar Rapids where I could board the train at 6:00 o'clock in the morning. When I returned to Cedar Rapids from Dubuque, I had to wait at the station several hours before a train started out for Ely. I still enjoyed going to Dubuque, however, where friend Professor Barta welcomed me into his home. It was much more pleasant than it would have been in one of the hotels where some of the other directors had to stay.

The Czech students seemed to have confidence in me and shared their difficulties. I don't know if I helped them, but I tried to be "a light along the way". I was glad to see them graduate and to hear them praised for their industry and exemplary behavior. It was a pity, as Dr Barta used to say, that war broke up the Czech division and turned some of the boys away from studying theology.

I served as a director for nine years (1912-1921). I resigned when difficulties developed in the institution, and when Dr Barta left

his position temporarily. I don't know how it would have turned out if I had accepted, two years before this, the position of professor of homiletics which had been offered to me. As it was, I did not like the idea of deserting the Czech church, nor did I care for life in a big city. I had gotten used to the wide open spaces of the country.

I have fond memories of Dubuque, almost all of them connected with friend Dr Barta and his family. I can see us even now walking the distance from his home to the school, discussing matters of interest. I also recall how he demonstrated on the blackboard his methods of teaching the Greek language. Sometimes he would help his own children with their school assignments. As a professor, he saw to it that his students would rank with the best.

Even from the beginning, in spite of the still existing difficulties within the parish, my work seemed rewarding and pleasant. The east branch increased in numbers so that the small church building became overcrowded. The members decided to build a new, handsome structure. That was in the year 1912.

Since it was to be built on the site of the present church, which was torn down, services would be held temporarily in the grade school building. All the brethren took part in seeing the new structure take shape, but the three who were particularly involved were ^{John} ~~Jan~~ Telecky Sr, ^{Joseph} ~~Josef~~ Zahradnik Sr, and ^{Joseph} ~~Josef~~ Holec. Let that be recorded to their memories, as they are now resting from their earthly labors.

It was on the delightfully clear autumn day of October 6 that the church was dedicated with God's Word and prayer. The morning Czech

sermon was preached by Rev Bren, and the afternoon English sermon was delivered by Prof Barta. The Cedar Rapids parish with Pastor Hlavaty joined our joyful celebration.

Since the afternoon congregation was unusually large, and only half of it could be seated in the church, Pastor Dobias preached to the overflow crowd in the cemetery back of the church. There was a noonday dinner served at the home of brother Mojzis. The white church, with its high steeple pointing heavenward, standing as it did on slightly higher ground amid a grove of tall pine trees, was beautiful to behold.

The members of the east church were proud of their new house of worship. Even though services were held in the afternoon, attendance was always good. That was in the years before the great upset caused by the war and the automobile.

We were in constant touch with our relatives in Bohemia, and learned about their joys and sorrows. In 1913 came the sad news that my mother passed away. She was 86 years old. Brother Josef, at whose home she spent her last years, wrote that his wife had been taking good care of her. I believed it because I witnessed all this when I saw mother for the last time.

Pastor Dusek remained our good friend and was always interested in the well-being of the Czech evangelical work carried on in this country. In 1910 he was appointed superintendent of the Czech Reformed Church. In the same year the Vienna Faculty honored him with a Doctor's Degree.

While in Chicago, we sent Dr Dusek a card with signatures of his friends. We assured him that we were thinking of him. I wrote to him after our Chicago convention and described what went on. I did not receive a reply because the first world war began. We had news that he kept up his spirits during the war, even when he was under investigation for disloyalty. After his wife passed away, he found life quite difficult, and he finally became ill and died. He lived just long enough to see the birth of freedom for his beloved country.

When the first war began in 1914, those of us who were born in Bohemia were anxious to know what would come of it. We heard that Czech soldiers were deserting the army, and that the Austrian command was trying desperately to keep Czechs in line and was prosecuting anyone whose sympathies were with the attacked Serbian nation.

We heard that Prof Masaryk, Dr Benes and Dr Stefanik were taking steps to free Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovenia from Austrian rule. We felt we should somehow get involved, and were delighted when our parishes collected about \$800 to donate to our country's cause. This much was accomplished even before the National Association was organized. After the Association came into being and a 'Busy Bee' branch was established in Ely, most of our church ladies joined and proceeded to prepare various items needed by the boys in the army.

It seems to me that the ordinary citizen supported the first world war better than he did the second world war. There were, during the first war, many meetings in all the villages, towns and cities.

There were patriotic speeches and songs composed to move people to buy war bonds and to get along without certain foods reserved for army use. Large crowds gathered at railroad stations to give inducted men a royal send-off.

We had patriotic meetings even in our small village of Ely, with speeches by outstanding men, among them Vojta Benes, the organizer of the National Association, and Dr Bren and Dr Krenek. Everything was done to support the war so the united effort would hasten the day of victory.

I would like to call attention to what might be otherwise forgotten, that is, that the evangelical ministers were eager and generous when steps were taken toward the independence of Czechoslovakia. The organizer Benes was a guest in our house, and in about all the other Cxech parsonages. He found it comparatively easy to work where there were parishes. He gave due credit to our parish, and to his own parish and its pastor, Rev Marek. Pastor Bren, in Hopkins, and Pastor Krenek, in Silver Lake, did much to stir up enthusiasm in their neighborhoods and beyond.

This voluntary exertion on the part of our pastors and parishes was not always appreciated. 'Women's News' published an article saying that the protestants were receiving too much credit in the war effort, and that the freethinkers should stop them.

Even I was accused of carrying on a religious propaganda when I said in a talk to my countrymen that I considered the emigration of so many Czechs to America an evidence of the providence of God.

I added that they were brought to America so they could assist their homeland in its time of need, and that the real objective was to establish peace and equality with the help of God. Our churches steadfastly offered prayers for victory. It was a time of high enthusiasm and great expectations, and it was fitting to seek the help of the Almighty.

The long expected day finally came: Germany surrendered. It was on the eleventh day of November, 1918, that the armistice was signed.

On that particular day we were taking Prof Barta to Cedar Rapids so he could take his train for Dubuque. He had been visiting us and preaching in our church. When we arrived in Cedar Rapids, we witnessed a crowd of extremely jubilant people. All of us remember how the day was celebrated -- noise, bands, parades. In the distance we noticed a Czech flag and we could hear Czech music. Our hearts rejoiced! The Czechs were a free people!

A large American flag was carried through the street, and next to it a big signboard advertising a dance to celebrate the great victory. It made me sad to realize how times had changed. Our forefathers were strengthened in battle with a prayer and the song: "Those who are God's defenders and of His holy word, look to him for help and place in Him their trust." They gave praise to God for victory. Our Czech people forgot in 1918 to follow the examples of their ancestors.

Our joy in winning the war was soon lessened when bad news began to arrive. Three boys from our parish failed to return.

Frank Mojzis died while the war was in progress. Two of our men, József Filipi and Joseph F. Kriz, died on the battlefield a few days before the armistice was signed. Both of them had been well liked by everyone. Both were in the artillery branch.

We conducted a memorial service for each of them, and tried to soothe ^{the} grief of their families. It appeared as if, like the ointment which was spilled long ago in show of thanksgiving to our Lord, the lives of these young men were sacrificed so the human race could live in freedom and in peace.

Our family also received a personal and sad piece of news. My wife's brother, Zdenek, whom I tutored when he was eleven years old, was inducted while he was working as a bank executive. He and some other Czech lads were enrolled in the French army. He wrote us a letter when he was guarding prisoners in northern Africa. He complained of the heat, the filth, and vermin, and said he had requested to be sent to the front.

His request was granted, and he lost his life on the field of battle and was buried somewhere in France. His wife and son came to Bohemia for a short visit, then moved to Germany. We don't know what happened after that.

My brother wrote to me about the soldiers from Habrkovice who didn't return to their homes. There were too many for a small village.

According to letters from Superintendent Dusek, the Czech evangelicals were planning extensive celebrations to mark the five hundredth anniversary of the martyrdom of Jan Hus, the country's

brave and effective reformer. The plans were not carried out because the Austrian government put a ban on public gatherings. Our Czech brethren had to be content to honor the greatest Czech in only their own churches, and were unable to tell the whole nation about this man and the greatest movement in the country's history.

American Czech protestants were not bound by any government rules. Our parishes remembered to honor this man of God who was willing to give his life, as he said in his own words: "For the truth which I believed and taught and preached, I shall gladly die."

Even the Ely church prepared a fitting ceremony. Several of the brethren hauled a huge rock from a farm two miles distant and set it down in the park near the mother church. An engraver, Kofron by name, was asked to engrave on the boulder: "Jan Hus 1415-1915."

I recall an interesting happening while he worked. Three small boys were leaning against the stone and watched how the chisel formed the letters and numbers. The engraver looked at the boys and in a serious voice warned, "You know, boys, you really should not be jiggling the stone."

Kofron laughed heartily when the boys jumped away. The boys didn't realize that it would take a greater strength than theirs to move the boulder.

We invited the Czech Evangelical churches in Cedar Rapids to take part in the celebration. The pastors in attendance were Hlavaty, Cada, and Spinka. Worship service took place inside the church, then

the congregation assembled around the stone which was dedicated to its intended purpose.

Some weeks later a celebration was organized by Rev Hlavaty in one of the Cedar Rapids parks. A Cedar Rapids minister spoke in English and Pastor Krenek from Silver Lake spoke in Czech. Pastor Krenek used the opportunity to describe to the citizens of Cedar Rapids, whose population was one third of Czech descent, John Hus as the undaunted defender of God's Word.

In that same memorable year of 1915, the Cedar Rapids Czech parish, under the leadership of Pastor Hlavaty, built the beautiful Hus Memorial Church. The ceremonies of laying of the cornerstone and the subsequent dedication stressed the hope that the Czech Evangelical people of the city would continue to heed Hus's legacy to hold to the God of their fathers and to live according to the Holy Word as an example to future generations.

The automobile appeared on the road about the time we moved to Ely. It caused a lot of attention. It was interesting to hear what our church members thought of the new invention. There was talk of high cost and the difficulties it would create because horses were afraid of it.

At first decisions were made that no automobiles would be bought, but decisions do not last long, and one brother after another bought one. As soon as one had learned to drive he came to the parsonage to give the pastor's family a ride. We couldn't refuse such a kind offer, but were always glad when the ride was finished and we were safe at home.

Little by little more members acquired motor cars, even though it was said they would bring some farmers to poverty or force them to work harder.

I resisted the luxury of an automobile until the year 1917, I had a team of two beautiful black horses, and they satisfied my needs. It was difficult to buck against the march of progress, however. I started asking the men that owned them which cars were better and which one I should buy if I should decide to get one.

The second of July came around, and our silver anniversary. Toward evening the brethren of the church began to arrive in their new automobiles or in horse-drawn buggies. Mrs. Bren and Dr Barta were with the group. When the brethren had gathered around our family in front of the parsonage, the curator of the church made a speech, wishing us well, and gave us our wedding gift of a Reo automobile.

The Reo was considered the best car for our use. Mrs. Bren and Dr Barta made speeches and wished us continued happiness. We were surprised and even moved to tears as we received such a great gift and heard all the good wishes. It would be impossible to forget the day and the expressions of kindness and friendliness.

The car was, of course, very handy. It was now easy to go to the branch churches or anywhere else, but that was true only when the roads were dry. When it rained, the roads became muddy and horses still had to be used. Horses were common for a number of years before roads were graveled or paved.

Our children were attending schools in Cedar Rapids and would come home for the weekends. The car was a big help in taking them to or from the railroad station in Ely, or in covering the entire distance to Cedar Rapids.

The automobile took us to church conventions in Hopkins, Silver Lake, and Clarkson. It was also used to visit church members and to go for needed household supplies to Ely or Cedar Rapids.

Worship services were for a time continued in one church in the morning, and in a second church in the afternoon. Because it was so easy to drive to any one of the churches, it was later decided to conduct services in one church only, and to rotate between the three churches. It was understood that members of the three churches would always take part in the services in whatever church they were held.

The plan did not work out very well. Some of the members were tempted to take longer trips than to church. It was evident that the automobile could have been a great help in church work, but it failed to be so. No doubt other churches had the same experience.

Rev Hlavaty and I supported each other in our work, and our families kept in close contact. His children often came to our house and, in the summer, joined in swims in our creek.

When the time came for Rev Hlavaty to resign his pastorate in the Hus Memorial Church, I substituted for him in some of the church

meetings. It wasn't long before Dr Bren was elected to become the new minister. He used to say jokingly that some years back he followed me to Minnesota, and now he was following me to Iowa. It was nice to have Brens close to us. We visited often, and talked over old times and looked ahead into the future together.

While in Ely, I had the opportunity to visit other churches whenever I was called to do so. The parish was always willing to let me go. The members understood I had to be of service to others in the same way as Rev Kun used to go to neighboring states to strengthen the various groups of believers with God's Word.

I recall with pleasure our revival meetings in the Bethlehem Chapel, near Howells, Nebraska, the silver wedding anniversary of Pastor Filipi in Clarkson, the dedication ceremony of the Lord's House in Tabor, the fortieth anniversary of the Omaha and Saratoga churches, the trips to Academy, the visits to Hopkins and Silver Lake, and the many other conventions and other calls to duty.

It became evident that a new hymn book would be useful because the present Evangelical Songbook did not seem adequate. The Tract Publishing Company promised Dr Losa that it would print a new book for us. Our Presbytery and the Evangelical Union nominated a committee to take care of the project. The committee consisted of Dr Losa, Rev Burian, and me.

We met one hot summer day in the Ely parsonage to select hymns from the Kancional, from the Songs of Life's Journey, and from other sources.

Our work was useless, however, because the publisher was unable to raise the money to proceed with the printing.

After some months, the news came that the Tract Publishing Co would find it possible to reprint the Evangelical Songbook and add a selected number of songs to the original book. I went to work and looked up my translations of English hymns and translated some newer ones. Dr Krenek helped with some of the songs when he came to visit with us. I sent my work to Rev Svacha, who helped with some of the tunes, and sent all the sheets to the printer. The printer sent me the proofs for final editing. It was an arduous task. It was evident from the way the proofs looked that the printer did not have a Czech typesetter. I made my corrections and returned the edited sheets. I doubted the printer would understand all the changes, but the finished product was satisfactory. Our churches liked the new song book, and used it for what it was intended -- to give praise to the Highest and to keep up the spirit of God's people.

The Ely church had a history of its own. It was built in 1868 out of sound, well-seasoned lumber; it was moved next to the parsonage (three fourths of a mile) in 1884; it was widened, improved, and dignified with a steeple, complete with a bell, in 1893.

In 1927 there were two possible projects brought up by the congregation. The first idea was to build a brand new church in the village of Ely. The other plan was to completely renovate the present structure. The renovation would consist of raising the building, digging a full basement, adding a new room in the front section,

installing a furnace, and bringing in modern pews.

The majority of the members favored the second plan, which was put into action with all possible speed. The congregation demonstrated again what it could do when it came to a church project. The men did much of the work; all were eager to contribute to it, and were pleased with the final result. The church building looked much better, and the basement was convenient for social gatherings.

A big surprise was in store for us one Sunday in June 1935. The morning service was held in the mother church and was followed by a potluck dinner in the basement. In the afternoon the entire congregation entered the church. I was told that this time the program would be in other hands. My wife and I had roses pinned to our suit coats as we entered the church, and it was arranged to have us led to our seats.

My wife was accompanied by the youngest Sunday School boy, the son of the Erenberger family, and I was led by the youngest girl, Amelia Anderle. We were seated in front and facing the congregation.

The program was organized by the Christian Endeavor group and directed by our faithful organist of many years and Sunday School teacher, John Kriz. Following a song, and in step with organ music, marched in one by one twenty five girls dressed in white and each with a different date, from 1911 to 1935, printed in blue on the front of her blouse. Each girl carried a rose which she placed in a small basket in front of us. Then the girls lined up in a pretty row and sang: "Where He leads me I will follow."

It is not difficult to guess that the ceremony was in honor of our twenty five years as leaders of the Ely church. Brother John Kriz spoke for the mother church, Frank Chaloupka for the west church, and John Telecky for the east church.

I remember that brother Kriz talked about the "good shepherd" and that brother Chaloupka made the statement, "in bad weather we didn't always come to services, but he was always there."

Naturally all the speeches, the songs, the prayers, and my remarks expressed thanks to God who for twenty five years kept us in his care and blessed our efforts to further His kingdom.

It was a hot, stifling day in June of 1936. The day's heat was followed by a terrific thunder storm at night. In the morning came the sad news that the west church had been struck by lightning and had burned to the ground. It was a big surprise to the family that lived about a block from the building to see it in flames. It was an especially hard blow to the church members, because the church had just been decorated at considerable expense. The brethren who had finished the improvements had been eager to show off their work to the rest of the congregation. Now all they had left was a heap of ashes.

The Kancionals and other song books, the Bibles, the library, and the organ were gone. Even the bell, whose pleasant ring had called believers to the worship of God was partially melted.

We held services the following Sunday at the site of the pile of ashes. We returned thanks to God for all the blessings we had

received in His sanctuary, and asked God to bless all that had been accomplished and to lead us on in His kindness so we would remain true to Him.

It was like a funeral service, and it was difficult to part without shedding a few tears.

While it was still warm, the church bell was hauled away by someone unknown to us. The only object left was the iron casting from one of the pedals of the reed organ. I took the casting and used it as a frame for a small picture. A row of pines stood on each of two sides of the church grounds. The farm's owner, brother Chadima, whose father donated the plot for church use, decided to leave the piece of land fenced off and uncultivated.

The members of the branch church met at the curator's home to decide what to do. It was decided, almost unanimously, to join with the mother church, because the members could easily cover the distance in their automobiles. The west branch started to attend the services at the mother church, and the members brought with them what money they had in their treasury and added to it what was received later from the fire insurance settlement. From that time on services were held for two Sundays in the mother church, and on the third Sunday in the east church.

When I became sixty five years old, I started to notice the weight of years and a sort of weakness. It occurred to me that it might be better to leave the affairs of the church in younger hands. I decided to retire in another year, and told the congregation that I would like

to make it the best year we ever had.

It moved me to see, as I spoke, tears in the eyes of many of the brethren. A few of them came to the parsonage in the days that followed and asked me to reconsider. I told them I would wait and decide when the year was up.

I don't know if I felt better at the end of the year, or if I simply became accustomed to getting old, but I announced I would continue to serve and did not bring up the matter again until after my seventieth birthday. I was sure at that time, however, that I was ready to give up the work. When some of the members still insisted that I stay on, I had a ready reply: "Is there a farmer or a laborer who feels capable to do his work when he reaches my age?"

We started looking around for a pastor who would take over the duties of a minister in Ely. We discussed the problem in sessions of the elders, and also in meetings of the congregation. We elected, I'm afraid without his knowledge, brother Joseph Havlik, pastor of Zion and Bethlehem Chapel, near Clarkson, Nebraska. He replied that because of the many improvements that had been undertaken in his church, he would not feel free to accept the offer.

We knocked on other doors, without success, until we found Rev Burian who would be willing to make a change. He came at our invitation to get acquainted with the congregation and to get the congregation to know him, and he was elected unanimously. He promised to take over the work on May 1, 1938. On that day I was 71 years and 4 months old, and had served the Ely church 28 years and 4 months. It was a touching moment

when, during my final church service, in front of the congregation, I turned over the keys of the church to Rev Burian.

As I surrendered the keys, I expressed the hope that the Lord would give His blessing to his ministry. When I turned over the house keys, I expressed the sincere wish that his home would always be filled with joy and happiness as it was when our family lived there.

In the name of the congregation, I gave the new minister and his family a warm welcome, with complete confidence that the Lord would continue to keep all of us in His love and guide us in our service to Him and His holy name.

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Chapter XVI

In Retirement

Now that my replacement was elected, we started to look around for where we should spend the autumn of our lives. We had more than a year's time to do this. The Silver Lake Presbyterian parish that had been friendly to us all these years offered to give us a plot of church-owned land where we could build a home. Some of the brethren suggested that Cedar Rapids would be a good location.

We finally decided to stay with the people we had served and to remain close to our church. We bought a house in the small village of Ely. In a village of that size people know each other and care about each other.

Our home stood on a spacious lot with a large garden in the back. One of the brethren who came for a visit told us, "You really bought yourselves something -- just a lot of drudgery! It will take hard work to keep everything in order."

I do not like the word 'drudgery'. What a person likes to do is not drudgery or a burden. As long as God gives strength for it, work promotes health and a feeling of satisfaction. Many people consider work a curse. In answer to this idea, someone wrote: "If work which can be so delightful is God's curse, how great must be His blessing!"

We were convinced that our church people were happy that we decided to stay in their midst. They transported our belongings from one house to the other, and helped us get settled. They also gave the parsonage a thorough cleaning so it would be ready for the new residents. All this went on during the week of March in 1938.

There was plenty to do, especially in the summer of the first year. There was always something to improvise or keep in order according to our tastes. The results of our efforts were soon evident -- the joy of beautiful flowers and the pleasure of having fresh vegetables. Even the tired feeling after a day's work was pleasant and resulted in sound sleep at night. The trains passing by within two blocks of the house did not wake us. Only our bees did not prosper in the new location, so I transported what hives remained to a friend's farm.

I spent the winter months reading the daily newspaper and looking through magazines. I also put some time studying the Greek New Testament and the Hebrew Bible. I had been interested in such studies when I was at the seminary, but had not had much time for it until now.

I was particularly interested in passages that translators found difficult to agree on. For example, there are in Czech Bibles at least three versions of the song of the multitude of heavenly host appearing at Christ's birth. I also tried to compare passages in the New Testament as written in the several languages I studied in school. I found that the meaning of a passage varied according to the language in which the words were written. The German translation appeared to be more accurate than other translations. Comparing the English Bible's version of the Lord's prayer with the Czech Bible's, I would say that the Czech version is better and clearer.

After about two months of this research, my eyes started to cause me trouble. Anyone who is familiar with Hebrew and Greek writing knows how hard they may be on sight. Anyway, my eyes warned me to give them some rest. It seemed I was not supposed to continue doing things for my own enjoyment.

Several years went by, and my friend and neighbor Dr Bren decided it was his turn to retire. He bought a house in Cedar Rapids after he was unable to find anything suitable in Ely. Since we spent most of our lives together, it was nice to continue on together in our later years. We visited together as often as we could. We recalled our student days, the years in New York, and the happenings connected with the Evangelical Union or the Czech Presbytery. We also discussed world events.

Our talks were serious when friend Bren was in a philosophical mood. At times our talks became humorous.

In addition to the writing of my autobiography, I did other things, some of which were strictly for pleasure. There was a great deal to do just to keep our grounds and home in order. There were times when I was glad when I was asked to substitute for our new minister when he was ill or away.

The Presbyterian Publishing Board decided at this time to stop printing the Czech Christian Journal. Brother Dr Bren argued that the Journal should be saved if at all possible, and as long as possible. He called a meeting of the local pastors. The pastors who participated were: Burian, Filipi, Pauk, Bren, and Pokorny.

A second meeting followed, and Pastor Husak, at the time editor of the Journal, was asked to be present. The Presbytery appointed all of the ministers at the meeting to serve as a committee in the interest of the paper.

As a committee, we began to realize that the number of readers of the Journal had dwindled, but we also found that the remaining readers did not want ^{the} paper stopped. The regular subscription did not make the publication profitable, and so we started asking for 'gifts of love'.

Asking for gifts of love brought good results, and the Board was willing to hand over the paper to the Presbytery and offered it support. It is possible that the readers of the journal were not aware of the fact that the brethren who worked for the paper did so voluntarily, without any monetary reward. This included the administrators, editors and writers. All was done out of love. The people involved in the work

even paid for their own paper, envelopes, and postage stamps.

Administration and editing (Dr Filipi and Pastor Pauk) took a great deal of time and effort. I offered my services, and was asked to contribute with the writing of this autobiography.

"Day after day goes by but the good Lord always keeps watch over His children." Many years have gone by and two important events in our lives were at hand. One was the fiftieth year of my ordination; and; in another year, the fiftieth year of our wedding.

Brother Pastor Burian kept track of these dates, and he and the parish arranged fitting celebrations. The people of the Cedar Rapids Hus Memorial Church joined in and added to the first event the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the ordination of its pastor Dr Bren. Professor Barta was with us on that day. We recalled the years of working together, the many joys and difficulties, and thanked God for giving us life and strength throughout the years.

The Presbyterian people in Silver Lake kept in mind that we had been closely connected with them. The opportunity to make this known came in the year 1941, when the Silver Lake parish hosted the convention of the Evangelical Union and the Czech Presbytery. Rev Burian took us there in his automobile. On an afternoon of one of the convention days, I was asked to give a talk on: "How it happened I came to Silver Lake."

I told the people about the same story that I wrote down in these memoirs. Their pastor, Dr Mrazek, followed my talk with a discussion of the early days of the Silver Lake Church, then presented me with a beautiful memorial lamp which I call, "The Ever Shining Light". On the lamp is the inscription, "The Fiftieth Jubilee of the election of Dr F. Pokorny as the First Pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Silver Lake, Minn. -- August 24, 1841."

Even our golden anniversary a year earlier, was remembered when, at one of the church dinneres, my wife and I were seated at a special table with a wedding cake placed before us. The people attending the dinner extended their best wishes for God's continued guidance and blessing.

The following year came the real date of the golden anniversary of our wedding. It was on the second day of July. On that exact date, friends Brens and Burians came over. It was announced that two days later, on July 4, there would be a church dinner and a ceremony dedicating a flag honoring labor. The dinner and ceremony were to be followed by a social hour.

As we entered the church to take part in the announced flag dedication ceremony, my wife and I were asked to sit in front of the assembly. We were immediately surrounded by representatives of the Church, Sunday School, and Christian Endeavor. All had speeches in regard to our wedding anniversary. Among those present were Brens, Bartas, and Pauks.

As a gift we received a 'hope chest' made from the wood of a walnut tree that had grown up on our property. Inside the chest were fifty silver dollars, and on each dollar was pasted a heart of white paper trimmed in gold. On each heart was printed a date from 1892 to 1942.

In the chest was also a similar but a much larger heart, and on it was written, "God is love and he who abides in love, abides in God and God in him. Love never fails. To its pastor of many years and to his

dear wife on the fiftieth anniversary of their marriage is this gift given by the members of the Church."

The afternoon was taken up with speeches about our fifty years of married life and about other successful marriages in general. The talks stressed the serious side of marriage. We were impressed by all that was said and found it difficult to express our gratitude to our church members, the visiting ministers, and the many friends.

A year later we were happy to celebrate the golden anniversaries of the Lorenc and Becicka couples. We thanked God that He gave these fine people good health and good fortune over the years.

We enjoyed pleasant times in our first years in Ely, but these bright times were soon darkened by what was going on in Europe, in Bohemia, and with Czechoslovakia. It was impossible not to be unmindful of what new hardships were in store for our native land. We were anxious about our relatives and friends. Before the German army entered the borders of the country, we had carefully worded reports from Dr Krenek, and letters from my wife's sister in Prague, and my niece in Habrkovice. When Czechoslovakia was torn apart, and Bohemia and Moravia were put under German rule, all connections with our native land were severed.

We worried more than ever. Friend Bren and I had long discussions. He was well versed in world events and tried to analyze where they would lead. We were hoping that eventually there would be an independent Czechoslovakia in a free Europe.

Our Czech-American Zion suffered during its existence the loss of some of its faithful ministers. Pastor Teply of Melnik, Wisconsin, passed away at an early age, and Pastor Linka, of Academy, South Dakota, followed some years later. We also lost brother Leksa, of Silver Lake. The ranks were thinning in other Czech denominations, as well. Among those we knew well were brother Vaclav Prucha and Edmund Wrbitzky. Among those who were involved with Czech people was Dr Hlavaty. He was for some years pastor of the church in Wagner, South Dakota, and retired to Cedar Rapids where he had labored as a young man. A few years before his death, when Pastor Burian^{and I} came to see him, he showed us his beautiful flowers. That was toward the end of summer, and he supposed he would not be planting flowers in the spring.

It wasn't long afterward that we attended his funeral which was conducted according to his wishes. I felt death coming very close as I witnessed the passing of a schoolmate from gymnasium days.

Death came still closer when my friend Bren became seriously ill. He was still present when the convention of the Midwest Presbytery and Evangelical Union was called to order, but he was already too weak to take part in discussions. He fought the sickness bravely and looked for help from doctors. Pastor Pauk took him to doctors and did what he could, and brother Burian and I paid him visits. He was always glad to see us, but a longer visit tired him.

I remember our last visit when I told him I had translated Dusek's song: "Come Thou Who Art Mournful" into English. Friend Bren always loved the song, and asked to have it sung at his funeral. I gave him a copy of the translation:

Come thou who art mournful,
Come and bring thy pain
To the breast of Jesus
Who knew sorrow's strain;
Come and on His bosom
Lay thy aching head,
And before His mercy
All thy sorrows spread.

Though the lips can't utter
Even thy grief's name,
Though thy cheeks be scarlet
Sorely flushed with shame;
Come to Him and meekly
Closer to Him press,
Let thy tears and grieving
Tell of thy distress.

He will not condemn thee,
Nor will He forsake,
He knows how temptations
Hearts may overtake.
In His arms He'll take thee,
Wipe away thy tear;
Trust Him, He'll console thee,
Take away thy fear.

Brother Bren was very weak , and it was difficult to talk with him. I watched him as he looked over my handwriting. He said he was glad that particular song was translated to the English language.

As we parted, he told me something that made me think he had lost hope he would recover. Inspecting his ^{thin} hands, he remarked, "I had hoped to live at least two more years, but let it be as God decides."

God decided that he should enter the joy of his Lord and not await the end of the war and the freedom won by his native land. He didn't live to enjoy what he always wanted, that he and his wife would spend some time with their grandchildren.

Many friends remarked at the time of his funeral and afterward that we would miss him. We had hoped that he would continue to work with us. He had written for the Christian Journal a fine article about "Advent and Christmas in a Czech Evangelical School". We had asked him to write about his school days in Tesina, and about whatever he recalled from his early life. It was too bad this was not to be.

His friends would recall his words of comfort; the churches he served would remember his efforts and his zeal. We laid his body to rest according to his wishes with song a prayer, and reading of the Holy Word.

As it often happens, one sadness is barely over before another begins. The following winter Professor Barta of Dubuque became dangerously ill. When he recovered somewhat, he asked for me, and

brother Vavra and I drove over for a visit.

He regained his strength to such an extent that he could keep up his teaching at the university up to his seventieth year. He retired and promised he would write for the Christian Journal. He made a good start with an account of his teaching at Dubuque University.

He and his wife came over during the summer and he even preached for me at the east church when brother Burian was away. He was also strong enough to come to the convention of the Czech Presbytery and Evangelical Union in Saratoga. While at the convention, he was stricken with an illness for which there seemed to be no remedy, and he kept weakening from that time on. Brother Burian and I went to see him when he was still fairly active. He talked about his school, the Greek grammar, and similar subjects in which he was interested. We had no idea we were talking to him for the last time.

The news came that his condition had worsened, and soon afterward that the end had come. He had asked to be buried in Saratoga where he used to visit and had many friends. That is where we laid his body to rest in the fall of 1944. After that I could not pick up the Hebrew Old Testament or the Greek New Testament without thinking of my friend Dr Barta.

Even our family had its own worry in 1944. In March our mother was operated on and stayed in the hospital for five weeks. It was the

same sort of sickness as thirty two years before. She came home healthy, but at Christmas she was in the hospital for another week.

Brens and Bartas and our family were indebted to Dr Bousa of Chicago for the many times he came to our rescue in time of trouble. He always offered his support and help.

We sometimes think that it is the minister who brings comfort to the sad and sick. Sometimes it is the sad and the sick that bring comfort to ministers who may be in retirement. In times of my own difficulties, I recall the brave words of a devout woman whose daughter died during childbirth. The child died the next day, and was buried in the arms of its mother. It was a day of sadness for the entire community.

Some days later, the dead woman's mother came to our house, and we tried to express our sympathy. She quoted immediately and in true faith the words from the book of Job: "Though He slay me, yet will I put my trust in Him." (Job 13, 15)

It is no wonder that I had nothing to add and that I hear her voice again when I have worries and difficulties.

As I conclude this writing it is a nice day. The world seems brighter now that the war has ended. It is also brighter at home, and the mind more at ease. I must confess sincerely and thankfully: "I love the Lord because he has heard my voice and my supplications. Because he has inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live." (Psalm 116, 1,2)

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Chapter XVII

Various Reflections

('Various Reflections' was published in the Czech language in the Czechoslovak semi-monthly paper 'The Christian Journal' in the March 5, March 19, and April 16, 1946 issues.)

Everyone likes to look back over the road he has traveled. What he sees are just momentary glimpses of special periods of life or of unusual incidents. A person can try to go back over his entire life, but he will overlook many things. When he tries to write down what his memory recalls, he must proceed one step at a time. Much of what has been almost forgotten comes back to life, and he lives again the experiences of former years.

It is interesting to reflect on all the changes which occurred during one's lifetime. Times change. "One generation goes, and

another comes, while the earth endures perpetually." (Ecclesiastes 1, 4) "For everything there is an appointed time; there is a time for every purpose under the heavens." (Ecclesiastes 3, 1) Older events fade from memory when new events are in the making, and what is new changes a person's life style, and a person changes as well.

It is true that there have been more developments in the last sixty years than in any other equal period of time. Each of these developments has had a marked influence on people's lives. I shall not be able to list all these advancements, but I shall write about those that seem of greater importance.

When we lived in Silver Lake, there were telephones connecting the villages, but there were none on farms. In Ely, however, when we moved there, telephones were already in all the farm homes. The phones were, of course, very handy when it became necessary to call the doctor or anyone else.

A telephone call served almost like a personal visit. Relatives or neighbors phoned each other and exchanged information how they were and what they were doing. The party line was a good source for local news. No one considered it wrong to listen in on any conversation. An elderly couple, who moved from the farm to the city where there were more advanced telephones, complained, "We no longer have a party line and we don't know what goes on in the neighborhood."

If there was a call to the parsonage, there would be many listeners, because there might be news of a wedding, a sickness, or possibly a funeral. Because of the number of open telephones, it sometimes became difficult to understand the message.

Some years ago I was called to Hutchinson, Minn., to officiate at a funeral. I understood that a wife had died. When I arrived at my destination, I learned that it was the husband who had passed away. One of the pastors made certain he would understand messages correctly. Before he started taking what would probably be an important call, he would call over the party line, "Please hang up your telephones, all you inquisitive people."

The telephone brought people closer together. It was a great help in church work because it made it easy to arrange coming events.

The automobile came into the picture at the beginning of the century. I saw the first 'horseless carriage' in Minneapolis, where it caused a great deal of excitement. Here was something entirely new! A few weeks later I saw a similar carriage close to Hutchinson, Minn. Soon after that one of the citizens of Silver Lake bought one of the new contrivances. The automobile created much interest, and sometimes amusement when it had to be pushed up a fairly small hill.

The automobile needed to be improved. It was not unusual to see, in the early days, one of the cars standing on the road with the driver next to it or under it, trying to repair something that went wrong.

I was in Silver Lake one summer day when one of the church members showed me the new Ford he had purchased, with the top supported mainly on two steel rods and with acetylene lights in front. The owner decided to give the Krenek couple and me a ride into the country.

It was a pleasant evening, bright with a full moon. All went well

until it was decided to turn back somewhere between Winsted and Silver Lake, and a tire blew out. The owner of the car walked the four miles to Winsted while we sat over an hour waiting for him. We got back to Silver Lake at two in the morning.

Year after year, the car became more dependable, and the widespread use of automobiles was a great influence on everyday life. People could now hurry from one place to another and it seemed that they started to hurry with whatever was to be done. Neighborhood visits were at an end, and drives to places some distance away became common. Friends were no longer seen riding in buggies and stopping on the road for a bit of gossip. Automobiles met on the road, but there wasn't time, as they passed, for even a quick hello.

Before the roads were gravelled or paved, there was still a need for horses, and there were still a few teams tied on the church grounds, but they began to disappear ~~sent~~ by. Farmers no longer bragged about their horses -- they talked about cars, their appearance and power.

The automobile could have helped church work considerably. It didn't do that, probably ^{because} a person is likely to use new things in selfish ways rather than for the common good.

The newly invented tractor helped farmers do their work faster. That meant that farmers might have some leisure time or could take care of more acreage. Trucks came into use for transporting heavy loads.

It is expected that the airplane will one day be in common use just as the automobile is today. If that expectation comes true, there will be even more changes in the way people live.

Recently I met one of our Sunday School boys on a Cedar Rapids street. He walked briskly as if he had an important destination. He told me his grandmother had given him a nickel and that he was going to the picture show. Movies were new at the time, and were of great interest to everyone. In time the movies became talkies and provided entertainment to millions.

I admit I don't know much about moving pictures. I made a stop in Chicago when on the way to a conference in Gary, Indiana, and visited Pastor Vanek and the Czechoslovak Consul Smetana. The consul was surprised that I had never been to see a moving picture. He maintained that a minister should know about those things, and suggested the two of us should attend a movie in the evening. Something interfered, however, and we didn't get to go.

Some weeks later, Pastor Milo Filipi and I were travelling by train and had a stop of several hours in Sioux City. We decided to visit a theatre. We saw how the popular Buffalo Bill hunted buffalo and fought Indians. I marveled at this new form of entertainment, and saw other movies after this. I was entertained but didn't learn much from them.

Another novelty that came to enrich our lives was radio. It was a wonderful invention. Many people praised it as the result of man's ingenuity. They forget for the moment that ingenuity and the gift to invent comes from a wise and generous Creator.

Radio came to our house from its beginning. Our two sons were at the time going to high school in Cedar Rapids, and were studying physics, wireless, and similar subjects. They put together the well known crystal set. This was followed by what was newer and better, and we enjoyed a home made radio for many years. It was not until our house was wired for electricity that our children surprised us with the gift of a fine store bought radio.

Radio is no longer new but it is still a remarkable invention. I recall how we talked to an eighty year old man about the device. He was amazed and could not understand how it was possible to hear voices and music from far away. He finally exclaimed, "A man will be afraid to say anything at home so someone somewhere wouldn't hear him."

New devices for use in war were likewise invented. The most ingenious was the atom bomb. It has been used to destroy human lives and entire cities. Human beings made great progress technically rather than spiritually. They invented horrible devices that they are now afraid of because they did not learn how to use their creations toward the common good.

Some people are losing hope and are afraid wars will never end even though there is talk of permanent peace throughout the world. There is a feeling of despair that human greed will again drive man against man, class against class, and nation against nation,

Nevertheless, the almighty and ever loving God is still the supreme ruler. He has His own plans for His creation. He still wants

to save His people and guide them in spite of their faults and sinful ways. The sky and the earth are His; the ages are in His hands. With Him everything is possible. We can go forward with confidence if we put our trust in God.

It seems to me that the recent changes have undermined somewhat what was considered God's own arrangement: The human family and family life. I recall one of the brethren in South Dakota telling me: "I am glad that we live far from the city. I have noticed that children living too close to the city have not turned out too well. I prize my home and my church above everything else."

That was years ago. I wonder what he would say today when nothing is too far. Yes, family life is changing. I don't care to discuss hasty marriages or divorces. Both are caused by poor reasoning, dissatisfaction, and lack of principle. There is anxiety that real family life is rare. Perhaps it was an exaggeration, but one newspaper article stated that many city homes have become just a place to sleep at night. Let us hope it isn't like that everywhere.

It would be interesting to conduct a survey in city and country homes asking the following questions: How many evenings in a week is your entire family together? Where do the various members of the family look for entertainment? Can an orderly family with the phonograph, radio, good books, and pleasant surroundings live peacefully together? What seems to be missing?

I am afraid we wouldn't get many comforting answers. Older people

are saying that today's children are different from what children used to be. Evidently they are being brought up differently.

Dr Krenek wrote recently: "Today's pressing problem is how to save the Christian family."

When we came to New York in 1888, we found that our countrymen lived in a sort of settlement. Most of them had homes around 70th Street. Pastor Pisek told us that the first immigrants settled around 4th Street, but that they later moved to a better section of the city. They were still unable to speak good English and found it convenient to stay together. It was probably like that in other larger American cities where a nationality settled in large numbers.

Pastor Pisek was glad his church was located on 74th Street which was close to the center of the Czech population. The Czechs seldom intergrated with other nationalities. The engaged couples of the neighborhood ^{always} ^ looked for a Czech minister to perform the marriage ceremony. They were married in the Czech language and were given a Czech marriage certificate on which appeared in what city in the old country each was born. There were as many as eight such weddings in a week.

Years ago, some Czech settlements were completely Czech. They had their own clubs and churches. Three such settlements were Clarkson, Neb., Silver Lake, Min., and Ely, Ia. Czech was spoken at home, in the street, and in churches. Teachers could not make the pupils speak English except in the classroom. If a new pupil tried to talk in English during recess or noon hour, he would be severely reprimanded by one of the older pupils.

A distinct change took place in the second and third generation. The Czech language was being replaced by English. Even our own congregations were asking to have English used in some of the services. I was surprised when Academy, South Dakota, situated far from any larger city, decided to have some English services. Brother Wrbitzky, the Congregational minister in Silver Lake, started to preach some sermons in English to satisfy the needs of a few American families. In our own church, we started an English Sunday School class for children who did not understand Czech.

My successor in Silver Lake, Pastor Krenek, was asked by his congregation to preach some sermons in English. He complained, "They asked me to preach in English and the ones who wanted it don't come to the services."

Everything is going in the same direction -- to the English language. It really can't be otherwise when families of various nationalities ask to be united with the church. Mixed marriages particularly are breaking down the speech barrier. Today, in many Czech families, the children may understand but do not care to speak Czech.

Gradually the English language introduced itself into our funeral services. There was a time when everything was Czech, but when the early Americans and the Czechs became more neighborly, the minister was sometimes asked, "Please say a few words in English because some of our friends do not understand Czech."

In some family groups there are relatives who do not speak Czech, and some Czech churches are being served by English speaking pastors. Wedding ceremonies are generally conducted in English,

even though both parties may be of Czech descent.

When I consider how it was and how it is now, I have to notice how members of a family may be scattered through the United States. In the old days, relatives generally lived close together. Then came the years when younger folks ventured far from home, a practice even more evident in time of war. It is noticeable in obituaries how far the surviving children have wandered from the parental home. It is not surprising to find people who grew up in Ely, Iowa, relocated in New York, Florida, Kansas, or California.

A big change took place during the last half-century in thinking and feeling about religion. Disbelief has become widespread. Unbelievers usually called themselves freethinkers, although they do not think freely but follow blindly in the steps of their leaders.

In recent years a change for the better has been taking place. The former leaders of freethinkers have died out, and the new generation with its mixture of nationalities is anxious to strive for better things. The prediction that man can live without God has not been fulfilled. Many young Czech folks have joined American churches. A new danger is now threatening and has overtaken many. It is religious ignorance and indifference. Indifference can sometimes do more harm than outright defiance. That is the way the poet G.A. Studdert-Kennedy understood it when he wrote:

Indifference

When Jesus came to Golgotha they hanged Him on a tree,
They drove great nails through hands and feet, and made a Calvary:
They crowned Him with a crown of thorns, red were His wounds and deep,
For those were crude and cruel days, the human flesh was cheap.
When Jesus came to Birmingham, they simply passed Him by,
They never hurt a hair of Him, they only let Him die;
For man had grown more tender, and they would not give Him pain,
They only just passed down the street, and left Him in the rain.
Still Jesus cried, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do,"
And still it rained the winter rain that drenched Him through and through;
The crowd went home and left the street without a soul to see,
And Jesus crouched against a wall and cried for Calvary.

G. A. Studdert-Kennedy, 1883-1929

Not all, but many are satisfied with things of this world and do not worry about spiritual matters. Their slogan is familiar: "Drink and be merry because tomorrow may never come." They are forgetting that "man does not live by bread alone." It isn't possible to live happily with this attitude or to build a well organized and peaceful society. Because the world is straying so badly, the Christian Church is called upon to strive dilligently that His will be done on this earth of ours.

The many changes and new ways of life have had an effect on our American-Czech parishes and other parishes. There is evidence that

family prayer is being discontinued and that orderly family life is no longer common. According to religious magazines, evening services or weekday prayer meetings are no longer being conducted. The daily hurry and bustle has taken away the time that had been devoted to church ceremonies. Various societies are now being organized to assist in the work of the church. Sunday Schools and young people's Christian Endeavors still play important parts in church life. It seems that something is still lacking, and a movement is on the way to teach religion in public schools.

I often marvel at the amount of time we used to spend in church when I took over the Silver Lake parish. There were services on Sunday morning and a young people's meeting in the afternoon. During the week we had a Bible hour, a teacher training class, choir practice, and an evening for learning new tunes.

Even in my time, the length of the worship service tended to be shortened. In Rev Kun's day the sermons were very long. This is noticeable when you read some of his published sermons.

There were also other changes. We used to sing, "Mighty God, strong in battle" or "Praise ye, our God on His holy throne." Now you hear, "When morning gilds the skies" or "O day of rest and gladness." As we think about it, we used to sing about God or to God. Now we sing to the morning or the day of rest and gladness. Someone will say that even these modern songs lead us to God and thanksgiving. That may be true, but there are among the brethren those who see the difference,

though there are not many of them left, and even they are getting used to the change. Pastor Karafiat condemned the song "O Holy Day, the Lord's Own Day" as being too sentimental, and Pastor Nagy didn't care for "Safe in the Arms of Jesus" because it calls for selfish peace rather than to greater effort.

Some of our ministers in Bohemia were displeased that American songs were being translated and used in place of the old-time Czech Brethren hymns. We must admit that "Songs for a Life's Journey and "Hymns of Zion" (both published in Prague) fulfilled their purposes in Sunday Schools in Bohemia and in this country.

"Times are changing, and people are changing with the times." Everything is constantly changing. Let us hope that the inevitable transformation in people and in everything will increase God's kingdom and magnify His glory.

The End