

GRID 8 PROFILE FOR WESTERN CZECH REPUBLIC

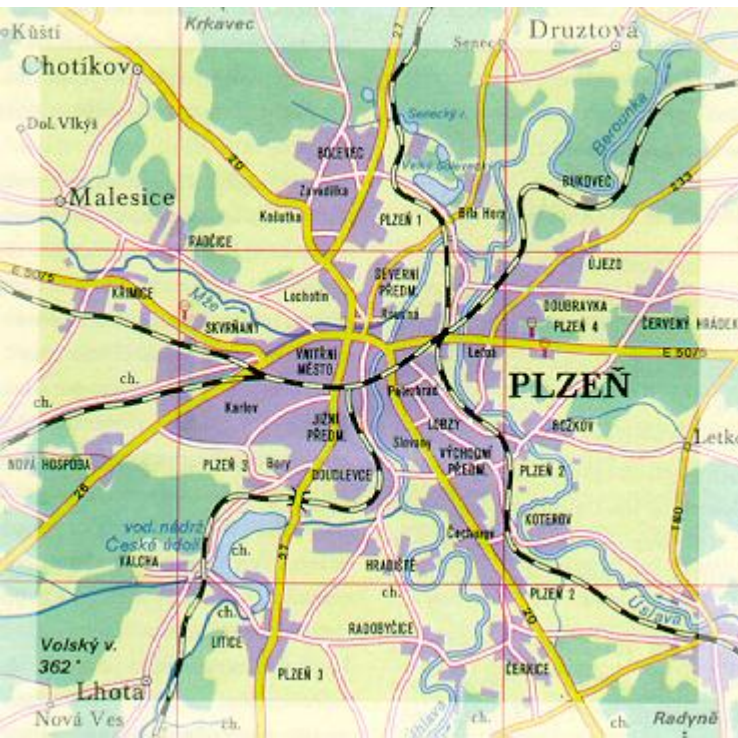
THE GEOGRAPHICAL DIMENSION

The Czech Republic is bordered East by Slovakia (the Slovak Republic), South by Austria, West by Germany, and North by Poland (see map below). Created in 1969, the Czech Republic comprises the former provinces of Bohemia, Moravia, and Czech Silesia, together often called the Czech Lands. In the Western part of the republic lies the Bohemian plateau, which is separated by the Bohemian-Moravian Heights from the fertile Moravian lowland in the E part of the republic. The Sudetes Mountains in the North separate Moravia from Czech Silesia along the Polish border.

The Czech landscape is quite varied; Bohemia to the west consists of a basin, drained by the Elbe (Czech: Labe) and Vltava rivers, surrounded by mostly low mountains such as the Sudeten with its part Krkonoše, where one also finds the highest point in the country, the Sněžka at 1,602 meters (5,256 ft). Moravia, the eastern part, is also quite hilly and is drained predominantly by the Morava River, but also contains the source of the Oder River. Water from the landlocked Czech Republic flows to three different seas: the North Sea, Baltic Sea and Black Sea.

The local climate is temperate with warm summers and cold, cloudy, humid winters, typified by a mixture of maritime and continental influences.





Plzen is situated 1010 ft above sea level in the Plzen basin (Plzenska kotlina) which is bounded to the north by the Krkavec downs (Krkavecka pahorkatina), to the south-east by the Radyne highlands (Radynska vrchovina) and to the east by the Radeč belt (Radecke pasmo). The Plzen basin is the easternmost and, at the same time, the lowest part of the West Bohemian basin.

The four largest rivers of the basin - the Mze, Radbuza, Uhlava and Uslava - meet in Plzen. The Uhlava flows from Klatovy, then into the Radbuza which originates from Stankov in the southern part of Doudlevice near the waterworks at a height of 981 ft. The Radbuza flows through Plzen and beyond the city brewery into the Mze at a height of 971 ft above sea level. The Mze flows to the city from Radcice and continues under Roosevelt Bridge. The Uslava flows from Stahlavy through Bozkov, Lobzy and Letna, then into the Mze in Doubravka near St. George's Church at a height of 965 ft above sea

level.

Weather - The Czech Republic has a mild continental climate with four distinct seasons. All four seasons are good for travel, but the spring and fall are the most popular thanks to pleasant, not-too-cold, not-too-hot weather, relatively long days, and plenty of cultural events. For the current weather forecast for Prague, visit www.wunderground.com and enter 'Prague' in the search bar.

Transportation	Czech Republic
Railways:	<i>total: 9,543 km</i> <i>standard gauge: 9,421 km 1.435-m gauge (2,893 km electrified)</i> <i>narrow gauge: 122 km 0.760-m gauge (23 km electrified) (2004)</i>
Highways:	<i>total: 127,204 km</i> <i>paved: 127,204 km (including 518 km of expressways)</i> <i>unpaved: 0 km (2002)</i>
Waterways:	664 km (on Elbe, Vltava, and Oder rivers) (2004)
Pipelines:	gas 7,020 km; oil 547 km; refined products 94 km (2004)
Ports and harbors:	Decin, Prague, Usti nad Labem

Merchant marine: *registered in other countries: 3*

Airports: **120 (2004 est.)**

Airports - with paved runways: *total: 44*
over 3,047 m: 2
2,438 to 3,047 m: 9
1,524 to 2,437 m: 14
914 to 1,523 m: 2
under 914 m: 17 (2004 est.)

Airports - with unpaved runways: *total: 76*
1,524 to 2,437 m: 1
914 to 1,523 m: 27
under 914 m: 48 (2004 est.)

Heliports: **2 (2004 est.)**

Country Size (Area) - The Czech Republic has 78,866 sq km - Population density is 130 persons per sq km.

Major cities	Number of Inhabitants
Prague	1,181,130
Brno	381,800
Ostrava	320,000
Plzen	166,770
Olomouc	102,650
Liberec	99,105
Ceské Budejovice	98,180
Hradec Králové	98,030
Ústí nad Labem	95,500
Pardubice	91,298

Transport and Traffic Methods

To reach the Czech Republic, the traveler will journey by airline, train, or car. Once within the country, the most common modes of transportation are tram, bus, car, metro, and taxi.

Roads - The quality of major roads in the Czech Republic approaches Western European standards; there are, however, relatively few high-speed highways compared to the United States or Canada. When calculating travel times, you should expect an average speed of no more than

90 km p/h, unless you plan to use a highway for the entire trip. Less-traveled country roads offer scenic views and pleasant driving.

Vlaky is the primary bus system within the Czech Republic. It provides domestic and international transportation.

CZECH AIRLINES (www.czechairlines.com) is the Czech Republic flag carrier, offering the only non-stop connections between North America and Prague.

Flight information for Czech Airlines is at www.CzechAirlines.com. There are up to 10 weekly non-stop flights between Prague and North America (New York – both JFK and Newark, and Montreal.) Most major European airlines and their US code-sharing partners fly to Prague via their European gateways.

SMARTWINGS (www.smartwings.net) is a modern low-cost airline operating from the Prague airport. Among destinations it offers are Amsterdam, London, Madrid, Milan, Paris, Rome, and Zurich, plus several destinations on the Greek islands, all for highly competitive fares.

THE HISTORICAL DIMENSION

Plzen (Pilsen), current population 170,000+ , capital of West Bohemia, third largest city in the Czech Republic was founded as New Plzen in 1295 A. D., by King Wenceslas II. To best appreciate and understand the history of Plzen it is essential to know some of the history of the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic

The name Czech is derived, according to old tradition, from the name of the chieftain of the main tribe , who brought them, sometime before the dawn of history, to the heart of the land which the Romans, after another tribe they found there, the Alpine Bojii, called Bio-hemia, or Bohemia. Several subdivisions of the Czechs occupied the westernmost parts of the new heavily forested territory, extended gradually over the same, absorbed the remnants of preceding dwellers, and by the fifth century. A.D. were firmly established in the natural geographic unit of “Bohemia.”

The history of the Czech tribes , from the dawn of written records, to the present day, has been one of everlasting struggles against invaders from the west and northwest by the Germans and from the south east by the Magyars. From the seventh century when they organized against the Avars into the Moravian State, to the seventeenth when they fell under Austria, the Czech people showed remarkable political and cultural developments. Long before America was discovered Bohemia had already a great university (1348) which exists to this day. In the fifteenth century it leads with John Hus and his followers in religious reformation; and from 1419 to 1432 it shatters every effort of the “Holy Roman Empire” at its subjugation. It is not until 1620 when the Czechs, worn out by political and religious strife

and temporarily without proper leaders, succumb to the Austro-Germans. From 1620 to the end of the eighteenth century is the dark age of the Czech people. Long before World War I, the Czechs were in open intellectual warfare with Austria-Hungary; from the moment the War started, wherever they existed, with the Allies, assisting them in every way possible. Eventually, on 28 October 1918, they terminated their 300-years long vassalage to the Austrian-Hungarian Empire and became once more, with the help of the Allies, mainly America, an independent unit of the human family.

In 1938, the Czech Republic (then named Czechoslovakia and consisting of the states of Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia), was once again invaded and occupied by Hitler's German forces (despite the feeble efforts of England's Chamberlain to negotiate a better outcome). They remained under German occupation until 1945 when they were liberated by the Allies. The newly freed Czechs had only a brief period of self-rule. Post-war negotiations between Russia and the Allies opened the way for Russia to occupy Czechoslovakia. The Russians maintained their oppressive presence until November of 1989 when the Communists Party harshly intervened against demonstrations organized by students on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the closure of Czech schools by the Nazis. The Communist Party relinquished political power during this contest termed the Velvet Revolution. Political parties were reinstated and Vaclav Havel who led in the negotiations with the communist government, was elected President.

In 1993, Slovakia separated from Czechoslovakia; Bohemia and Moravia remained in what then became the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic has become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the United Nations (UN). Its units have participated in missions to Iraq, Croatia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and many other countries.

In 2004, the Czech Republic became a member of the EU (European Union).

Currently, the Czech Republic is a fully democratic country with a stable political structure and growing economic power. Also, very importantly, it is a Friend of the United States of America.

Bohemia

Bohemia, historical region of central Europe and former kingdom, forms roughly the westernmost two-thirds of what is now the Czech Republic. It is bounded by Poland on the north, Moravia on the east, Austria on the south, and Germany on the west and northwest.

The name Bohemia is derived from the Boii, a Celtic people who inhabited the area around the Fifth century, B. C. The Boii were expelled by the Marcomanni, a Germanic tribe, about the beginning of the Christian era. Between the fifth and eighth centuries, Slavic settlers, and later the Avars, occupied Bohemia. During the Ninth century Christianity was introduced to the region which was then part of the Moravian Kingdom. The first Bohemian (Czech) dynasty, the

Premysl family, came to power in the Tenth century. In 950 Bohemia was forced to recognize German supremacy and become part of the Holy Roman Empire. From 1310 to 1437 the country was ruled by kings of the house of Luxembourg. During the latter part of this period, Hussites, a Bohemian religious group that in many ways prefigured the Protestants of the Sixteenth century, rebelled against the authority of the Roman Catholic church. This led to intervention and a long period of warfare (Hussite Wars). The Bohemians were forced to accept a compromise agreement with the church in 1436. Most of the fundamental political and religious issues involved the struggle remained unsolved, but the Hussite movement stimulated nationalist sentiments among the Bohemians, checking a previous trend toward Germanization.

A line of Hungarian kings ruled Bohemia between 1471 and 1526. During this period the religious situation was tense but quiet. In 1526 Holy Roman Empire Emperor Ferdinand I of the Habsburg family was elected king of Hungary and Bohemia. Under Hapsburg rule, which lasted until 1918, the history of Bohemia was merged with that of Austria. During the Reformation the Catholic Habsburgs were intolerant of the growing Protestant movement in Bohemia. An incident known as the Defenestration of Prague, when angry Czechs threw two representatives of the Habsburgs out of a window, was the immediate cause of the Thirty Years War (1618 -1648). The Battle of White Mountain (1620) restored the Hapsburgs and was followed by the merciless extirpation of Protestantism, the suppression of all national privileges, and the enforced use of German as the national language. The reforms of Joseph II (reigned 1765 - 1790) stirred up a revival of nationalism in Bohemia; after 1848, when a national rebellion was swiftly suppressed, a constant struggle followed for Czech autonomy within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Bohemia became a province of the new republic; on January 1, 1993 it became part of the independent Czech Republic.

Plzen

In 1295, the city of Nova Plzen (New Plzen) was founded by Czech King Wenceslas II on the confluence of the Radbuzza and Mze rivers. This occurred at the crossroads of three important trade routes, Nurnberg, Regensburg and Sachsen.

New Plzen was growing very rapidly and soon became not only an important commercial center, but also the third Royal Town in Bohemia following Prague and Kutna Hora. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, Plzen was one of the original centers of the Hussite movement, but after expelling the Hussite leader Jan Zizka and his allies in 1420, it became a firm bastion of the Czech Catholic Church until the Seventeenth century.

A new period of growth came as late as the nineteenth century with the onset of the Industrial Revolution.

The world-known Prazdroj brewery was founded in 1848, the engineering Skoda works were founded in 1859, and an extensive railroad network was built in the period 1861 to 1876. The city of Plzen came into the Twentieth century as a developed industrial, economic and cultural city, which was soon to experience the difficult setbacks of an economic crisis and two world wars. Plzen was liberated on May 6, 1945, by the American Army led by General George

S. Patton. After that, the city, as well as the rest of the country was to ride out more than 40 years of totalitarian communist domination. That domination generally ended in 1989, the desired result of the Velvet Revolution. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW THAT THE RUSSIAN-COMMUNISTIC INFLUENCE CONTINUES THROUGH TO THIS DAY. (Some several years after the successful Velvet Revolution and the reported departure of the Russian Occupation forces, one of my Czech Refugee friends told me: “They are still here, they just don’t wear their uniforms anymore.”).

Discussion of Grid-8 Questions

1. What is the history of this people group? How did they arrive in their current country/area?

The earliest tribe, the Boii, probably Celtic, was displaced by Slavic settlers from the east. First written records of Plzen castle are dated 976 AD. 1295 AD - the town of Nova Plzen (New Plzen) is formed. 700 years of often oppressive occupation follow: Most savage abuses are from the “Holy Roman Empire,” Germans, Russians. 1918: Independence. 1938 - 1945: German Occupation. Brief independence, followed almost immediately by Russian occupation until 1989 on occasion of the Velvet Revolution. Subsequently, economic and political growth. Responsible member of the world community. Always a friend of the West, especially the United States, and never forgetting the horrible treatment by the Catholic hierarchy, Germany, Russia and their associates.

2. What are the most significant events among the people or in their country?

Founded in 1290 AD by King Wenceslaus II of Bohemia, the city was an important trade center. It remained a stronghold of Catholicism.

Hussite Wars.

Thirty Years War

Austo-Hungarian monarchy.

1918 - Independence.

1938 - Occupation by Nazi Germany.

1948, approximately - Russian Communism took over.

1989 - Velvet Revolution.

1989 - Vaclav Havel - elected President.

Their particular history significantly affects their view of the world: Germans are the enemy; Russians are the enemy; the Catholic Church is primarily oppressive and of no use; America is a true friend.

These feelings are not nearly as strong among the younger generations; some of the customs foisted on them by the occupiers and violently opposed by their parents and forefathers, are no longer very important.

For the Evangelical Movement, the Czech’s long cultural growth and the very small Protestant individuals or groups who have survived especially recent communistic and Catholic influence offer hope and challenge.

Some other important considerations for the visiting Evangelical:

1. The people have a long , deep cultural background. (I have been told the early missionaries seemed to consider the Czechs as ignorant and backward).
2. Their definition of “old” is different from ours. Our history is about 200 years in length; theirs is 700 years +. For example, for them, the Battle of the Alamo happened yesterday.
3. In America, we call ourselves American-Czechs.....not Czech Americans (as is the style of other foreign-born Americans, for example: African-Americans, Mexican Americans).

THE DEMOGRAPHIC DIMENSION

General

1. *Where can this PG be found?* The Czech Rep has an ethnically homogeneous population with minorities of Slovaks and Romaies. Czech-speaking people can be found in Austria (especially Vienna), Poland, Germany, Ukraine, Croatia, and western Romania. Outside of Europe, Czech is spoken in Australia, Canada, and in the United States, where the greatest number of Czechs outside of the Czech Rep live. (New York, Chicago, Cleveland, and in agricultural regions of Texas, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Nebraska)(1990 census)
2. *What is the worldwide population of the PG? What are the major population centers outside the country? See question #1*
3. *What segments exist with the PG? How might they be further divided?* According to most of what I’m finding, the country is fairly homogenous.
4. *To what other people groups are they related?* The official Czech website links Czech influence and influence of the Czech Rep. to many countries around the world through literature, exploration, music, sports, and politics.
5. *What distinguishing cultural or visual characteristics do they have?* Czechs seem very proud of their country and heritage, which is very rich and diverse. They participate in music, the arts, literature, and outdoor recreation. Very popular for decades has been “tramping” and hiking. Tramping is an unstructured days-long walking trip into nature and has developed its own “culture” of sites, camps, and music. Outdoor activities are encouraged by the Czech govt., and sections of outdoor area are set aside for outdoor activities such as tramping, hiking, bicycling, and other sports in nature. Tourists are drawn to festivals, markets, historical sites, outdoor activities, concerts, exhibitions.
6. *What percentage of the PG is urban? Urbanization is normal with 68% of the population living in 348 towns. What is the rate of urbanization?*
7. *What is the Infant/Child Mortality Rate?* The I/CMR has been declining. By the year 200 there were 373 deaths of children under the age of 1 year, 231 of those below the age of 28 days. The reported infant mortality rate of 4.1 is reported by PPOPIN Czech Republic at <http://popin.natur.cuni.cz> It may be important to know that the Czech Rep has one of the lowest fertility rates in the world. The trend is to postpone childbearing until a later age, and there is an increasing number of women having their first child

above the age of 30 (30%) 31.8% of all live births are children born outside of marriage. The average Czech mother has 1.3 children.

8. *What is the Life Expectancy?* 75 years 72.9 for men, and 79.1 for women
9. *What is the leading cause of Death?* Diseases of the circulatory system and neoplasms.

Education / Literacy

1. *What % of population attends school?* Public education is free and mandated for all children starting at age 6. Children may attend either public or private schools. Parents may choose any school within their district. Primary schooling is divided into lower level (6-11 yr-olds) and upper level (11-15 yr-olds) Secondary schools (15-19) include upper secondary (literature, science, multiple-focus, bilingual 4-5 subjects through foreign language, and vocational and technical schools, and academies, apprentice training schools (2-3 yrs), professional colleges, universities, polytechnic colleges, economic college, et al.
2. *Are the schools effective? What kinds of skills does a high school graduate have?* The labor force by occupation: agriculture 4.1%, industry 37.6%, services 58.3%. A college graduate? Universities, technical universities, agriculture, forestry, medical, chemical tech., economics, education
3. *Are the schools racially mixed or mostly homogeneous?* History of discrimination and segregation of Romani children into special school population. Over half (75%) of the population of all special schools nationwide were Romani in 2000. Who else attends schools? All Czech children from age 6 for 9 years, foreign students, adults. Many technical universities; discussions of education are paired with discussions of human resources. By law, minorities have the right to educate their children in their mother tongue in the public schools at no charge. Currently, this is exercised only by the Polish national minority.
4. *What is the adult literacy rate in trade/national language?* The official Czech Rep website quotes the literacy rate as 100%. 99.8% Czech; on par with New Zealand rating of # adults reading 1 bk/mo. 70% (also watches 2hrs tv on average /day) Local language? Czech. Eng, Ger, and French commonly taught in school as foreign lang. Polish national groups attend school in Polish.
5. *What ongoing literacy programs exist?* Part of govt. White paper goals to increase lifelong learning by 2010, beef up ICT training, and make education certificates, etc. transferable throughout EU, improve teacher training, and increase foreign language instruction.
Education is compulsory and free for 9 yrs., starting at age 6 to citizens and foreigners. Special education is provided for children with disabilities (not counted in the compulsory 9 yrs.) School is year round from 9/1 to 8/31 with breaks scheduled throughout the year.
6. *What is the general attitude toward literacy?* If 70% of the adults read on average one book / month, it must be positive.
7. *What kinds of publications are readily available in the local language/mother tongue?* University magazines, business, medical journals, computer magazines, Czech literature, daily news, environmental news, poetry, internet, views from Canada or the United

States, regional magazines, general interest, theological magazine, psychology, car racing, humor, TV Guide, science fiction, railways, pets...

8. *Are the people primarily oral learners, even though they are literate?* If they read and watch tv as much as reported, they may be more visual learners than oral learners.

Language

1. *What languages do your people speak?* Czech, Bavarian, Czech sign language (partially intelligible with French sign language), standard German, Polish, Romani, Lower Silesian. *What are the most common second languages?* German and English *In general, how interested are your people in learning second languages?* Learning a second language is mandatory in the public education system.
2. *What is their heart language?* “A thousand-year history flows through each word. We do something magnificently old and historic when we speak Czech” (Karen Capek) Is there a different language (e.g., a national language) that they must learn in order to function? 96% of the population speaks Czech. *What is the attitude of the PG toward their mother tongue (proud, indifferent, like it for private use, ashamed/resistant)?* The origins of the Czech language date to the end of the 10th century. There is a long, proud history. There is a difference between traditional, standard written Czech and that commonly spoken, even more so than in other languages, since the differences involve not just a specific vocabulary, but systematic changes influencing declension and conjugation. Three different dialectal regions exist: the Hana of central Moravia, the Moravian-Slovak region, and the Lassko (Silesian) region. However, everyone who speaks Czech can understand each other without difficulty.
3. *Who mainly speaks the heart language (Age group, social group, educational level)?* 96% of the population speaks Czech.
4. *To what languages is the heart language related?* In the middle ages Czech expanded in influence to Upper Silesian Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, and some expressions can be found in Russian. *Do any other groups speak your PG’s language?* Czech is the official language of the Czech Republic and the language of instruction in the public schools.
5. *What languages are used in education? In textbooks?* Czech with the exception of Polish PG. Foreign languages taught include Russian (as the first foreign language before 1989) now is 3rd behind German and English.

Grid-8 questions

1. *Who are “we” (your people)?* Czechs are formal and indirect. They go out of their way not to offend, and are non-confrontational. They lower their eyes and become silent when uncomfortable. Czechs are logical, practical, and efficient. Careful planning provides a sense of security. Rules and regulations let one know what is expected and how to plan one’s life. Family life is quickly becoming non-traditional in the sense that more couples are not married, divorce is on the increase, and there is a decline in both the numbers of marriages, and in the birth rate and number of children born into a family. *Who are “they” (others/outsideers)?* Roma tend to be the “they”. Roma have a very different social and family structure that values the extended family and separates the roles of males and females into public for men, and private for women, sectors. Working outside the home is not a concern for Roma, and they tend to have large

families, less education and income, and shorter life spans than Czechs. *That is, how do your people perceive themselves as compared to others? (We are honest/They are liars, thieves, crooked...)* What kind of jokes or proverbs do “we” have about “them”? Where do “they live, and why? What separates “us from “them”? What social barriers exist between the two groups—do they fraternize, intermarry, work together...? Spiritually, how do they perceive themselves as different from others? According to the official Czech Rep website: advanced, trustworthy, modern, and democratic, proud of maintaining its unique cultural heritage in the face of oppression from socialism and communism. There is a strong loyalty to tradition and heritage. This shows up in their church traditions. For example, Christmas is the time of the year when more people go to church than any other time, especially for the music. Spiritually, Czechs relate to a historical tradition rather than a personal religion or experience. I was surprised to read in an article by Jana Fialova on the official website that Christmas is a celebration of the “return of the sun and the promise that nature will soon awaken from her winter slumber. Christians have given this occasion a much deeper, mysterious significance by associating it with the birth of a savior, who, through a virgin birth, enters the world.”

2. *Turn the previous questions around to answer it about your people from an outsider’s perspective (what “they” say about “us”, etc.). How is the people group perceived by outsiders? Roma perceived the educational policy of assigning Roma children to schools for the disabled as racial discrimination that hindered the development and preparation of their children for advancement in the world of work. What jokes or proverbs about the people group exists among other peoples?*

The Main Thing: Questions for Application

1. *What 5 things can you say about who your friends are? What new proverbs/sayings have you memorized-in their language- that give truth-capsules of who they are as a people? Proverbs that I found generally have similar meanings and ways of expression as some proverbs familiar to those in the US, especially those about the virtues of work, punctuality, and visitors and fish smelling bad in about 3 days.*
2. *What implications do you see here for ministry that leads to believers (people hearing the gospel, understanding it, responding to it), groups (people gathering) churches (people forming NT churches that reproduce), and leaders (people being called, identified, and trained for leadership)? Mass Bible and literature distribution to a reading population as part of sports and recreation or other events, English as a Foreign Language instruction, family day camps or recreation opportunities, a call for massive prayer effort for people of Czech Republic, an evangelistic trip at Christmas (learn Czech Christmas carols and distribute Bibles or tracts as part of a concert)*
3. *What bridges and/or barriers to the above results can you identify from the information in this section? The Czech people are tied to heritage and tradition. The bridge building would need to lead to an understanding of Jesus beyond public institution in his name to a personal understanding and conversion. The idea of a personal God will seem like a foreign idea, even though they have a long tradition of institutional Christianity. Czech people are formal in their social relationships, and a move to the informal without an invitation may be viewed as an attempt to humiliate them. They are always polite, but may never move to a first-name basis with people outside their extended family or very close friends. They tend not to acknowledge strangers on the street.*

4. *How might the information in this section affect how a group or NT church looks (group size, meeting place, leaders, ordinances, functions, practices)?* NT churches might tend to be very small groups, since Czechs tend to move slowly toward friendship outside of family or very close friends. People are used to thinking of religion, church, and Christianity in terms of tradition and holiday entertainment. Tour groups of church musicians would need to be well prepared not only to present the gospel to individuals and groups, but also well prepared musically. Western ideas of contemporary church music would be very foreign to their mindset. Our message of a personal relationship with a living God through Jesus would need to be communicated without “churchy” jargon, but somehow a connection to tradition might help understanding. Avoid an over emotional presentation. Build relationships over time in order for Czechs to open up. Pray for openness on the part of the Czech people to listen to the gospel. Sports or family camps might pay attention to the school schedule, which is year round with scheduled breaks. In August, businesses close down, and people leave for vacations.

THE SOCIAL PROFILE

Family Structure

The majority of the Czech population views the family as one of the basic institutions of social structure. Laws governing the starting and maintaining of a family come from the civil code of 1811, amended with new family laws since then. Traditional family structure is patriarchal. However, Czech families have long depended on two incomes, and the woman’s income determines the living standard of the family. Non-traditional families are on the rise since communism failed. Incomplete, or single-parent families, and cohabitation are on the rise, as is a lower birth rate. More than 70% of single-parent families have a woman head of household. Likewise, management of the family’s finances is changing for non-traditional family situations from the father having control to a co-sharing of control among cohabitating couples. There has also been a shift from the traditional two-child family to a single-child family in recent years. Traditional marriage, the marriage rate, and number of children in Czech life have been declining for a number of years. Likewise, the age of couples who marry and the age of beginning parenting have risen.

Social Structure

Cleanliness is valued especially in personal spaces such as one’s home. Never put feet, especially in shoes, on the furniture. Take off shoes when entering a home. Public space is generally less clean than personal spaces. One’s personal body space is smaller than the typical American’s, but fewer people are allowed inside. In public people often crowd together closely enough to make an American uncomfortable. People are assertive in regards to accessing public transportation. Public displays of affection are often common, but only because those showing affection are close.

Men help women: help with a coat, or allow a woman to enter first (BIG EXCEPTION – men always enter a restaurant before the woman), a woman (or elderly) would be offered one's seat. Clothing is expected to be better for restaurants, theaters, dinner parties, etc. Jeans in places such as a theater or opera mark one as a tourist. Interestingly, more casual clothing is appropriate for most work.

Dining has rules. A knife and fork are used in the continental manner. Noises are rude. No slurping or belching. One may ask permission to sit with strangers at a table in a restaurant, but will not converse except to say goodbye. Not to say goodbye under such circumstances would be considered rude.

When entering a small business, restaurant, etc. it is common to speak a general greeting, but not to single out anyone for conversation.

When asked "how are you?" it is expected to have a somewhat negative answer, even if things are really going well. Upon being given a complement, it is expected to disagree somewhat rather than simply say "thank you". To just say "thank you" is somewhat rude. Czechs generally express thinking less of themselves than is actually accurate. It is socially polite to do so.

Most of the websites I've looked at for youth are in Czech or are sociological studies of youth. It seems that education is important for Czech youth, and that families carry the responsibility to help them get the best education they can. It seems that the same problems of bullying, violence in movies and video games plague the youth of Czech Rep. as do in most European countries and North America. Youth violence at school is reported to be on the rise.

THE TECHNOLOGICAL PROFILE

The Czech Republic has a relatively young technology base by comparison to Western industrialized countries. The Czech television and radio industries have only been operating outside of Communistic control since the early 1990's. The telephone, cellular phone, DVD, computer/internet, and information technology industries are beginning to gain footholds with the younger generations, but the concentration of technological progression is centered within Prague. Adoption of technological advancement and its impact within Plzen has been very gradual.

The two biggest factors influencing the slow technological growth are personal income and cultural mindsets. The gross national income per person is \$10,710 (according to World Bank in '06), which is very low on the European scale (3rd from the bottom). This rates the Czech population as being within 'relative poverty' by comparison with the rest of Europe. This significantly impacts their ability to obtain the latest electronics and labor-savings devices common in other parts of Europe and the West.

Unemployment among young people aged 15-24 years is 16.6%, higher than the Europe average of 13.8%. The young people in a society are the early adopters of high-end electronics such as laptop computers, iPods, cell phones, and DVDs. The desire for higher incomes within this age

group is fueling an exodus from small Czech villages into larger urbanized cities, primarily Prague, with its multi-national companies and increased wage scales.

The closed cultural mindset of the older Czech population is a remnant from the Communistic repression era. The openness of the internet, cell phones, cable TV, pay-per-view TV, and free-speech media markets (radio and broadcast TV) is gaining in popularity with the 15 to 30 year age groups, but has not been widely embraced by the general populace.

In summary, the Czech Republic has been increasing its overall level of technology as its culture becomes more open and as its youth embraces Westernization, but progress will continue to be hindered by the low per capita income and close-mindedness of the older populace.

Television

**Television 150 (plus 1,434 repeaters) (2000)
broadcast
stations:**

Televisions: 3,405,834 (December 2000)

The annual monetary impact of the Czech audiovisual industry, i.e. television stations, film distribution, video sales and rental, cable distribution and pay-per-view television, is approximately CZK 12 billion (425M Euros, \$575M USD). . Two-thirds of this sum comes from national [Czech Television](#) and private stations [TV Nova](#) and [Prima TV](#).

On February 25, 1954, regular television broadcasting commenced in the Czech Republic; after unsuccessful attempts in 1948 and 1953. Broadcasting was done only by state-run Czechoslovak television.

Czech television is its successor and currently broadcasts on four channels.

- CT1 - Czech Television Teletext, all types of programmes (family viewing) (analog)
- CT2 - Czech Teletext Express, mainly culture, art, music, sports, documentaries and programmes for special audiences. (analog)
- CT24 - satellite and cable distribution (digital)
- CT4 - SPORT (digital)

The Czech Republic was the first East European state to provide a private television broadcasting license without fees and conditions. In 1994, after a selection procedure, the federal CT channel became the commercial television station TV Nova, and the era of private broadcasting began.

Today, the television sector in the Czech Republic is marred by excessive politicization. The lower house of Parliament, the Chamber of Deputies, in particular, has excessive influence over both the country's broadcasting regulator (RRTV), and the public service broadcaster Czech TV. The television sector also remains uncompetitive, dominated by the two nationwide commercial stations and two public service channels.

A television license (also covering radio) is mandatory in the Czech Republic and costs 120 CZK per month. The Czech TV website can be found at <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/english>, and a daily program listing can be found at <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/program/>

Besides the four broadcast television stations, there are over 20 regional television stations operating in the Czech Republic. TV Nova has the largest number of viewers; the majority owner is the CME Company, owned by U.S. investor Ronald Lauder. The standard programs include a broad range of genres, news, major sports events, films, documentaries and current affairs programs.

Czech TV stations transmits more than 15,000 hours per year. Almost 60% are produced by the Czech Television network. Programs from abroad (36%) are mostly dubbed, a small amount with subtitles. There are 5% from other Czech independent producers.

The broadcast content is made up of Information and news 12%, documentaries (magazines and chat shows) more than 15%, Sports 10%, education under 10%, entertainment and music about 15%, drama and TV films about 30%. Advertising (mandatory) is 1%.

Most Czechs speak English and/or German. As a result, there are an increasing number of broadcast choices in these two languages.

Most properties in Prague will have access to either cable or satellite television. Finding the same accommodations within Plzen may not be as likely. The main provider of these services is UPC, who supplies both. Their website can be found at <http://www.upc.cz>. They also supply internet and telephone connections.

The UPC satellite service offers a better selection of channels for English customers, including; Animal Planet, BBC Prime, Cartoon Network, CNN, Discovery, Eurosport, MTV, VH1 and National Geographic. English films are a rarity, and many of those that you do find will be dubbed, and not subtitled. English channels represent a small quota of those on UPC, with the majority being German or Czech.

It is possible to receive UK's SKY television in the Czech Republic. To receive a full range of channels, a large 2m dish will be required, but the majority of channels can still be received with a standard dish. In addition, a SKY subscription is required to obtain a viewing card, which will require a UK address. If you do not have SKY hardware or a viewing card and a UK address, a complete service can be found at <http://www.skydigital.cz>.

Unless someone has a decent grasp of the Czech language, TV is unlikely to be worthwhile as entertainment, although it can be very useful as a tool to learn the language.

Film Industry

According to the Association of Producers within the audio-visual industry, the impact from services provided for foreign audiovisual companies and advertising production can be added to

the CZK 12 billion. The total turnover of the audiovisual industry in the Czech Republic can be estimated at around CZK 16 billion, or approximately 450 million euros; the sum would cover making two or three Hollywood blockbusters of *Titanic* rank, including marketing costs.

Since 1993, at least 15 films have been filmed in the Czech Republic that attract both Czech and foreign viewers. The Czech Republic is able to offer interesting locations and cheap extras (fill-in actors). The country also offers all the necessary services and studio infrastructure for use in film production.

DVDs

There are plenty of DVD shops in Prague which carry some English titles, but the availability of English-language titles in Plzen is scarce.

Within Prague, there are plenty of DVD rental shops. Expect to pay around 100 CZK for new releases and 50 CZK for older films. To be a member of the store you will need to pay a returnable deposit or a small sum to cover the cost of the membership card. Nearly all rented "English" DVD's will only have English subtitles and will not be dubbed, which could be helpful for improving Czech language skills.

Radio

Seven broadcast radio stations and 76 regional broadcast radio stations currently operate in the Czech Republic. The broadcast radio stations include:

- [ČRo1 - Radiožurnál](#) (Czech Radio news-politics station)
- [ČRo 2 - Praha](#) (Czech Radio family station)
- [ČRo 3 - Vltava](#) (Czech Radio cultural station)
- [ČRo 6 - Praha](#) (Czech Radio political analysis station)
- [Evropa 2](#) (commercial station focusing on contemporary music and entertainment)
- [Frekvence 1](#) (commercial station focusing on classic music and entertainment)
- [Radio Impuls](#) (informative and music radio station)

Daily press

There are many periodical and non-periodical titles published within the Czech Republic.

Four main newspaper titles compete for readers' attention.

- [Mlada fronta Dnes](#) and [Lidové noviny](#), which are owned by the MAFRA publishing company
- [Právo](#), owned by the Borgis company

- [Hospodářské noviny](#), owned by the company Economia.
- Newspapers with a smaller circulation include
- [Deníky Bohemia a Moravia](#), owned by Vltava – Labe – Press
- [Sport](#), owned by the company Ringier
- [Haló noviny](#), owned by Futura.

The most successful tabloid newspaper on the market is [Blesk](#), which is owned by the Ringier company.

The largest circulation is regularly shared by Mlada fronta Dnes and Blesk.

The most important distributors of the daily press are Mediaprint – Kappa and PNS.

Within major hotel chains, there are English-language newspapers available, such as the International Herald Tribune or USA Today.

Magazines

A wide range of magazines for all tastes is published in the Czech Republic. These include both original Czech titles and licensed foreign magazines.

Among the weekly social magazines are the popular [Reflex](#), [Týden](#), [MF Plus](#) and [Instinkt](#).

A major weekly news magazine in the Czech Republic is [Respekt](#).

Internet

The international country code for Czech Republic web sites is: cz. It is estimated that over half of the population uses the internet on a regular basis.

Several Internet servers compete on the Czech market. The most frequently visited are [Seznam](#), [Centrum](#), [Atlas](#), [iDnes](#), [Volný](#) and [Tiscali](#).

Internet Usage and Population Statistics:

YEAR	Users	Population	% Pop.	Usage Source
2000	1,000,000	10,292,000	9.7 %	ITU
2003	2,700,000	10,230,271	26.4 %	ITU
2006	5,100,000	10,209,643	50.0 %	ITU

THE POLITICAL PROFILE

The Czech Republic has a heritage in the democratic process and the Czechoslovak Republic has been among the most advanced nations. At times the Czech Republic has been considered an island of democracy and civil liberties in Central Europe and has been an active partner internationally with democratic countries.

The Czech Republic is a democratic country in which Parliament holds the central role in the political system. The President has limited powers but he is the official head of state.

The Constitution is the supreme law of the land and was ratified by the Czech National Assembly in December 1992 and went into effect for the new and independent Czech Republic. The fundamentals of the Czech democratic system are the Declaration of Basic Rights, legislation and international conventions. Legislation must be ratified by both the Parliament and the President.

Power is divided between the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary branches. The Executive branch is the President, the Prime Minister and Ministers and is the supreme organ. The Legislature is representative of a two-chamber Parliament: the Chamber of Deputies which is the lower chamber and the Senate which is the upper chamber. Mandates in both chambers are assigned through a free, confidential and equal vote by citizens in elections. The Judiciary branch is the legal system executed by independent courts where impartiality and independence of judges must not be jeopardized in any way.

The Czech Republic uses several electoral systems and formulas for counting votes into mandates. All elections are held on the basis of confidentiality, generality and equality. Direct voting prevails. All citizens of the Czech Republic who have reached 18 years of age are eligible to vote as the right to vote is general, equal and direct, and voting is confidential. The Czech electoral system is in its infancy as it only began in 2000.

The Chamber of Deputies is comprised of 200 members who are elected for four-year terms. Only those political parties that gained at least 5% of votes through elections are represented in the Chamber of Deputies, while the Senate mandates are attained by majority vote. Any citizen of the Czech Republic who is at least 21 years of age can become a deputy. The next election for the Chamber of Deputies is in 2010.

The first Senate election took place in 1996 when all 81 members were elected at one time. In 1998 one-third of the Senators were replaced while in 2000 another third were replaced. The standard electoral term for a Senator lasts six years. Senators are elected by a majority voting system; therefore, a candidate receiving more than 50% of all votes in his / her district becomes a Senator. In an election that results in no candidate receiving 50%, the two most successful candidates enter a second round of elections. Only a citizen of the Czech Republic who is at least 40 years of age can become a Senator. The next Senate election will take place in the fall of 2008.

Regional elections are for a period of four years and anyone 18 years of age and residing in the region is eligible. Municipal elections are for 4 years. Municipalities may create election districts inside their boundaries with the number of elected representatives depending on the population.

The Czech Republic joined the European Union on May 1, 2004 and it is believed that this action has significantly influenced and continues to influence all aspects of life for Czech citizens. The first election for the European Parliament was held in 2004. The Czech Republic has 24 seats in the European Parliament and members are elected for 5 years. A political party or coalition must receive a minimum 5% of the votes to be able to participate in one of those seats. Any citizen of the Czech Republic or any other member state of the European Union can become members of the European Parliament if they are 21 years of age and have the ability to be elected. The next election will take place in 2009.

The only position that cannot be elected directly by Czech citizens is that of the President. This position is elected indirectly in a joint conference of both houses of Parliament and is for a term of 5 years with a one-time possible extension. Only a person nominated by at least 10 Deputies or 10 Senators can become President. The President is elected by an absolute majority of votes from both Senators and Deputies. Only a citizen of the Czech Republic who is at least 40 years of age is eligible to become President. The next election will be held in 2008.

The administration of public services is decentralized in the Czech Republic. There are only a few issues that are managed directly and purely by the highest administrative level – the state. The philosophy of “subsidiary administration” is utilized because it is believed that basic criteria, resolution of problematic issues and effectiveness are better resolved at the lowest possible level. The Czech Republic is divided into 13 regions and the capital city of Prague. The basic territorial unit is a municipality and / or corporate town. As of 2004 there existed 6,249 municipalities in the Czech Republic. The highest concentration of municipalities is in the Central Bohemian region and the lowest in the Karlovy Vary region. Each municipality is administered by a Mayor and the corporate towns by a Lord Mayor. Regions are administered by a Marshall.

“e-government” is utilized and represents public administration with the aim of faster, more reliable and less expensive government while ensuring more transparency in relation to users of public services – the citizen.

The Czech Republic seeks to represent itself as a democratic nation and a politically, economically and socially stable state in Central Europe. It seeks to promote not only its particular interests but also to assume its share of responsibility for the development of Europe and the international community as a whole. As a member of all important and regionally relevant international organizations, the Czech Republic focuses on political, humanitarian and economical development. The Czech Republic subscribes to the legacy and values of European civilization. One of its key priorities is the development of democracy and the rule of law based on freedom, equality, justice, democracy, tolerance of diversity and solidarity with the weak, threatened and defenseless. It perceives democracy not only as an internal affair of individual countries but also as the best basis for the successful development of mutual relations. Czech

Republic is not neglectful of other countries and people living in them. It actively participates in international cooperation concerning all aspects of help – humanitarian (i.e., medical, financial and material) and military (i.e., defensive and peacekeeping).

THE ECONOMIC PROFILE

Occupations and lifestyle

Services (58%), industry (38%), agriculture (4%) (2002)

Economy: Agrarian, industrial, or mixed?

Mostly industrial, but some agriculture.

Average monthly income?

National monthly minimum wage as of 01/01/2003 : 199 euros

Average wage for a employee in the manufacturing industry in 2001 : 14,129 koruny by month (ILO data)

Products of this economy

The principal industries are heavy and general machine-building, iron and steel production, metalworking, chemical production, electronics, transportation equipment, textiles, glass, brewing, china, ceramics, and pharmaceuticals.

The Czech Republic has a well-educated population and a well-developed infrastructure, but its industrial plants and much of its industrial equipment are obsolete.

Its main agricultural products are sugarbeets, fodder roots, potatoes, wheat, and hops.

How are prices determined? Major influences?

Any barter culture? Level of significance

The Czech Republic is a major hub for Turkish drugs on their way to Germany. Drug trafficking is a problem in the Republic and, like many other Eastern European countries, there is a Russian mafia presence.

Impact of communism on present economy?

Control of financial institutions (private vs. public strength)

One of the most stable and prosperous of the post-Communist states, the Czech Republic has been recovering from recession since mid-1999. Growth in 2000-2001 was led by exports to the European Union, especially Germany, and foreign investment, while domestic demand is reviving. The rate of corruption remains one of the highest among OECD countries.

Moves to complete banking, telecommunications, and energy privatisation will add to foreign investment, while intensified restructuring among large enterprises and banks and improvements in the financial sector should strengthen output growth. The government has recently agreed to the sale of a 7.0% stake of ČEZ, the energy producer.

Effect of EU on present economy?

The last Czech government had expressed a desire to adopt the euro in 2010, but the current government has postponed it due to budget deficits. An exact date has not been set up, but the Finance Ministry described adoption by 2012 as realistic^[5] if public finance reform passes.

Fiscal deficit is becoming a problem, with the 2007 deficit estimate having been recently raised to 4.0% of GDP from 3.3% previously. The government is currently looking over several reform plans to cut the deficit to 3.0% (required for Euro adoption by the Stability and Growth Pact).

Business partners? Relation of this economy to other countries?

Germany 36.1%, Slovakia 8.4%, Austria 6%, Poland 5.3%, UK 4.7%, France 4.7%, Italy 4.3%, Netherlands 4.3% (2004)

Type of dwellings? How built? Common businesses/buildings in every neighborhood?

Although the Czech Republic does not have a shortage of housing on a national scale, the situation in individual regions and municipalities differs considerably. In general, in regions and municipalities where a sufficient number of employment opportunities exist, the demand for housing exceeds supply. The result is a higher cost of housing, which is inaccessible for lower-income households. Meeting the housing needs of such households is difficult. This situation exists especially in Prague, other large cities, and their vicinity, i.e. localities, which offer ample employment opportunities. The opposite situation can be found in northern parts of the country, which suffer from high unemployment due to structural changes. Demand for housing and housing prices are very low in such localities. This situation shows that there is a disparity between the availability of employment opportunities on the labour market and supply of housing.

The ten million Czech inhabitants live in more than 6,200 settlements, but almost five thousands of these municipalities have less than one thousand people living there.

Although the sweeping majority of municipalities are rather small rural villages, most inhabitants live in towns.

47% of all dwellings are privately owned, 17% are managed by housing cooperatives and 29% are rented.

Current state/quality of health care

Czech health care and medical facilities are of a good quality.

Typical diet - how balanced, sources of food?

Czech cuisine has both influenced and been influenced by the cuisines of surrounding countries. Many of the fine cakes and pastries that are popular in Central Europe originated in the Czech lands. Czech cuisine is marked by a strong emphasis on meat dishes. Pork is quite common, and beef and chicken are also popular. Goose, duck, rabbit and wild game are served. Fish is rare, with the occasional exception of fresh trout, and carp, which is served at Christmas.

Knedlíky (boiled sliced dumplings) are one of the mainstays of Czech cuisine and are quite often served with meals. They can be wheat or potato based, and are sometimes made from a combination of wheat flour and stale bread or rolls. They are typically large and served cut into slices, in contrast with the smaller dumplings found in Austrian cuisine. Only potato based dumplings are usually smaller.

Plzen is the birthplace of a style of beer, pilsner, that changed the beer world forever. In fact, when one normally thinks of beer today, it most closely resembles one in this classic style.

Public utilities (quality, cost, how modern)?

Electricity in The Czech Republic operates at 220V AC (as opposed to 110V here in the US).

Electricity, gas, water and other resources are used much more carefully in other countries than in the US because these things are recognized as being scarce and are expensive there.

Electricity costs in other countries are 3 to 4 times what they are in the US. Because of this, the hallway lights of offices, partment building and hotels are not on all the time, but operate with motion detectors or timers. Families tend to not use lights at all during the day. They also tend to use much less hot water than Americans. Most homes do not have furnaces, but rather small electric heaters in each room, which are used sparingly.

Water costs are also very high compared to those in America. Hot water is very expensive.

Fuel for cooking, heating?

The Czech Republic is reducing its dependence on highly polluting low-grade brown coal as a source of energy. Nuclear energy presently provides about 30 % of total power needs, and its share is projected to increase to 40%. Natural gas is procured from Russian Gazprom (roughly three-fourths of domestic consumption) and from Norwegian companies (most of the remaining one-fourth). Russian gas is imported via Ukraine (Brotherhood pipeline), Norwegian gas is transported through Germany. The gas consumption (approx. 100 TWh in 2003-5) is almost two times higher than the electricity consumption. South Moravia has a small oil and gas deposits.

THE SPIRITUAL PROFILE

19 percent of Czechs believe that God exists

Czechs are famously agnostic. When we asked Jirí, a middle-aged Czech, if there would be any celebrations associated with a recent saint's day, his reply was, "Of course not. There are no Christians in the Czech Republic."

Common wisdom has it that alcoholics outnumber practicing Christians and that more Czechs believe in UFOs than in God — and common wisdom may be correct. Census data from 1991 and 2001 show that in the decade after communism, the number of self-professed atheists rose from 40 percent to 60 percent, one of the highest percentages in the world. A recent European Union survey shows that only 19 percent of Czechs believe that God exists. But the story is more complicated than these numbers suggest.

Magda, a twentysomething Czech friend, expressed frustration with comments like Jirí's. "Just because we Christians are small in numbers doesn't mean we don't exist," she said. There's more than Magda's own personal experience to back this up. During the process of researching a magazine article on Christianity in post-communist Europe, we stumbled on a surprising fact. Even as church attendance and belief in God have plummeted in the Czech Republic, small evangelical congregations across the country are not just holding steady but are actually gaining

members. And these members tend to be young Czechs, members of the first generation now coming of age that never knew life under socialism.

The number of evangelicals — who take the Bible's authority seriously, focus on the person of Jesus, stress outreach and service and often point to a distinct conversion experience — grew throughout the 1990s. The Apostolic Church (*Apostolská církev*) and the Brethren Church (*Církev bratrská*) tripled their numbers, for instance, while most other evangelical churches grew at a slower rate.

This is even more remarkable when you compare evangelical groups to the more established churches. During the 1990s, census data showed that the Catholic Church lost one-third of its members. Accusations and revelations about StB involvement didn't help matters. Neither did battles over property restitution, only now showing signs of potential resolution. And it wasn't just the Catholics: the Czech Brethren (*Ceskobratrská církev evangelická*), the Czech Hussites (*Církev ceskoslovenská husitská*) and the Silesian Lutherans (*Slezská evangelická církev a.v.*) all saw drops of nearly 50 percent. Only the evangelicals continued to grow.

We tracked down evangelical leaders and attended Sunday services here in Prague to gauge the strength of the movement. What we found was a powerful sense of optimism. Though Czech society has become post-Christian, evangelicals see this lack of belief as an opportunity. Jirí Unger heads the Evangelical Alliance in the Czech Republic. He calls it a "privilege" to serve in such an atheistic society. "It's a real nice challenge because you can influence so much," he told us. "So many things are beginning."

James Krikava, an American Lutheran missionary, finished his 15 years of service in the country in June and has fully turned operations over to the local congregations he helped to found. Looking back on his work in Prague and Plzen, Krikava radiated the same excitement. "[At] my church in Plzen, I think there's one adult that I didn't baptize," he said. "These are all people who came from atheism into the faith and that is real mission work."

Membership remains small at about 1 percent of the population. Like all churches, evangelical congregations hoped for greater results in the heady days after 1989, but the smaller numbers have proven to be a strange kind of blessing. Communist repression had turned evangelical churches inward and they became incapable of receiving an influx of new Christians right away. Unger calls this a "ghetto mentality" that took time to overcome. "We were a ghetto that had to preserve Christianity," he says, "but we lost a vision for society, how to equip Christians outside the congregation or its meetings. A major goal is to enlarge the vision of the church, because the church is still suspicious of everything public."

So the 1990s became a decade of experimentation and development as evangelicals expanded their mission and church structures and tried to reach out in new ways. Rudolf Brancovsky' is a 24-year old painter and sculptor here in Prague, and one of the new generation of Christian artists and students who are influencing the church. He moonlights as the lead singer and songwriter for the band Veselá Zubatá (The Merry Grim Reaper). The group sings honestly about faith and the church, and is often critical of the Christian subculture that has developed in the country. "Jesus changed water into wine; Christians tend to turn it back into water,"

Brancovsky' told us one afternoon in his studio. This attitude has fueled experimentation and a willingness to try new things.

Churches now partner with congregations in Ireland, the UK and the United States to put on summer English camps with an evangelistic focus. They have adopted praise choruses in addition to time-tested hymns. They have launched youth groups and started counseling programs.

The results can be seen in the pews; young believers and families now fill 545 evangelical congregations. Through organizations like the Evangelical Alliance, cooperation among denominations is up. Higher-quality Christian presses now publish more resources for Christians and churches, books including Czech Bibles and translations of well-known Western authors such as Philip Yancey. Support organizations such as the new counseling ministry Parakletos are up and running.

Christianity, long assumed to be dying here, lives on — but much of that life takes place away from the obvious medieval churches and baroque monasteries that saturate Prague. And Czech culture, it turns out, is not as hostile to religious messages as is often claimed. The same Eurobarometer survey that put belief in God at 19 percent showed that half of all Czechs harbor a belief in "some sort of spirit or life force," often referred to as necismus (somethingism). Though disillusioned with traditional religion, Czechs are open to a new way forward, and a growing number of evangelicals are trying to show it to them.