

Arrival in the Czech Republic

After 5 year of planning, we've finally touched down in the Czech Republic! The house in Neilston is sold, the car went to the scrappy, we gave away tons of stuff, and the rest went into boxes. Inland Revenue, the council, numerous other govt departments, banks and insurance companies have been notified of our leaving. Moving home is one thing, moving country is quite another! We have extricated ourselves from one life, and are ready for the next stage.

The first stop was 10 days in Mosbach, Germany, for OM's Missionary Training School. It was a great chance to get further training with 6 other new missionaries going to Central and Eastern European fields, and relax a bit! We certainly needed it after the stress of moving.

For the first three weeks in Czech we stayed with a Christian family in a small village, but we've now moved to a flat in the southern city of České Budějovice.

Culture Shock

Do you know what culture shock is? It's the stress you feel when everything you thought was normal gets turned upside down, and done differently. It's been like that living in the village of Svatý Jan nad Malší. *Cake and doughnuts* for breakfast! Putting out washing in sub-zero temperatures, in the falling snow, then bringing it in to thaw later! Not knowing much Czech language, and being unable to ask whether the cakes we are eating at 7PM are just a snack, or actually dinner!

Imagine the scene: Steve and Varya sitting in the middle of "Skolka" (infant school)

surrounded by 3-4 yr-olds, being drilled by them on Czech words! It's pretty humbling.

Particularly in the first 2 weeks, these differences took their toll on us and our emotions went up and down like roller coasters. What are we doing here? Will we ever be able to understand more than a few words of Czech?

Our host family though were patient with us and saw us through the difficult times. Staying with a Czech family was certainly the right thing to do, and we have made friends for life. We're now feeling much more stable, and Varya is trying to remember many of the recipes!

Thank You!

Thank you for your prayers! There have been a number of times when we have felt lifted, and we have known that people have been praying for us. One example is regarding Benjamin's often rocky relationship with Dominik, the 3-yr-old son of the host family. We were quite

concerned about it, and asked people to pray. Within a few days they started to get on much better.

Prayer works! Every day there is news in our team of answered prayer, and people closer to finding the Lord.

Day to Day Life

We are thrilled to be living in a lovely flat (very 70's style) in Ceske Budejovice. It's 10 minutes from the OM base by bus, warm and spacious. The landlord and his wife are lovely and speak good English—in fact Petr has already been invited to an Alpha course, and we're praying for him.

Every weekday morning one of us goes in to the OM prayer meeting at the base while the other looks after Benji for the morning. In the afternoon we swap over so that we can both do a few hours of un-interrupted language

study. Soon we'll get a "language helper" who will meet with us at least once a week for planning, pronunciation and teaching.

We're also becoming more involved in team life. Varya has taught one evening of English classes, and we'll each lead the English Bible Class a couple of times. Steve has made a 5-minute presentation video of OM Czech Republic. The team is great—full of fun, and dedicated to the ministry work here.

Does anyone fancy a trip out here to see us? Please get in touch!

A Wing and a Prayer!

Prayer points

- that the Lord will provide a language helper suitable for us. We need to speak good Czech, and it's a very hard language!
- that the process of applying for the visa will go smoothly
- for ongoing spiritual and physical strength.
- for our language study, that we'll be self-disciplined
- for relationships with non-Christians, such as our landlord and his wife
- that we'll be able to get Benjamin into an infant school quickly. This will free both of us up for more language study.
- praise God that the move went (reasonably) well, and that we're now in our new flat.

What does Operation Mobilisation do in the Czech Republic?

- Among other things: Runs an English School. There are about 50 pupils in a number of classes. It's a great way of reaching the local community with something that people really want, and provides many opportunities for touching people.
- Runs Alpha courses (in Czech, and soon to be in English too), and an English language Bible study.
- Sends presentation teams to Czech churches to talk about missions; is involved in church planting; runs Teen Street.



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