



One thing we must do in Prague: Alpha by Jarda Tusek

In 2006, Sara and I wrote and published a work of fiction, *Three Things You Can't Do in Prague*. In this book, we laid out a “business plan” for a possible way for us to fulfill our God-inspired goal of helping people who live in the Czech Republic to know and serve God.

Through our fictional counterparts, Knut and Gudrun Peterson, we articulated, in a humorous way, three “taboos” in modern-day Prague, three things that are simply not done:

1. To cause European Christians to thrive and come alive in the Lord, and to boldly claim and celebrate their 2000-year Christian heritage
2. To encourage people to worship Christ in a variety of historical expressions (sacramental, liturgical, charismatic, evangelical and so on), rather than working only with the state –sponsored Christian churches.
3. To focus on the apostolic empowerment available to people for service through the convergence of scripture, spirit and sacrament, so that these people can fulfill the Great Commission (to make disciples for Christ) and the Great Commandment (to love God with all your heart, and love your neighbor as yourself).

This book helped us think through what we felt called to do, which was to find effective methods for Christian ministry in a country full of educated, sophisticated people whose view of the “goodness” of the Chris-

tian gospel is understandably skewed by centuries of religion-based wars, repressive state churches and discredited religious institutions.

Fiction vs. Fact

In *Three Things You Can't Do in Prague*, the Petersons received spiritual and practical help in their Czech ministry from their home church, an independent Protestant communion that was built on a convergence model, bringing together the sacramental, evangelical and charismatic Christian traditions. Due to its evangelical roots, the communion was interested in missionary activities, and the Petersons were sent to Prague as the “spearhead” of its international effort.

But remember, this book was fiction! As Sara and I began to develop our ideas about our Prague ministry, it became apparent that our ministry goals no longer meshed with those of the communion when its emphasis shifted from international missions to a USA-focused plan of growth.

This change indicated to Sara and me that we needed to find Christians who are more like-minded, to help us by becoming

our prayer partners and interested friends. We know we can't accomplish much of anything alone; we need the fellowship and encouragement of other Christians who want our ministry to succeed and wish us well. We also need to find a Christian program of evangelism that fits well into the Czech mindset, which is rational and logical rather than emotional.

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Prague rooftops. Photo courtesy Luis Blanco





One thing we must do in Prague: Alpha



Sara and I visit the Albin Polasek Home and Gardens, near our home in Lake Mary, Florida.

ALPHA

Alpha is a worldwide phenomenon. It's found in over 160 countries. It's run in tens of thousands of churches of all denominations. More than 13 million people have taken this opportunity to explore the meaning of life. Perhaps it's your turn.

Alpha is an opportunity to explore the meaning of life in a relaxed, friendly setting. The Alpha course usually meets once per week for 10 weeks, and includes an amazing one-day or weekend getaway. Each session, people enjoy great food, laughter and learning in a fun and friendly atmosphere where no question about life or God is seen as too simple or too hostile...questions like—Is there a God? Why am I here? Where did I come from? Where am I going?

<http://alphausa.org/>

The years of 2007-2010 have been a time of prayer, reflection and listening to God for Sara and me. We've realized that not every Christian vision is brought into reality exactly as we plan, even when the vision is from God. As Sara's brother John told us in 2006, after reviewing *Three Things You Can't Do in Prague*:

“God will surely use you, but He will not necessarily use you in the ways you imagine.”

Knut and Gudrun tackled the “three things you can't do in Prague,” and were successful. In real life, however, Sara and I have streamlined our tasks from three to one, and taken a more positive approach which we are calling “one thing we must do in Prague.”

ALPHA

Back in 2000, Sara and I attended our first Alpha course. We credit this course with steering us in the development of our Czech ministry, as we could see immediately that the logical, low-key Alpha way of evangelism would be successful among the educated, worldly Czechs.

Sara and I have attended Alpha seven times; the first time we were simply participants, and thereafter we were asked to be helpers and leaders. We've watched the DVD's, read the books, discussed the topics with Christian friends and even met Nicky Gumbel, the man who is in charge of Alpha worldwide.

You could say we know a bit about Alpha!

Alpha is already being offered in the Czech Republic, we found, but in Czech, not English. It's our idea that having an English-version Alpha may be very attractive, especially to young people who need to perfect their English skills as their country becomes more integrated into the European Union. Offering Alpha in English also fits well with our business expertise, developed over the past 20 years, of providing career and educational programs in English (see www.ili.cc for details).

We are just completing our 8th Alpha course (where we are helpers), this one at Markham Woods Presbyterian Church in nearby Heathrow, Florida. We have had a wonderful experience in this Alpha—so great, in fact, that we want to become members of MWPC. The pastor, Joe Wendorph, his staff and the lay leaders of the church have embraced us warmly through Alpha. In fact, last Sunday Pastor Joe invited me to tell the congregation about our plans to minister in Prague, using Alpha as our main program.

With a simpler, more clear vision—*one thing we must do in Prague (Alpha)*—we are leaving for Prague on May 20 to establish our Prague-based Christian ministry. Sara and I deeply appreciate the support and prayers of our friends, and look forward to keeping in touch with them on our website, www.ili.cc, on our Alpha programs in English, in Prague.