

**Západočeská univerzita v Plzni**  
**Fakulta filozofická**

**Bakalářská práce**

**2012**

**Natalie Součková**

**Západočeská univerzita v Plzni**

**Fakulta filozofická**

**Bakalářská práce**

**Mormons in the Czech Republic**

**Natalie Součková**

Plzeň 2012

**Západočeská univerzita v Plzni**

**Fakulta filozofická**

Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

**Studijní program Filologie**

**Studijní obor Cizí jazyky pro komerční praxi**

**Kombinace angličtina – francouzština**

**Bakalářská práce**

**Mormons in the Czech Republic**

**Natalie Součková**

*Vedoucí práce:*

Mgr. Kamila Velkoborská Ph.D.

Katedra anglického jazyka a literatury

Fakulta filozofická Západočeské univerzity v Plzni

Plzeň 2012

Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

*Plzeň, duben 2012*

.....

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisor, Mgr. Kamila Velkoborská Ph.D., for valuable guidance and advices. Besides, I would like to thank sister missionaries Emily Bean, Cynthia Curtis, Jessica Sears and a member of the Church Eva Havlíčková who were absolutely helpful and consented to be interviewed. Furthermore they provided me all the materials which they had available.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2	MORMONS IN GENERAL .....	3
2.1	Brief introduction to Mormonism.....	3
2.2	History .....	4
2.2.1	Joseph Smith.....	4
2.2.2	Enlargement and separations .....	5
2.3	Present situation.....	7
2.4	Beliefs and practices .....	8
2.4.1	Ordinances .....	8
2.4.2	Worship .....	9
2.4.3	Prayer .....	10
2.4.4	The Book of Mormon and other sacred scriptures .....	11
2.4.5	Differences from other Christian denominations .....	12
2.4.6	Hierarchy .....	13
2.5	Mormon subculture.....	14
2.5.1	Lifestyle .....	14
2.5.2	Family life .....	16
2.5.3	Education.....	16
2.6	Polygamy and FLDS.....	16
2.6.1	History of Mormon polygamy.....	16
2.6.2	Life in FLDS community .....	18
2.6.3	FLDS in headlines .....	19
2.7	Self image.....	21
2.8	Mission .....	22
2.8.1	Missionary work and missionaries.....	24

3	MORMONS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC .....	26
3.1	History of the Church on our territory .....	26
3.1.1	Persecutions in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy .....	26
3.1.2	Turn for the better in Czechoslovakia.....	27
3.1.3	Reversal in the communist period .....	28
3.2	Contemporary situation .....	29
3.3	Czech and Slovak districts .....	30
3.4	Prague congregation and its activities.....	31
3.5	Czech missionaries .....	33
3.6	My experience .....	34
3.7	Interviews .....	37
3.7.1	Interview with Sister Jessica Sears .....	37
3.7.2	Interview with Sister Cynthia Curtis .....	37
3.7.3	Interview with Sister Emily Bean .....	38
3.7.4	Interview with Eva Havlíčková .....	38
4	CONCLUSION .....	40
5	ENDNOTES .....	42
6	BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	46
6.1	Print sources.....	46
6.2	Internet sources .....	47
6.3	Personal interviews .....	51
7	ABSTRACT .....	52
8	RÉSUMÉ.....	53
9	APPENDICES .....	54
9.1	Appendix I.....	54
9.2	Appendix II.....	56
9.3	Sources .....	66

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The objective of this Bachelor's Thesis is to present the issue of Mormon religious movement with a focus on the Czech Republic. The most attention is dedicated to the largest denomination of Mormonism, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, however, certain minor groups are also discussed.

I devised this topic due to my coincidental meeting with Mormons missionaries two years ago. They were somewhat different and special from other people, not only for their representative clothing and American accent in their Czech. Therefore I decided to examine it more closely.

The work gives a description of relatively short history which was, however, affected by many contentious events. The past times are continuously followed by present situation worldwide and in the USA. Another subchapter deals with their ordinary practices, lifestyle, faith and beliefs – especially the Book of Mormon which is one of the most important parts of Mormonism. Members of the Church exhibit high degree of uniformity and therefore all the mentioned characteristics might be applied to members all over the world as well as the Czech members.

A special subchapter is devoted to a controversial denomination of fundamentalists who live in the USA and till today continue to practice renounced polygamy, and generally maintain a specific way of living. Also an impact of this denomination on Czech public opinion is discussed.

Mormon method of spreading the faith into the world - the mission – is analyzed in global scale but primarily with a particular attention to the Czech mission, the unsuccessful attempts during the last century and today's apparent but not really significant progress.



Last part of the work is devoted to my own findings and experience with missionaries and members who consented to be interviewed. The most remarkable extracts from the interviews are placed at the end of the thesis. The literal transcript of the interviews is enclosed in Appendix II.

Several different sources of information were applied. Generalities about the history of the movement as well as beliefs and practices of church members were obtained from books about new religious movements in the world and in the Czech Republic. Other important sources of information were websites of the Church in English which archives many materials published during the history of the Church. An analysis of the Church official websites is also part of the work. Many other websites and newspaper articles were used to gain specific information. Last but not least the missionaries and members of the Church themselves who were interviewed and thus helped to clarify the information.

## **2 MORMONS IN GENERAL**

### **2.1 Brief introduction to Mormonism**

Hundreds of new religious movements arise annually but they are often very unstable and therefore most of them fail and disappear in less than ten years or they last as long as its charismatic leader lives.<sup>1</sup> The success of the Latter-day Saints religion may result from its origins. Contrary to most of religions in America, which arose in other cultures and societies, the Latter-day Saints emerged in America. Moreover, it brings a feeling of importance to its history and people. America is the Promised Land prepared by the God especially for His Chosen People, the Latter-day Saints. Mormons' teachings explain background in American society and established American principles of democracy into celestial world.<sup>2</sup>

For the beginning it is necessary to explain the origin of the term. Mormons is a popular nickname for the Latter-day Saints and members of other related denominations, even though they officially disavow it<sup>3</sup>. The nickname derives from the name of a sacred scripture of the Saints, the Book of Mormon, which will be discussed in more detail thereafter. "The word Mormon means, literally, more good" in the language of Lamanites, Mormon's tribe.<sup>4</sup> The official name, The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saint was revealed by God to Joseph Smith and denotes one of their main beliefs. They prepare themselves for return of Jesus Christ and tend to build the Kingdom of God on earth, called Zion. Jesus will come again on earth and will personally reign there before God's Final Judgment.<sup>5</sup> Members of the Church are referred as Latter-day Saints or simply Saints. This term has a different meaning from the word Saint traditionally understood as holy person who is usually canonized after his death. Saints in Mormonism are members of the Church and therefore people who endeavour to be a humble and helpful person who follows God's laws.<sup>6</sup>

According to the name, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints it can be assumed that it is derived from Christianity. In fact, foundations of Mormonism are based on biblical and folk traditions redefined in distinctively American ways. Although most Saints would identify themselves as Christian, main Christian denominations, e.g. Baptists or Fundamentalists, consider Mormonism to be a new religion rather than a denomination.<sup>7</sup> The Saints regard the Mormon movement as a restoration of true Christianity. According to them the churches have apostatized over the centuries and the original church of Jesus Christ had become irretrievably corrupted therefore it needs to be restored.

## **2.2 History**

### **2.2.1 Joseph Smith**

As mentioned previously Joseph Smith was a founder and leader of uniquely American religion. Born as a poor farm boy, he became a charismatic prophet, town and temple builder, and in the end a martyr for the faith he had established. He was a controversial figure – beloved of his followers and hated by his detractors. By all odds his experiences and teachings affected the spiritual lives of millions.

Joseph Smith Jr. was born in 1805 in Vermont; he grew up on a series of tenant farms in western New York. As a young man of fourteen years, Joseph leaned toward different religions, but he was not sure which of the competing churches was the right one to join. In the spring of 1820, he went into a grove of trees near his home and prayed to learn which church he should join. As an answer, Joseph received a vision of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. (see Appendix I, Picture 1)

I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.<sup>8</sup>

He was also told that he was chosen by God to restore the Church of Jesus Christ on the earth. Then in 1823, he had a series of visions, in one of which an angel Moroni revealed to him that a book of God's words written on gold plates is buried in the hill near his house. After four years of waiting and praying he was allowed to remove them, however, he could not show it to anyone. Subsequently, he started to translate the God's words written in reformed Egyptian<sup>9</sup> into English while using the "Urim and Thummim", a pair of stones in silver bows, which had been given by God to assist man in receiving revelation already from the time of Adam.<sup>10</sup> When the translation was finished the angel Moroni took back the plates. The resulting work was called The Book of Mormon. Soon after the book was published, on April 6, 1830, the Church of Christ was formally organized by Joseph and his few followers. Afterwards the Church was renamed to the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints.<sup>11</sup>

This impressive story of enlightenment may be found on most of websites of Latter-day Saints supporters. However, what is not likely to be found is some information about Smith's employment as a treasure seeker for what he was brought before a court by one of the former treasure-hunters or information about his unfriendly relationship with his father-in-law, Isaac Hale, who "considered Joseph to be an arrogant, fraudulent, and lazy young man, totally unworthy to marry his daughter"<sup>12</sup> and accused him of having stolen his daughter.

### 2.2.2 Enlargement and separations

As the number of followers grew, the opposition to Mormons' faith and religious practice deepened in American society. From the point of view of society the Mormons' religious idea was very provocative and the community was too radical and closed. Also Mormons' perspective on the society was not much friendly, they regarded ordinary Americans in a very condemnatory or even contemptuous way. For persecution the Mormons made several moves. Nevertheless Joseph Smith was arrested

in Cathage, Illinois. Disagreements culminated when a wild mob took the law into their own hands and killed Smith and his brother in 1844. Mormons consider this event as martyrdom. This caused a total separation from American society and in following years some more conflicts appeared such as Utah War, which was a conflict between Latter Day Saints and the United States federal government, but the second generation of Mormons was heading toward peace.<sup>13</sup>

After Smith's death the conflict about the leadership arose between Sidney Rigdon and Brigham Young. Young won and therefore Rigdon founded a new Church of Christ on the 15th anniversary of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. About 30 000 Mormons followed Brigham Young on his journey westward while searching for the Promised Land. The journey was full of hardship but they finally reached an area of the Salt Lake where they built up Salt Lake City which became the capital of the state Utah. But certain started to oppose that Smith's son should have become the leader and consequently in 1860 they founded another church named Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints which is based in Independence, Missouri.<sup>14</sup> It has become the second most important church of Mormon movement. Nowadays there is about 200 000 of members and the name of the church has been changed to the Community of Christ. During its brief history, Latter-day Saints has produced more than a hundred additional different organizations due to internal conflicts over basic goals, beliefs and organizational forms. The number of followers is not more than 10 000.

Tension diminished thanks to gradual cancellation of several original principles of the Church. Such a concept was kind of racisms against people with dark skin. The statement by Brigham Young imposed a ban on their priesthood on basis of biblical curse of Cain or cruse of Ham or other various explanations why they are uncouth and low in their habits.<sup>15</sup> Another unusual religious practice was "blood atonement" which orders as follows:

Those who commit certain grievous sins such as murder and covenant-breaking place themselves beyond the atoning blood of Christ, and their only hope for salvation is to have their own blood shed as an atoning sacrifice.<sup>16</sup>

The most controversial practice was plural marriage. It was introduced by Joseph Smith and then became obligatory in order that members achieve the heaven. This doctrine was cancelled in 1890.<sup>17</sup> It was a turning point in relation to American society. But still there exists few marginal denominations which did not cease to practice it. This is the case of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. As well they ignore the statement which in 1978 declared that the ban on priesthood of black people had been lifted.<sup>18</sup>

### **2.3 Present situation**

There appears a considerable progression from marginal newness to mainstream maturity. The teaching remains quite different from the teachings of traditional Christian denominations nevertheless as they abandoned many controversial religious practices they were finally accepted by the American society and the Church currently claims to be just another church and the Book of Mormon is just another gospel.<sup>19</sup> A symbol of this reconciliation might have been Olympic Games in 2002 which took place in Salt Lake City, which was allowed to represent the USA in the world.

Another sign that Saints are part of American society is that they started to appear in popular culture. They were mentioned in American animated sitcoms like The Simpsons or South Park. They were presented as just another church in a long list of Christian denominations and their members as overly helpful, enthusiastic and happy people.

In recent years, the number of Mormons in administration of the US is steadily growing. It seems as a paradox that fighters against American society became its legislators and guardians. Also the society perceives Mormons in a very different way these days. They are regarded as

citizens with high moral values and their attitude to family life is highly appreciated. “An impressive number of American Saints have or do serve as leaders at every governmental level, including federal cabinet secretaries, presidential advisors, legislators, ambassadors, national party officials, federal agents, military officers and mayors.”<sup>20</sup> This is in favour of Christian Right, because it is more comfortable partnering Mormons who are morally conservative and therefore against abortion and gay rights, than with liberal Protestants who support it. Apropos political orientation, 55% of Mormons are Republican and 12% of them are Democrat.<sup>21</sup> From these figures it is visible that they tend to be conservative to moderate.

According to the data reported in the 2011 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches, more than six million Saints live in North America is the fourth largest Christian denomination.<sup>22</sup> Therefore they form a significant religious minority comprises two percent of American population. This spread over the last two centuries is mainly thanks to a strong missionary imperative. The Church claims a worldwide membership of over 14 million<sup>23</sup> and at its current rate of growth, there will be more than 250 million before the close of the twenty-first century.

## **2.4 Beliefs and practices**

### **2.4.1 Ordinances**

In order to be saved the Saints must achieve the spiritual progress through certain ordinances. Shortly after the birth, child receives only a religious blessing. Baptism is usually at the age of eight and it is performed by a proxy, who is often a family member. It is a very important ordinance because it is a decision to become a member and hence it is not performed until the child is eligible to make decisions. Baptism is followed by a “confirmation” and “reception of the Gift of the Holy Ghost” which consist in laying on of hands.

At the age of twelve young men are ordained to the “Aaronic Priesthood” which entitles them to assist in home teaching, blessing and expounding the gospel, on the other hand it obligates to help in meeting houses, cemeteries and many other responsibilities. At the age of eighteen they are ordained to higher order of priesthood called “Melchizedek Priesthood” to become “elder”. In addition to functions of lesser priesthood elders are also authorized to perform ordinances. Last office is “High Priest” who manages congregational activities.

Another sacred salvation ritual is an “endowment” whereby the Saints gain the gift of “power from on high”. It consists of “washing” and “anointing” and they receive the garments. During this ordinance a reciprocal covenant between God and the member is sealed. The member makes additional promises to obey the God’s laws and in return God undertakes to protect him.<sup>24</sup> Saints can be married for eternity in a ceremony “sealing”. Their children and other family members can be also united this way in order to join whole family in celestial world.<sup>25</sup> They perform many other special blessings for various reasons. Generally the rituals are quite secret and they usually do not talk a lot about it.

#### 2.4.2 Worship

On Sundays the Saints usually attend sacrament meeting in the course of which the Holy Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is provided for the remission of sin. It consists in partaking of bread and drinking water in remembrance of Jesus Christ. The Last Supper Jesus gave bread to Apostles saying, “This is my body,” and wine saying, “This is my blood.”<sup>26</sup> Saints drink water instead of wine because of the Word of Wisdom which prohibits alcohol.

Worship is quite informal with playful activities. Ordinary worship, blessing of children, baptism or marriage for lifetime take place in meeting houses which resemble ordinary American houses of worship. Temples are reserved solely for special sacred rituals such as “endowment” or “sealing”.<sup>27</sup> Nobody, members included, is allowed to enter the temple



unless they have a special “recommend” which encompass several conditions: to be a member of the Church, to obey the laws of God, to pay the tithing etc. Furthermore, they have to dress in special ritual attire.<sup>28</sup>

### 2.4.3 Prayer

Saints pray every morning and every evening. Compared to other religions their prayer is quite unusual and informal. Every prayer is different because they do not recite any fixed text on the contrary they say it in their own words and therefore considerable part of their prayer is improvised. Saints believe that praying with sincerity is more important instead of vain repetition. A prayer start by addressing God e.g. “Dear Heavenly Father” and then continue with several sentences in which they express their gratitude, questions, pleads and other feelings. Each prayer ends with the word “in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.”

Saints also begin and finish each lesson with a prayer. In a group only one of them is praying out loud and others joint just saying Amen. All of them have their hands clasped and eyes closed. The opening prayer may be performed while sitting on the seats but the ending prayer is performed while kneeling on the floor. During this prayer they usually thank God for many reasons such as weather, whether it was sunny or rainy, also for the opportunity to preach the gospel and plead with him for better understand the issue to be discussed.

Praying is very important for Saints because it is the way how to speak to God and listen to him. Therefore their prayer is rather a conversation with God in order to create a relationship with him. This relationship is very special and deep. Saints regard God as their best friend to whom they can entrust their secrets, wishes and concerns. “In fact, God is better than a friend because he never tells you that you repeat what you said the day before.”<sup>29</sup> Furthermore God is their Heavenly Father who looks after them every single day and protects them everywhere they are and this is one of reasons why they should be grateful.<sup>30</sup>

#### 2.4.4 The Book of Mormon and other sacred scriptures

As a Christian denomination the Saints accept the Bible, more precisely the King James Version. But the book on which they put the emphasis the most is The Book of Mormon which serves as another testimony of Jesus Christ. In fact even from the subtitle “Another Testament of Jesus Christ” it is clearly visible. Although the prophet Joseph Smith claimed the Book of Mormon the most correct of any book on earth, there are grammatical errors and it has been modified several times. For this reason the authenticity of the text has been called in question, but for Mormons there is no doubt. Every member should have read it. Missionaries have it with them all the time in case that somebody would be interested in.

The book tells the history of lost tribes of Israel, the Jaredites and the Lamanites, who settled in America. These ancient Christian Americans, however, begun to fight each other and finally all the Jaredites exterminated. Only Mormon and his son Moroni survived. The Lamanites are believed to be ancestors of the contemporary Native Americans. This solved the mystery of the Native Americans’ origins. Moron and his son created and buried the tablets which were then discovered by Joseph Smith. The text on tablets tells that Jesus Christ will appear in America to establish religious order and truth.<sup>31</sup>

As the Church enlarged questions about organization, structure, regulations and other directions appeared. For this reason Joseph Smith drew up two other books, the Doctrine and Covenants and the Pearl of Great Price. Apart from items which were mentioned, these books precise some parts of Bible which were personally translated by Joseph Smith such as the Book of Abraham. The books also encompass a first-person narrative of Joseph Smith, his revelations and inspired declaration given for the establishment of the Church and other sacred documents. These texts also give advices about the Saint’s daily lives and last but not least there is the Word of Wisdom.<sup>32</sup>

Mormon publishers provide a special publication which is composed from all these four most important books of the Church but only English version. In Czech there exists a version of three Mormon holy books but Bible is separated.<sup>33</sup>

#### 2.4.5 Differences from other Christian denominations

Although Mormonism has its historical roots in Christian theology, there is some slight dissimilarity which is characteristic only for Saints teaching and practice. The conception of the Holy Trinity differs in a way that God, the Eternal Father, His Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost do not coexist in unity. Although they are perfectly united in purpose and will, they are three distinct beings. Furthermore, God and Jesus Christ are believed to be corporeal persons of flesh and bones. Only Holy Ghost is seen as a personage of spirit. This concept was influenced mainly by Smith's First Vision of God and His Beloved Son. The Father God is also accompanied by Heavenly Mother. They both are parents of all the pre-mortal spirits who later become the men and women on Earth and then return again to God.<sup>34</sup>

Mormons acknowledge the Plan of Salvation which explains the pilgrimage of spirits. As it was mentioned all children of God first exist as pre-mortal spirits, then they are humanly embodied to live on Earth. After death they enter the Spirit World and they undergo the Final Judgment. According to their spiritual progress and conformity to God's law they attain lower or higher degree of heavenly glory. Heaven is arranged in three degree: the Celestial Kingdom, the Terrestrial Kingdom and the Telestial Kingdom. The highest one is the Celestial Kingdom which can be entered only by men who were ordained Melchizedek priesthood, their wives and families which underwent the ritual of sealing. Those who do not achieve a degree of glory rest in a state called Outer Darkness.

As it was mentioned a baptism is not organized after the birth but at the eight years of age. The reason is that the Saints do not subscribe to the doctrine of "original sin". It is also necessary to wait till the child is

eligible to make decisions, because their faith is not imposed to anybody. The performance of baptism also differs. The child is immersed in water for the remission of sin.

Even dead people have the opportunity to be baptized and become a member of the Church. A living person, acting as proxy, is baptized on behalf of the deceased who consequently accept or reject the offered ordinance in the spirit world. The rule that the faith is not impose to anyone applies to living people as well as to dead people. To perform this type of baptism it is necessary to provide dates of birth and death of the deceased. For this reason the Saints keep extensive genealogical archives.<sup>35</sup> For example <https://www.familysearch.org/> is an online genealogical service provided by Saints and plentifully utilized by public.

#### 2.4.6 Hierarchy

The Church has the same structure as the original church established by Jesus Christ. The head of the Church is Jesus. His highest representative is the President of the Church who is chosen by God and is believed to be a prophet.

For verily I [God] say unto you, that he [the President] that is ordained of me shall come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you before, to teach those revelations which you have received and shall receive through him whom I have appointed.<sup>36</sup>

At present, the President is Thomas S. Monson and he is assisted by two counsellors who form the First Presidency. This council supervises Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Their portraits on walls in meeting houses are a sign of due respect which Saints show to these authorities. Furthermore Saints have all confidence in their president. His orders are the word of God and must be obeyed. Another body of general church leaders is called the Seventy. Many of them serve as local leader in different areas in the world. These general authorities are full-time employments contrary to local administrators called bishops or branch

president who take turns in leadership in order that they could keep their secular employment<sup>37</sup>

## **2.5 Mormon subculture**

As a result of long lasting separation from American society there was not an influence of larger secular culture. Therefore Mormons changed many social institutions (family, economies, politics, education etc.) in their characteristic way and accordingly a new subculture remarkably independent of the larger society was born. It must be admitted that the subculture has been Americanized over last forty years. But their common religious faith and the objective of building the kingdom of God connect them. Thus their subculture remains somehow distinctive. For this subculture it is also characteristic that members of the Church evince high degree of uniformity all around the world excluding elements which are hard and unnecessary to implement e.g. native language.<sup>38</sup>

### **2.5.1 Lifestyle**

The Saints tend to be more religious than ordinary Americans, nevertheless it is not only the worship which ties them together, there also many secular activities and communities in which they socialize and engage. It is not a coincidence that one of the oldest and largest woman's organizations in the world called Relief Society was founded by Mormons. Men use to participate meeting of the priesthood quorums. Every Sunday children attend Sunday school. Apart from this, there are many other social and sport activities, which they take part and share their leisure time. The society is ordered according to age and gender. Every member of family and community has its responsibilities.<sup>39</sup>

As the Word of Wisdom assert it is forbidden to Mormons to use illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco but also coffee or tea. This law of health leads them to eat more fruit, vegetable, whole grains and less meat. The Word of Wisdom was written in 1830s, long before it was discovered the negative impacts of tobacco or alcohol. They are simply encouraged to

maintain a healthy, productive and moderate life.<sup>40</sup> Moderation is required in all aspects of everyday life. Their appearance usually correspond to conservative American standard which means no excessive makeup, jewellery, tattoo, body piercing, immoderate hairstyle or sexually provocative style, just modest and practical clothing.<sup>41</sup>

There exists one oddity concerning Mormon clothing. They take part in a ceremony “endowment” during which they receive the temple garment. Since then they are expected to wear it under their clothing both day and night to protect them from evils of the world. It is also required to enter a temple.<sup>42</sup> Over the years it has changed from one-piece unisex underwear (see Appendix I, Picture 2) to two-piece underwear for men or women (see Appendix I, Picture 3). Long pants and shirt without a low-cut neckline remind women to dress modestly and not provocative.

The Saints tend to cooperate and serve one another in the interest of God’s kingdom. In Utah, where approximately 60% of citizens are reported to be members of LDS Church, it may happen that a family bought a house built by a LDS contractor with money borrowed from an LDS-owned bank, and then insured it in LDS insurance company. The family likely purchases their basic needs in LDS department store called ZCMI (which stands for Zion’s Cooperative Mercantile Institution) and watch LDS television station BYU TV which is operated by Brigham Young University which, accordingly to the name, is also a LDS institution.

Daily life is highly interconnected with the religion which requires a strong commitment of person’s time, energy and other resources. Most of the activities of congregations depend on unpaid labour and therefore many Saints perform voluntary and often extensive work in addition to their secular employment. Saints are also expected to contribute a tithing to the Church, which is 10% of their gross income.<sup>43</sup>

## 2.5.2 Family life

Family is the basic unit of their religion. Almost everything in their lives revolves around family. Moreover, every evening they gather for scripture reading and prayer. Saints evince strong commitment to family values. Pre-marital or extramarital sexual relationship is prohibited. Fidelity in marriage is very important. Saints are discouraged to get divorced, but it is not forbidden. The Saints' divorce rate is comparable to the number of divorces of ordinary Americans. Perhaps it is because they tend to marry at younger age.

Generally, Saints consider marriage more than simply a contract. It is sacred, loving relationship intended to last for this lifetime or even for eternity. Husband and wife are expected to coordinate in support of one another, the family and the community. Traditional American gender roles of men and women are strongly encouraged. Latter-day Saint families are usually larger than the American average, because they are encouraged to have as many children as they are able to nurture and support. Abortion is prohibited except for serious reasons. Birth control is permitted just for family-planning purposes.<sup>44</sup>

## 2.5.3 Education

Children attend American public schools and, before or after it, many high school and college students attend special religious classes. The Saints founded Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, and many other educational institutions and colleges. There is higher number of high school and university graduates.<sup>45</sup>

## **2.6 Polygamy and FLDS**

### 2.6.1 History of Mormon polygamy

Lately after establishing the Church, polygamy became an important part of the teachings. It is a marriage to more than one partner at a time. It was the typical form of polygamy - polygyny in which wives

share one husband. As it was mentioned plural marriage was privately practiced by Joseph Smith who claimed to follow his revelations given as answers for his questions about the Bible. He asked why Abraham, Jacob, Solomon and other leaders in the Old Testament had multiple wives. These revelations were not recorded until 1843 shortly before Smith's death. From 1852 president Brigham Young made polygamy widely known and defended practice. Although it was officially encouraged majority of members did not practiced the principle. It was common among men in leadership positions.<sup>46</sup>

Negative public opinion was supported by federal laws which made polygamy illegal. Despite these laws Mormons continued to practice it since they believed to be protected by the First Amendment including a free exercise of religion. This assumption was inquired by the Supreme Court which held that the government cannot interfere with religious belief but with religious practices it is in accordance with the Constitution. Consequently, in 1890, President Willford Woodruff issued the "Manifesto" on the basis of his revelation. This press release should have terminated the practice of plural marriage. Most of polygamists, however, interpreted the law that it just prohibited new marriages and continued to cohabit with their wives until the "Second Manifesto" was issued in 1904. Since then Mormons follow the Book of Mormon. "For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none."<sup>47</sup> They believe that monogamy is and always has been the practice ordained by God unless he commands otherwise, which is believed to be this case. Nowadays members who practice polygamy are excommunicated.<sup>48</sup>

This gave rise to group of people who believed that the Church abandoned the God's command only due to government pressure and therefore it must be still obeyed. Till these days there are several groups of polygamists in Utah, Arizona, Colorado or Texas. Over the time the opinion on the way how to practice the polygamy differentiated and therefore there are different organizations such as the Apostolic United



Brethren, the Latter-day Church of Christ or Kingston group. The most significant group is the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. To better understand what is this religion about it is useful to explain the term “fundamentalist”. The most of worldwide religions have fundamentalist movements, which are characterized by a strict adherence to sacred texts.<sup>49</sup>

### 2.6.2 Life in FLDS community

FLDS normally avoid any contact with outsiders. For this reason many of FLDS homes are surrounded with high walls, their children are homeschooled and they concern in compounds away from the cities and Gentiles, as non-members are called. Their lifestyle is full of contrasts. On one hand they seem not to live in this century, from their old-fashioned appearance to banishment of television. These communities grow their own fruit and vegetable in order to be somewhat self-sufficient. On the other hand FLDS member use cell-phones, moreover they are highly computer literate and operate many large businesses.<sup>50</sup>

The old-fashioned appearance of FLDS women (see Appendix I, Picture 4) is worth discussing a little more in detail. They wear a homemade 19<sup>th</sup> century “prairie dress” with long sleeves, along with trousers or stocking underneath and full-body long underwear as well. Women always keep their hair coiffed. The reason is that women are responsible for the men’s thoughts when they looked at women. Women and girls of all ages wear this set of clothes even when they take a swim.<sup>51</sup>

Plural marriage is seen in many views. Some women appreciate that sister wives (as they call wives of one husband) can share their household tasks and do not feel any rivalry. There are women who are not really happy about it but they regard it as a test from God. However there is also case when a wife was very delighted to welcome as a sister wife her own sister and share her kind husband with her because an unhappy marriage which her sister experienced. The role of woman is not

extraordinary only for sharing one household, sister wives tend to have many children to fulfil the God's order "multiply and replenish the earth" and therefore mother who have given birth to 10 or 16 children are not exceptions there. Any birth control, even by natural rhythm, is often regarded as abortion.<sup>52</sup>

The life of FLDS man is not always very enviable. It is a simple math that in the case of polygyny, there is not enough of women to every man and therefore certain men have to leave the community, these are called Lost Boys. However even if a man is lucky to have a wife and children it might change when he displeases the leader, who is regarded as a prophet. According to the policy reassignment, wives and children might be transferred to another man in case of adverse marriage.<sup>53</sup>

Notwithstanding with all these oddities and complications, FLDS members found their lifestyle idyllic. Cooperation between neighbours and sister wives is perfect and they all live happily exempt from junk food, stress or social pressure.<sup>54</sup>

### 2.6.3 FLDS in headlines

FLDS obtained unwilling publicity due to the scandal at Yearning for Zion Ranch in Eldorado, Texas, in April 2008. At the time both Texas Social Services and Newbridge Family Shelter received a series of phone calls from a terrified person who identified herself as 16-year-old girl as Sarah (Jessop Barlow) living at YFZ Ranch. She reported that she was being abused by a 49-year-old man to whom she was "spiritually married" as his seventh wife. The girl claimed that once she had been beaten so severely that she had several ribs broken and therefore needed the medical care. Only under these circumstances she was allowed to leave the Ranch, but she could not take her 8-month-old infant child with her. She whined that she needed to escape this situation.<sup>55</sup>

Executive Director of Child Protection Project, Flora Jessop, who also received similar calls, was former FLDS member. Because of her

experience she did not hesitate to take action even though there were several ambiguities, but as she claimed it was not her responsibility to investigate whether the phone calls were legitimate. For her initiative Texas officials petitioned a judge for a warrant to search the ranch. These calls resulted in an armed raid of the SWAT team in the ranch. Investigators observed a widespread pattern and practice that boys after they become adults were expected to spiritually marry underage girls and have children. Texas District Judge, Barbara Walther, held that more than 400 children were removed from the YFZ Ranch and placed in state foster care during the investigation under suspicion that they may be at risk of sexual abuse. DNA samples were collected to determine which child belongs to which mother and father, because in some cases children were not able or willing to reveal names of their parents during the hearings. The alleged rapist was arrested. Several other phone calls have made the situation more complicated. Another young girl claimed that she is being abused in Colorado City, Arizona, and finally identified herself as Sarah's twin sister. But none of these girls were found.<sup>56</sup>

The reason is that Sarah was in reality Rozita Swinton, a 33-year-old woman living in Colorado Springs, Colorado. She has perpetrated false reporting many times. On one hand there are those who are convinced that Swinton has developed multiple personalities due to trauma which she had suffered as a girl. In her senior year in high school, she accused her father of sexually assaulting her. On the other hand there are those who regard Swinton as a masterful manipulator who desire attention. Nevertheless it is on the psychologists to determine her mental condition.<sup>57</sup>

The investigation took 6 weeks. During this time several mothers from YFZ Ranch agreed to an interview in Larry King Live and another show to stress their view and their feelings. Eventually the court held that children were wrongly taken from the YFZ Ranch and they would return to their parents. Although there was the pattern of pregnant minor girls spiritually married to older men, there was no evidence of danger to the

physical health or safety and children were finally return to their families.<sup>58</sup> This action is only the latest in a long list. Authorities persecuted FLDS members for their religious principles several times. But they believe that these obstacles make them better and stronger than before.<sup>59</sup>

## **2.7 Self image**

Among many supplement websites of the Church, there are two most important: <http://www.lds.org/> which is rather used by Church members and <http://mormon.org/> which serves as self presentation of the Church and the faith to people around the world. Although both of them contain many pictures of content people and families of various race and age, there are quite visible differences. On the member website it is Jesus Christ who welcomes visitor on the first page. The Holy Scriptures and other material for study are provided. There is information about Church activities, upcoming events, links to wards and stakes, as their local divisions are called. The appearance of the website for non-members is little more secular and easy – bigger picture and less text. It explains basic beliefs of the Church and it instigates questions about life, its purpose and how God affects our lives. Consequently it gives possible answers. The website provides a possibility to order a free Book of Mormon or contact a missionary for meeting to easily learn more about the Church.

On their websites there is a strict list of terms which should be used when referring to the Church. It is advised to mention the whole name at the beginning and then there are several abbreviations allowed such as the Church of Jesus Christ or simply the Church. The purpose is not only to emphasize the focus on Jesus Christ but also to distinct themselves from other Mormon denominations.<sup>60</sup>

The recent media interest in the Fundamentalist Latter Day Saints caused that growing number of people confuse this religion with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. For this reason Saints founded a special website <http://fldsmormons.com/> with the title “FLDS

are not Mormons” to defend themselves against wrong public opinion. The website briefly explains the history and emphasize that the only connection is the Book of Mormon and first three presidents but the practice and culture have differentiated over the time. Saints clarify basic beliefs of both religions and introduce their lifestyle. They present their focus on family and common family activities as well as equal treatment with black members of the Church.<sup>61</sup>

## **2.8 Mission**

The most remarkable contribution to the growth of the Church is always has been due to the mission. The main objective of mission is to bring people closer to Jesus Christ through preaching the Gospel. But missionaries have many other tasks. They provide humanitarian aid in countries of the Third World. The mission also involved a lot of administration work and the most important activity which is to baptize and confirm new members in order to be saved and return to live with our Heavenly Father. The idea of mission is based on words of the Doctrine and Covenants and primarily the Bible: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”<sup>62</sup> But it has also a long tradition in the Church, since the time of Joseph Smith.<sup>63</sup>

For geographic and linguistic reasons first missions were working in the USA and Canada and afterwards in England. Since the Missionary Language Institute has been set up missions have gradually spread to South America, North and Eastern Europe and Pacific Islands and were very successful and many converts have immigrated to the USA. Subsequently missions have extended to Southeast Asia, Australia West and South Africa. There is no mission in North Africa or Middle East due to important Islamic influence.<sup>64</sup>

These days, according to the number of people who received baptism and confirmation and the number of missions and missionaries, the Church achieved the greatest success in Latin America, however, some of returned missionaries says that “people got baptized to either

please the missionaries, or they enjoyed the attention”<sup>65</sup> and only a few number of converts are active members for longer time.

Over the time Mormon missions has gained quite precise form and rules concerning who can serve a mission, for how long etc. Missionaries follow a handbook called Preach My Gospel which explains purposes and contents of the missionary work.<sup>66</sup> The number of missions has reached 340 and approximately 55,000 full-time missionaries are serving there.<sup>67</sup> It is not obligatory, as their official websites proclaims, but young men are highly expected to serve a mission primarily due to the priest’s authority to perform baptism and confirmation. Therefore they form the basis of every mission’s congregation. In a larger congregation they might be assisted by young women. Retired married couples are also encouraged to serve the mission when their children are raised. About 70% of missionaries serve their mission in the USA and the rest of them are spread all over the world.<sup>68</sup>

Before missionaries leave their home country, they attend the Missionary Training Center (MTC). Several teachers like substituting this abbreviation for “My time for Christ”.<sup>69</sup> In MTC missionaries primarily practice teaching the gospel and those who are going to serve the mission in foreign country learn the language and are thought by fluent returned missionaries. Usually missionaries spend in MTC 9 weeks, however, it might differs according to the demands of the language. Today there are 17 MTCs in operation around the world including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Guatemala, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa, South Korea, Spain and the UK. The largest one is in Provo, Utah. Missionaries are called to the MTC which is the nearest one to the target mission for which they were chosen e.g. missionaries who are going to serve in the Czech Republic attend the MTC in London, the UK.<sup>70</sup>

After missionaries leave the MTC they do not attend any other language courses in the country they practice and learn the foreign

language from their companion who is always more experienced because he has been there longer the newcomer has. During the stay missionaries from the same city gather every week to practice the language together.<sup>71</sup>

### 2.8.1 Missionary work and missionaries

The missionary work does not consist only in searching for potential members and proselytizing, missionaries spread the gospel, teach future and new members. They try to integrate the newcomers to social life of the Church. Missionaries invite them to all activities which the Church organises and usually there are many of them regularly every week. They do not focus only on new converts but they attempt to integrate also members who have become less active.<sup>72</sup>

Missionaries' lives are absolutely dedicated to the mission. They give up studying, working, dating or even contact with family. They follow a strict daily plan which starts at 6:30 a.m. During the day they study the scriptures, meet new people and with whom they share the gospel. Usually they return home around 9:30 p.m.<sup>73</sup>

Event their contact with their family and friends is limited. One day per week is so-called "preparation day" often abbreviated to "P-day". This day missionaries are allowed to read and write emails for an hour.<sup>74</sup> During this day missionaries do shopping, clean their apartment or have their hair cut. This all as a preparation for the rest of the week in order that then they could only focus on missionary work. This day they are allowed to take off the representative attire. When missionaries are called for a mission and became representatives of the Church they are required to wear suitable clothing. For men it means dark suit, white shirt and tie. Women are supposed to be dressed in skirts and blouses. It also reminds to the missionaries the serious nature of the missionary work. Both of them have nametags with the full name of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and their missionary name. During the mission, missionaries are addressed with their titles "Sister" or "Elder" and surname because they are representing the Church and Jesus Christ. It

brings more respect to relationship between missionary as a teacher and representative and member as a learner. Missionary work is unpaid and therefore missionaries live from their own savings.<sup>75</sup>

The decision where missionaries would serve is made by God who reveals it to the prophet. Missionaries just receive a letter with the information. Before they leave for a mission they attend a special ordinance for missionaries to receive a blessing which should help them to spread the gospel and help people finding the way to God and Jesus Christ.<sup>76</sup>



## **3 MORMONS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

### **3.1 History of the Church on our territory**

#### **3.1.1 Persecutions in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy**

First activity of Mormon missionaries which is worthy to mention is in 1865 when they reached Austro-Hungarian Empire and started to preach the gospel in Vienna. But it was not until March 1884 that first missionary came to Prague. However it was not an initial objective it had happened as a result for certain circumstances. The missionary work was much more complicated than it is today. Elder Thomas Biesinger and Elder Paul Hammer who served a mission in Vienna had to face an important obstacle at the time. Only several Christian churches were allowed in the Austria-Hungary e.g. Catholics, Orthodox or Lutherans. In order to keep the empire from breaking away, all other religious or political ideas were prohibited and people preaching it were arrested. Therefore missionaries were forced to conceal the preaching for teaching English. When more and more complications occurred, the missionaries decided to separate in case that one of them was accused and arrested the other would continue teaching.<sup>77</sup>

For that reason Elder Thomas Biesinger moved to Prague and started talks with people and won friends including Johann Klusak and Antonín Just. Soon after his arrival he was arrested and jailed a short time. His accusers and simultaneously his investigators were his two seeming friends mentioned. Elder Biesinger spent in prison more than 2 months. Few days after he was released Elder Biesinger met one of his accusers Klusak who asked for forgiveness because his son was dying of smallpox and he thought that he was punished for the accusation. Elder Biesinger freely forgave him nevertheless his son died two days later.

Perhaps that was one of the reasons that the other accuser Antonín Just asked to be baptised. Therefore Elder Biesinger baptised and confirmed Just who thus became the first Czech member of the Church.

This had happened just before his return to Utah. Elder Biesinger had to leave because of negative publicity, rumours and misinformation about the Church e.g. converts from Europe become slaves of American polygamists. This caused that he could not find any new follower.<sup>78</sup>

### 3.1.2 Turn for the better in Czechoslovakia

The situation had considerably changed after the First World War when Elder Biesinger returned to Czechoslovakia and helped to officially open the Czechoslovak Mission in 1928 even though he was more than eighty. Elder Biesinger baptised Františka Brodilová who then become an important initiator of Czechoslovak Mission and afterwards the first Relief Society president in the Czechoslovakia. Her family was subsequently baptised in the Vltava River. After a short time Elder Biesinger was released and no new missionary had replaced him therefore Brodilová contacted the President Heber J. Grant and consequently Elder Arthur Gaeth was set as a President of the Czechoslovak Mission. His active work was really successful, suddenly Mormon subject matter started to appear in newspapers articles and radio broadcasts both in German and Czech. This publicity changed the public opinion to unprejudiced or even favourable.<sup>79</sup> In addition in 1930 the number of missionaries increased and the Mission extended from Prague to Brno, Hradec Králové, Pardubice and Mladá Boleslav.

Notwithstanding the effort of missionaries there was still very small number of converts in Eastern European countries because most of them preferred to move to United States. The Mission, however, made progress. In 1933 the Book of Mormon was translated into Czech and 3000 copies were published. The number of missionaries and cities involved comparatively grown. Shortly after the rise the Church had to confront difficulties with Gestapo as the political situation was getting worse after that Hitler was elected to Chancellor of Germany. Eventually the missionaries left Czechoslovakia and the then President of the

Mission Wallace Toronto appointed their Czech representatives Josef Roubíček in Prague and Jaroslav Kotulan in Brno.<sup>80</sup>

### 3.1.3 Reversal in the communist period

After the Second World War the missionaries returned to provide humanitarian assistance. This positive approach together with negative impact of the war resulted in double number of new coming members. However this bloom did not last for a long time. Since 1948 the presence of American missionary as well as their religious activity had become unwanted under communist regime. In 1950 two missionaries were accused of spying and arrested and were not released until all other missionaries left the country. The government officially terminated the Mission and Czechoslovak members were forced to continue meetings secretly. The Church went to underground. A secret training centre for local missionaries was established in Brno under the pretext of yoga exercising. The President Toronto applied for visa many times until he received it in 1965. However his visit was very short because the secret police banished him from the Czechoslovakia and therefore situation had not improved.

It was not until 1985 that the Freiberg Temple in the German Democratic Republic was dedicated. It was the first temple in communist-controlled Europe and was a sign of better times of the Church. After Velvet Revolution the government adopted the freedom of religion and the Czechoslovakia Prague Mission was re-established in 1990. At this time there were approximately 200 members. In 1991 the Mormon Tabernacle Choir visited Czechoslovakia and performed in Prague opera house. Singing religious songs is also a manner how to preach the gospel and primarily to make the Church more visible. Somebody has really become a member of the Church as a result of the concert.<sup>81</sup> In early 1990s the Church grew apace, however, this upswing turned out to be rather eagerness for free decisions which people recently acquired than

the real interest in the Church and the number of baptism per year decreased approximately from 200 to 50 till the end of 1990s.<sup>82</sup>

### **3.2 Contemporary situation**

In 2002, a law concerning religion was introduced to the legislation of the Czech Republic. This law specifies conditions of establishment of a church and its activity so as it could be registered by the state. It aims to separate “safe churches” and potentially dangerous sects and therefore the church obtains confidence of people and high social status which reduces the tension in society regarding new religious movement.<sup>83</sup> This registration entails also several privileges and powers (e.g. marriage performed by the church is recognised by state) but it brings some responsibilities as well for example the secret of the confessional.<sup>84</sup>

The official status recognized by state, however, has not much changed the public opinion of Czech people. Most of them have not any opportunity to learn about it. Contrary to America where the Church has mostly built up a positive view, in the Czech Republic the missionaries and members have to fight against continuing misinformation. Czech people keep in their minds only an image of polygamy sect due to news reports about FLDS members which they as dilettantes easily confuse with the Church of Jesus Christ. The raid in 2008 at the Yearning for Zion Ranch has slightly reflected in Czech environment and Saints had to explain that they are not the alleged abusive polygamists.<sup>85, 86</sup>

The official name of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recorded in the Czech registry is “Církev Ježíše Krista Svatých posledních dnů v České republice” which is distinctive not only for the specification that the Church operates in the Czech Republic but also for the translation of the word “latter” which was translated rather in the meaning of the English word “last”. In Czech it does not really give the originally intended impression of the Saints’ main belief that Jesus Christ will return to the Earth and will reign over the kingdom of God, but rather it seems that the last days before his crucifixion are important to them.

These days the Church claims that total number of membership is more than 2200. It is the number of people who were baptised however what is more important for the Church is the number of active members which could be only estimated by local missionaries and it is approximately 500 members. An active member is someone who attends Sunday's sacrament meetings, pay the tithing and actively participate in other activities of the Church. Majority of converts are young between the ages of 18 and 30 and many of them have served, are serving or would like to serve a mission.<sup>87</sup>

From 1993 the church publishes a Czech version of magazine Liahona for Church members of all ages. Some issue include supplement for children called "Little Star".<sup>88</sup> The magazine is published in more than 50 different languages usually every month. From 2001 it is available online on <http://www.lds.org/>. The name Liahona comes from the Book of Mormon, it was a special compass which gave direction to Lephi after their escape from Jerusalem.<sup>89</sup>

### **3.3 Czech and Slovak districts**

Czech members and missionaries are concentrated in 13 congregations all over the Czech Republic, namely in České Budějovice, Hradec Králové, Jičín, Liberec, Plzeň, Prague which are in Czech district and Brno, Jihlava, Olomouc, Ostrava, Třebíč, Uherské Hradiště, Zlín in Moravian district.<sup>90</sup> In Czech Republic Saints built up two meeting houses and also two Family History Centres which provide records of births, marriages, deaths or other information. From the list of Czech congregations it is evident that missionaries are more successful in cosmopolitan cities e.g. Prague or more religious regions like Moravia contrary to secular North of Bohemia.

In the Czech Republic, there is not any Mormon temple and therefore when Czech Saints want to strengthen their marriage or family through the ritual of "sealing" they have to travel abroad. The German mission was more successful than elsewhere and the Church built up

there two temples. The closer one is situated in Freiberg, Saxony (see Appendix I, Picture 5) and the other is Frankfurt, Hesse. Both of the temples are decorated with a gold-leafed statue of the angel Moroni (see Appendix I, Picture 6). This symbol of Mormonism always towers high above the ground on top of a spire. Although it is not required, it makes part of most Mormon temples and it is not seen just as a decoration for Mormons. As mentioned he was the son of Mormon from the tribe Lamanites. They wrote the history of their tribe which consequently has become the Book of Mormon. The angel holds a horn in his hand and symbolically preaches the gospel to the whole world.<sup>91</sup>

Under current Czech/Slovak Prague Mission there are nearly 200 members baptised in Slovak Republic<sup>92</sup> which is divided into 5 congregations in Banská Bystrica, Bratislava, Košice, Trenčín, Žilina.<sup>93</sup> The numbers of members are significantly different not only because of the different population but also due to Catholic domination which caused complications to a progress of the Church over the time. In addition, after the division of Czechoslovakia, the Church lost the privileges of the church recognized by the state.

This wider conception of Prague Mission which controls both Czech and Slovak Republic might be the cause of misinformation on the Church News website which claims that “the Czech Republic’s people speak Czech and Slovak, both of which are official languages”.<sup>94</sup>

### **3.4 Prague congregation and its activities**

The meeting house in Prague (see Appendix I, Picture 7) is just ordinary Prague house, quite large but modest. Commodious white halls are only simply decorated with most important figures of the Church. A painting of Jesus Christ (see Appendix I, Picture 8) on the wall in front of the door welcomes everybody who comes in. The Book of Mormon is displayed on the table next to several sofas so that the visitor can comfortably start to read it, in case that missionaries have not give him one copy yet. Versions of the book in many different languages are

available there as Prague is a very cosmopolitan city. Then I noticed a small statue of Joseph Smith in the kitchen. In the halls upstairs there are maps hanging on the walls. They represent their emphasis for genealogic because there are arrows with names of members or missionaries which are pointing to places they live. There are other arrows with the same name but different colour for their parents and grandparents. Apart from rooms for religious lessons the church building consist also a room for playing which is equipped with table football and billiard hockey. The most important hall where sacrament meeting take place is just modest room without any decoration. There is nothing more than chairs, lectern and piano.

Future members and new members learn about the gospel on religious classes. In Prague there are two classes per week – one in English and the other in Czech. At the present it is Elder Curtis, husband of Sister Curtis, who teaches these classes in English. Another way how to learn more about the teachings of the Church is during meetings with missionaries. The person is asked to read selected verses of the Book of Mormon and then it is discussed. What the text is about, how God really meant it and how to make use of his words in present life.

Apart from religious classes the Church provides various communities for different members. There are special activities for children, for young single adult, for men or women. On the website of the Church they precise the time of meetings which take place every week in every congregation. Sundays start with Sacrament meeting which is followed by Sunday school classes. Then women meet at the Relief Society and men gather for the Priesthood meeting. Every Monday in Prague meeting house a young adults meet for a dinner. Fridays are reserved for leisure time and playing games in the meeting house. Not to forget the healthy lifestyle one day a week is sport day. All members and friends of the church, which means that they are not member but they show a positive relationship to the Church, are invited to join.

On the websites there is also a calendar of activities which are not held regularly such as dance evening organised by Center for young single adults in Brno and which took place on 21 April 2012 or the Weekend of fathers and children which takes place at the beginning of June. Sister Curtis and Elder Curtis manage the Center for young single adults in Prague. This center is established throughout Europe and organise many activities for young adults every week.

### **3.5 Czech missionaries**

In 2010, David Robert Irwin was called as the president of the Czech Prague Mission. As all other mission presidents he is accompanied by his wife Lyn Protheroe Irwin. They both have previously served as senior missionaries in the Czech Republic. From a legal perspective the mission president is also the only representative authority of the Church and his rights are not limited.<sup>95</sup>

The number of missionaries in congregations depends on the size of the base. Male missionaries are essential for the congregation due to their authority to perform baptisms and confirmations. Therefore in congregations where a small number of active members are present for example in Liberec or České Budějovice, only 2 male missionaries serve. Sister missionaries serve mission in larger congregations such as Prague, Brno or Ostrava.<sup>96</sup>

Missionaries in the Czech Republic who learn a little about Czech history are impressed by an important personage of Czech religion.<sup>97</sup> One of the first reformers of the Christ Church was Jan Hus who believed the scriptures and he taught the gospel as he understood it. Missionaries revere and emphasize his martyrdom.<sup>98</sup>

Czech people are increasingly indifferent concerning faith and religion.<sup>99</sup> In addition the type of mission, when members of the Church walk in the street and want to talk with people about God, is considered somewhat strange. Certain people who are addressed may regard it even



unpleasant.<sup>100,101</sup> Although missionaries found Czech people really kind even those who are not interested. It might be just due to their positive view on people. It may be illustrated on an example a journalist who revealed his experience.

Former editor of Jičínský Deník gave his number to the missionaries solely for professional reasons, however, they call him several times. And thus he considered them “more importunate than Jehovah’s Witnesses”<sup>102</sup> Nevertheless the missionaries only do as the missionary handbook advises that they should contact people who might be interested in the Church. As missionaries irregularly change their places of operation and they always inherit the phone with contact from their predecessor, they cannot know that the contact was not interested person.

### **3.6 My experience**

My very first contact with Mormons was in Pilsen two years ago. I was sitting alone in a park. Two well-dressed young men with nametags were passing by and stopped next to me. With a strong American accent they explained in Czech that they were missionaries and asked me what the most important thing in my life is. We talked a little about me and when I said that I studied English they immediately invited me to their English classes every Tuesday evening. Finally they gave me a leaflet with several questions about life saying that the answers could be found at the Church and there was an address of the Church in Pilsen. Missionaries demanded my phone number in order to make another meeting. I agreed and subsequently we met several times. They gave me the Book of Mormon and before every meeting asked me to read some part to discuss. While I was gone for summer holidays, the missionaries were transferred and the new ones have never contacted me.

Last summer in Prague I met sister missionaries in public transport. One of the missionaries asked me where I bought my handbag and we talked a little. Finally asked about their missionary work and they were

very thrilled for the experience of preaching the gospel and changing people's lives. When I compare it with missionaries in Pilsen, the meetings with them seemed to me a little odd, somewhat unnatural. They were quite shy nevertheless they had to hold a conversation. The tacit rule that young men have to serve a mission is not really the most effective solution for the mission. Not everybody might be a teacher.

After my meeting with sister missionaries I decided to focus on them. Less than a year later, when I first came and knocked on the door of the church in Prague Sister Curtis, an elderly lady, welcomed me with a smile. I explained the reason of my visit and she immediately called the sister missionaries who were nearby in the city. While we were waiting for missionaries Sister Curtis looked for any material about the Church which she could provide me and the Book of Mormon of course. I asked for English version. She guided me gladly around the church and presented to her husband Elder Curtis and all other missionaries who were present. They were all immensely thrilled to meet me and girls welcomed me even with a hug. When sister missionaries who we were waiting for came we agreed on the date of meeting to do an interview. I thought that today's objective is accomplished but the missionaries were very prompt and immediately asked me to join a lesson of Eva Havlíčková, a Czech girl who has been recently baptized.

We were watching a film to learn more about the life and death of the prophet Joseph Smith. This film made his life very similar to life of Jesus Christ. He was preaching the gospel, helping people and healing them through power of priesthood. Missionaries consequently explained that this miraculous healing through power of priesthood happens till these days. As expected there was not any mention about Smith's private practice of polygamy or racism doctrines he introduced. None of that, on the contrary he was described as a perfect father of perfect family, who was helping black slaves to redeem themselves from slavery. He was a decent, helpful and gracious person who suffered from the lack of understanding of other people and died bravely as a martyr. After the film

we clarified with missionaries some parts of the film we did not understand and talked a little about his deeds.

I must admit that there was a slightly visible difference between sister missionaries and a new Czech member. Although she has accepted the dress code her clothing was not as modest as I was used to with missionaries. Her knee length skirt was much more ostentatious and her make-up was also more noticeable.

I supposed that those who show a great commitment for the Church and decide to voluntarily serve a mission as sister missionaries and senior couple to whom I was speaking, certainly grew up in the typical Saint family. However this presumption was wrong. Only two out of four missionaries grew up in complete Saint family. Elder Curtis became member of the Church when he was 27. In the family of Sister Sears there are only her mother and grandparents also members of the Church. Her father is not even a member of any church which is quite unusual while taking account religious American society.

Then I thought that at least they certainly come from Utah and the everyday life and people there have influenced them. However this assumption was not true as well. Sister Curtis lives in Virginia and Sister Bean comes from the state New York. This all implies that the decision to become a missionary and give approximately two years of one's life is might be partly influenced by people around that person but the most important is the person itself who listen to the will of God and wants to become a better person, be more Christlike and help people to find the way to God.

During the classes missionaries explained that to become a member of the Church is not necessary about giving up things. The Church endeavours to acquaint you with God and then he will decide about your life. Therefore the most but not the only purpose of missionary work is to perform baptisms and confirmations of new members to show them "the path to God".<sup>103</sup>

## 3.7 Interviews

In this part there are certain concrete examples which show how the Church influence lives of the members - several interesting stories how God guides their steps which cannot be deduced in any conclusions, however, it is worthy to emphasize.

### 3.7.1 Interview with Sister Jessica Sears

What was your motivation for the mission?

“I wanted to be a better person. And to be a better person that means to follow the Christ. As I thought about it, the best way how to become more “Christlike” is to be a missionary to help people to find Chris and spend my time thinking of other instead of thinking of myself.”

### 3.7.2 Interview with Sister Cynthia Curtis

Have you ever heard of the Czech Republic before you got to know that you were going to serve a mission there?

“Back in 2002, I was here teaching in Olomouc. I lived here for a year and I really loved living in the Czech Republic and I really loved the language and I was really fascinated by Czech history. [...] I was there with the US state department programme teacher exchange. From United States I came to teach in Olomouc and the teacher from Olomouc went to my school in Virginia. After my year I thought I would love to come back teach the gospel in Czech Republic. [...] But I knew that I would not be able to. I was teaching from time to time. I was not married that time. Unmarried older women can serve a mission but they might be limited in things that they can do. [...] and then suddenly I have met this man who had the same problem and he wanted to go on a mission. [...] And we knew that it was right about to get together. We celebrated our first wedding anniversary last September here in the Czech Republic. [...] I was praying for the Czech Republic but I was also praying for whatever

Heavenly Father wants. When we got the letter and opened it up, it said the Czech Republic. I knew that it was the answer for my prayers.”

### 3.7.3 Interview with Sister Emily Bean

Do you miss your family when you are far away and the contact is limited during the mission?

“I see it as a sacrifice if I can bring this message to someone else’s family then my family and I, we both feel that it is a good sacrifice It is hard for us to be apart but we can share that with somebody else, someone else’s family because that really blesses us a family - our relationship to each other. That’s how it is. We miss each other but we understand that. My father also served a mission.”

### 3.7.4 Interview with Eva Havlíčková

How did you get to know about Mormons?

“I was working in the USA during this summer and I was meeting different kinds of families every day. One day I met this family, the Lykins family. They were so special to me. [...] I told them that I went to church and that I was protestant and they started to teach me something about their own believe. First, I didn’t want to hear about it. [...] They gave me their Book of Mormon. It all sounded pretty strange to me but the people and the whole family just looked and acted like angels. [...] They were so humble and precious. So I started to read and learn more from them. I wasn’t sure if I wanted to be a Mormon but I knew that I wanted to be like these people. You could feel such a big Spirit from their hearts and peace and humbleness and love and hospitality all kinds of these nice characteristics. [...] They advised to find the church in Prague and find some missionaries which can help me with my studies. [...] I started to follow all the commitments and I started feel the Spirit much more. [...] It has completely changed my lifestyle and I felt so right about it.”

What have the decision to join the Church changed in your life?

“To live according to God and Jesus Christ brought big safety and sureness to your life. [...] God has a great plan for us. But we have to live according to him. That’s what is required. Which means, that I have to be quite different than most of people in Czech. Just not drinking is already quite different and strange for most people. And because of that you get into situations which are not easy to deal with. And I am not even talking about the sexual life. And it is not easy but to me he has amazing plan. And I believe in it.”

Don’t you mind the prohibitions? How did you get used to it?

“Well, it is not easy. Especially when I used to be a person who consumed alcohol. But that is what God wants from me. He is my father and he knows what the best for me is. It is like with our own parents. I feel like that with my own parents. Sometimes, I do not understand why they are asking me to do this or why they are not allowing me to do something. I do not know. But I trust them and I believe in them.”

## 4 CONCLUSION

In the thesis I endeavoured to give an objective and overall survey of Mormon religious movement, however, I encountered a clash already while classifying the Church. Putting aside the question whether it is a Christian denomination or rather new religion, it is still far from both well-established Christian churches and main religions like Judaism or Hinduism. But it might be just the matter of time because the churches had centuries and the religions had even millennia to develop and gain believers. The Church of Jesus Christ attracted 14 million people all over the world during two centuries. It is one of the fastest growing churches primarily due to their strong missionary imperative which is not obligatory, however, highly expected mainly from young men. Young women and senior couples who are motivated may also serve a mission.

The history of the Church is not extensive in comparison to other well-known religions even though it is quite controversial. Over the time, the Church has changed its characteristics in an important way. From an extreme, fundamentalist but also innovative religion the Church has become rather a mainstream Christian denomination and as they themselves claim “just another church”. It seems to me that the Church is even overlooking certain parts of their history and practices which they renounced. The only important matter is what they focus on nowadays and it means content family, healthy lifestyle and humble life following the example of Jesus Christ.

I tried to discover how the religion is special. Thanks to personal interviews and related visits in the Church I made several findings. It is the spirit of the community which ties them together and makes them who they are. They meet often for various activities and spend together more time than other churches. Members are stimuli for each other to be more “Christlike” – to be a good member – to be Saint, which in Mormonism means to be accommodating, to make sacrifices etc.

But the faith is not necessarily the only thing which binds them. The Church gives people certainty and answers as well as any other church, however, the Saints have many characteristics of community which offers people social surroundings of people with higher moral standard and fill their leisure time with enjoyable activities.

Another reason why the Church is a little extraordinary is the relationship to God. It seems to me somewhat closer than the relationship of other believers. He guides their steps and they speak about him very often. He is their Heavenly Father who carefully looks after them every day. During the prayer they simply say anything they feel or think of and it makes God their best friend, the closest person in their lives, someone who knows things that they do not say to any other person.

To assess the situation in the Czech Republic, people generally do not perceive the Church very well mainly due to lack of information. If there is somebody who knows the Church usually it is only for the polygamous background. They easily confuse the Church of Jesus Christ with groups of fundamentalists whose practices and lifestyle are today completely different. One of the reasons is also general feeble relationship of Czech people to religion. They find the missionaries talking with people in streets about the religion quite strange or even annoying. Despite the public opinion, the number of Czech members is constantly growing. Tens of people become members every year.

Finally as I had an opportunity to be taught by several different missionaries I may compare it. From my experience I consider that sister missionaries and senior couples, who are not expected to go on a mission but it is only their own decision and motivation, are likely to be better teachers. Somebody who is shy or has difficulties in talking with people is not really the best representative of the Church.



## 5 ENDNOTES

---

- <sup>1</sup> BEAL, T. K. *Religion in America: a very short introduction* p.42
- <sup>2</sup> VOJTÍŠEK, Z. *Netradiční náboženství u nás* p. 41
- <sup>3</sup> NEUSNER. *World religions in America* p.281
- <sup>4</sup> Roberts B.H. (ed.). *History of the Church* [online]. Volume V, chapter XXI.
- <sup>5</sup> NEUSNER. *World religions in America* p.281
- <sup>6</sup> *Style Guide - The Name of the Church* [online]
- <sup>7</sup> BEAL, T. K. *Religion in America: a very short introduction* p. 35
- <sup>8</sup> SMITH, J. *Pearl of Great Price* [online], line 19
- <sup>9</sup> *Book of Mormon*, Mormon 9:32
- <sup>10</sup> *Bible Dictionary: Urim and Thummim* [online]
- <sup>11</sup> *American Prophet – Biography* [online]
- <sup>12</sup> JULIUS, C. Clark. *Joseph Smith* [online]
- <sup>13</sup> VOJTÍŠEK, Z. *Nová náboženská hnutí a jak jim porozumět* p. 126
- <sup>14</sup> PARTRIDGE, C. H. (ed.). *Encyklopedie nových náboženství* p.33
- <sup>15</sup> *Journal of Discourses* [online] 7:290 – p.291 Brigham Young
- <sup>16</sup> MCKEEVER, B. *Blood Atonement - If It Was Never Taught, Why Do So Many Mormons Believe It?* [online]
- <sup>17</sup> VOJTÍŠEK, Z. *Netradiční náboženství u nás* p. 42
- <sup>18</sup> *Fundamentalists, Blacks and the Priesthood* [online]
- <sup>19</sup> VOJTÍŠEK, Z. *Nová náboženská hnutí a jak jim porozumět* p. 124
- <sup>20</sup> NEUSNER. *World religions in America* p.275
- <sup>21</sup> BEAL, T. K. *Religion in America: a very short introduction* p. 38
- <sup>22</sup> *Trends continue in church membership growth or decline, reports 2011 Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches* [online]
- <sup>23</sup> *Facts and Statistics* [online]
- <sup>24</sup> Interview with Sister Curtis on 12 April 2012
- <sup>25</sup> NEUSNER. *World religions in America* p. 282
- <sup>26</sup> Britannica online Encyclopedia - Eucharist [online]
- <sup>27</sup> NEUSNER. *World religions in America* p.284
- <sup>28</sup> PARTRIDGE, C. H. (ed.). *Encyklopedie nových náboženství* p. 35

- 
- <sup>29</sup> Interview with Eva Havlíčková on 30 March 2012
- <sup>30</sup> Interview with Sister Bean on 30 March 2012
- <sup>31</sup> BOWKER, John (ed.). *The Oxford dictionary of world religions* p. 655
- <sup>32</sup> *God's Commandments* [online]
- <sup>33</sup> Interview with Sister Bean on 30 March 2012
- <sup>34</sup> NEUSNER. *World religions in America* p. 282
- <sup>35</sup> PARTRIDGE, C. H. (ed.). *Encyklopedie nových náboženství* p. 35
- <sup>36</sup> SMITH, J. *The Doctrine and Covenants* 43:7
- <sup>37</sup> Interview with Sister Curtis on 30 March 2012
- <sup>38</sup> NEUSNER. *World religions in America* p.285
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p.276
- <sup>40</sup> Interview with Sister Curtis on 12 April 2012
- <sup>41</sup> NEUSNER. *World religions in America* p.279
- <sup>42</sup> VOJTÍŠEK, Z. *Encyklopedie náboženských směrů a hnutí v České republice* p. 89
- <sup>43</sup> NEUSNER. *World religions in America* p.278
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.276
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p.278
- <sup>46</sup> *Polygamy: Latter-day Saints and the Practice of Plural Marriage* [online]
- <sup>47</sup> *The Book of Mormon* Jacob 2:27
- <sup>48</sup> EMBRY, J. L. *Polygamy* [online]
- <sup>49</sup> Britannica online Encyclopedia – Fundamentalism [online]
- <sup>50</sup> ANDERSON, S. *The Polygamists* [online]
- <sup>51</sup> HAYES, S. *Why do all those polygamist women look exactly alike?* [online]
- <sup>52</sup> ANDERSON, S. *The Polygamists* [online]
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>55</sup> WEST, Brian *Affidavit: FLDS raid spurred by girl's reports of physical, sexual abuse* [online]
- <sup>56</sup> ADAMS, Brooke *Report: FLDS teen whose call sparked Texas raid said she feared for her life from physically abusive husband* [online]
- <sup>57</sup> *Rozita Swinton's Bad Call* [online]

- 
- <sup>58</sup> ADAMS, Brooke *Cour slams FLDS raid* [online]
- <sup>59</sup> ANDERSON, Scott *The Polygamists* [online]
- <sup>60</sup> *Style Guide - The Name of the Church* [online]
- <sup>61</sup> *FLDS are Not Mormons* [online]
- <sup>62</sup> *The Holy Bible* [online], Mark 16:15
- <sup>63</sup> *Missions – Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ* [online]
- <sup>64</sup> *Growth of the Church* [online]
- <sup>65</sup> *Regrets of going on a mission* [online]
- <sup>66</sup> *Preach My Gospel* [online]
- <sup>67</sup> *Facts and Statistics* [online]
- <sup>68</sup> NEUSNER. *World religions in America* p.284
- <sup>69</sup> *What is the MTC?* [online]
- <sup>70</sup> Interview with Sister Sears on 4 April 2012
- <sup>71</sup> Interview with Sister Bean on 4 April 2012
- <sup>72</sup> Interview with Sister Bean on 30 March 2012
- <sup>73</sup> *What Missionaries Do* [online]
- <sup>74</sup> Interview with Sister Bean on 12 April 2012
- <sup>75</sup> Interview with Sister Curtis on 12 April 2012
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>77</sup> HARTLEY, William. *A Missionary's Two Months in Jail* [online]
- <sup>78</sup> *Elder paved way for Czech mission in 1929* [online]
- <sup>79</sup> MCOMBER, Ruth and SOUTH NIENDORF, Ann *Czechoslovakia was her mission* [online]
- <sup>80</sup> MEHR, Kahlile *Czech Saints: A brighter Day* [online]
- <sup>81</sup> Seidl, Felix *Sharing My Testimony through Music* [online]
- <sup>82</sup> MEHR, Kahlile *Czech Saints: A brighter Day* [online]
- <sup>83</sup> VOJTÍŠEK, Z. *Nová náboženská hnutí a jak jim porozumět* p. 125
- <sup>84</sup> *Výpis z Rejstříku registrovaných církví a náboženských společností* [online]
- <sup>85</sup> DUBSKÝ, Kamil. *Východočeští mormoni: S agresivními a sexistickými odpadlíky z Texasu nemáme nic společného* [online]
- <sup>86</sup> VOJTÍŠEK, Zdeněk. *Nová náboženská hnutí a jak jim porozumět* p. 19
- <sup>87</sup> MEHR, Kahlile *Czech Saints: A brighter Day* [online]

- 
- <sup>88</sup> VOJTÍŠEK, Zdeněk. *Encyklopedie náboženských směrů a hnutí v České republice* p. 90
- <sup>89</sup> The Book of Mormon – Index
- <sup>90</sup> Církev Ježíše Krista Svatých posledních dní [online]
- <sup>91</sup> *Angel Moroni Statues Atop Mormon Temples Are More Than Decoration* [online]
- <sup>92</sup> *Facts and Statistics* [online]
- <sup>93</sup> Církev Ježíša Krista Svätých neskorších dní [online]
- <sup>94</sup> *Country information: Czech Republic* [online]
- <sup>95</sup> *Výpis z Rejstříku registrovaných církví a náboženských společností* [online]
- <sup>96</sup> Interview with Sister Curtis on 30 March 2012
- <sup>97</sup> Interview with Sister Curtis on 12 April 2012
- <sup>98</sup> *The tapestry of God's Hand* [online]
- <sup>99</sup> *Lidé se méně hlásí k náboženství i národnosti, vyplývá ze sčítání lidu* [online]
- <sup>100</sup> VOJTÍŠEK, Zdeněk. *Nová náboženská hnutí a jak jim porozumět* p. 19
- <sup>101</sup> DUBSKÝ, Kamil. *Východočeští mormoni: S agresivními a sexistickými odpadlíky z Texasu nemáme nic společného* [online]
- <sup>102</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>103</sup> Interview with Sister Curtis on 12 April 2012

## 6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

### 6.1 Print sources

- BEAL, Timothy K. *Religion in America: a very short introduction*.  
3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Oxford University Press, c2008, 128 s.  
ISBN 978-0-19-532107-4.
- BOWKER, John (ed.). *The Oxford dictionary of world religions*.  
1<sup>st</sup> paperback ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, 1111 p.  
ISBN 01-986-6242-4.
- NEUSNER. *World religions in America*.  
3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, c2003.  
ISBN 978-0-6642-2475-2.
- PARTRIDGE, Christopher H. (ed.). *Encyklopedie nových náboženství: nová náboženská hnutí, sekty a alternativní spirituality*.  
Transl. by Vojtíšek, Zdeněk et al. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Praha:  
Euromedia Group - Knižní klub, 2006, 448 p. ISBN 80-242-1605-1.
- The Book of Mormon: an account written by the hand of Mormon upon plates taken from the plates of Nephi*. Transl. by Smith, Josef jun.  
Salt Lake City, Utah: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,  
c1981, 779 p. ISBN 15-929-7500-3.
- VOJTÍŠEK, Zdeněk. *Encyklopedie náboženských směrů a hnutí v České republice: náboženství, církve, sekty, duchovní společenství*.  
1<sup>st</sup> ed. Praha: Portál, 2004, 462 p. ISBN 80-717-8798-1.
- VOJTÍŠEK, Zdeněk. *Netradiční náboženství u nás*.  
1<sup>st</sup> ed. Praha: Dingir, 1998, 137 p. ISBN 80-902-5280-X.
- VOJTÍŠEK, Zdeněk. *Nová náboženská hnutí a jak jim porozumět*.  
1<sup>st</sup> ed. Praha: Beta Books, 2007, 210 p. ISBN 978-808-6851-648.

## 6.2 Internet sources

ADAMS, Brooke *Report: FLDS teen whose call sparked Texas raid said she feared for her life from physically abusive husband* [online], 2008,

Available from:

<http://archive.sltrib.com/article.php?id=8853168&itype=NGPSID>

[Retrieved 17 April 2012]

*American Prophet – Biography* [online], Available from:

<http://www.pbs.org/americanprophet/joseph-smith.html>

[Retrieved 20 March 2012]

ANDERSON, Scott *The Polygamists* [online], 2010. Available from:

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2010/02/polygamists/anderson-text/1> [Retrieved 21 April 2012]

*Bible Dictionary: Urim and Thummim* [online], Available from:

<http://www.lds.org/scriptures/bd/urim-and-thummim?lang=eng>

[Retrieved 22 April 2012]

Cíkev Ježíša Krista Svätých neskorších dní [online] Available from:

<http://www.mormoni.sk/> [Retrieved 14 April 2012]

Církev Ježíše Krista Svatých posledních dnů [online] Available from:

<http://www.cirkev-jezise-krista.cz/> [Retrieved 14 April 2012]

*Country information: Czech Republic* [online], 2010. Available from:

<http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/58558/Country-information-Czech-Republic.html> [Retrieved 23 April 2012]

DUBSKÝ, Kamil. *Východočeští mormoni: S agresivními a sexistickými odpadlíky z Texasu nemáme nic společného* [online], 2008.

Available from:

[http://jicinsky.denik.cz/zpravy\\_region/jicin\\_mormonicirkev20080412.html](http://jicinsky.denik.cz/zpravy_region/jicin_mormonicirkev20080412.html) [Retrieved 23 April 2012]

*Elder paved way for Czech mission in 1929* [online], 1991. Available from:

<http://www.ldschurchnews.com/articles/20736/Elder-paved-way-for-Czech-mission-in-1929.html> [Retrieved 10 April 2012]

EMBRY, J. L. *Polygamy* [online], Available from:

<http://www.media.utah.edu/UHE/p/POLYGAMY.html>

[Retrieved 7 April 2012]

- Encyclopedia – Britannica online Encyclopedia* [online]. Available from:  
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/194799/Eucharist>  
 [Retrieved 4 April 2012]
- Facts and Statistics* [online], 2011. Available from:  
<http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/> [Retrieved 14 April 2012]
- FLDS are Not Mormons* [online] Available from: <http://fldsmormons.com/>  
 [Retrieved 8 April 2012]
- Fundamentalists, Blacks and the Priesthood* [online] Available from:  
<http://www.mormonfundamentalism.com/Blacks.html>  
 [Retrieved 25 March 2012]
- God's Commandments* [online], Available from:  
<http://mormon.org/commandments/> [Retrieved 6 April 2012]
- Growth of the Church* [online]. Available from:  
<http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/background-information/growth-of-the-church> [Retrieved 18 April 2012]
- Seidl, Felix *Sharing My Testimony through Music* [online]. Available from:  
<http://www.lds.org/liahona/2011/08/did-he-really-ask-me-that/sharing-my-testimony-through-music?lang=eng&query=czech>  
 [Retrieved 21 April 2012]
- HARTLEY, William. *A Missionary's Two Months in Jail* [online], 1982.  
 Available from: <http://www.lds.org/> [Retrieved 10 April 2012]
- HAYES, Stephanie *Why do all those polygamist women look exactly alike?* [online], 2008. Available from:  
<http://www.tampabay.com/features/humaninterest/article473439.ece>  
 [Retrieved 21 April 2012]
- Holy Bible*, Mark 16:15 [online]. Available from:  
<http://bibleresources.bible.com/passagesearchresults.php?passage1=Mark+16:15&version=9> [Retrieved 18 April 2012]
- Journal of Discourses* 7:290 – p.291 Brigham Young [online]. Available from:  
<http://www.journalofdiscourses.org/> [Retrieved 8 April 2012]
- JULIUS, C. Clark. *Joseph Smith* [online], 1987. Available from:  
<http://www.lds-mormon.com/jsmith.shtml>  
 [Retrieved 22 March 2012]

Bartůňková, Tereza. *Lidé se méně hlásí k náboženství i národnosti, vyplývá ze sčítání lidu* [online], 2011. Available from:

[http://www.rozhlas.cz/zpravy/spolecnost/\\_zprava/lide-se-mene-hlasi-k-nabozenstvi-i-narodnosti-vyplyva-ze-scitani-lidu--990446](http://www.rozhlas.cz/zpravy/spolecnost/_zprava/lide-se-mene-hlasi-k-nabozenstvi-i-narodnosti-vyplyva-ze-scitani-lidu--990446)  
[Retrieved 24 April 2012]

MCKEEVER, Bill. *Blood Atonement - If It Was Never Taught, Why Do So Many Mormons Believe It?* [online] Available from:

<http://www.mrm.org/blood-atonement> [Retrieved 22 March 2012]

MCOMBER, Ruth and SOUTH NIENDORF, Ann *Czechoslovakia was her mission* [online], 1995. Available from: <http://www.lds.org/>  
[Retrieved 10 April 2012]

*Missions – Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ* [online]. Available from:

<http://www.ldschurchnews.com/missions/> [Retrieved 18 April 2012]

*New form the National Council of Churches* [online]. Available from:

<http://www.nccusa.org/news/110210yearbook2011.html>

[Retrieved 19 March 2012]

*Polygamy: Latter-day Saints and the Practice of Plural Marriage* [online]

Available from: <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/polygamy-latter-day-saints-and-the-practice-of-plural-marriage>

[Retrieved 7 April 2012]

PORTER, David. *Angel Moroni Statues Atop Mormon Temples Are More Than Decoration* [online], 2011. Available from:

<http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/angel-moroni-statues-atop-mormon-temples-are-more-than-decoration>

[Retrieved 21 April 2012]

*Preach My Gospel* [online]. Available from:

<http://www.lds.org/library/display/0,4945,8057-1-4424-1,00.html>

[Retrieved 24 April 2012]

*Regrets of going on a mission* [online], Available from:

<http://www.exmormon.org/mormon/mormon085.htm>

[Retrieved 18 April 2012]

Roberts B.H. (ed.). *History of the Church* [online], Available from:

[http://www.boap.org/LDS/History/History\\_of\\_the\\_Church/](http://www.boap.org/LDS/History/History_of_the_Church/)

[Retrieved 22 March 2012]



*Rozita Swinton's Bad Call* [online], 2008. Available from:

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2008/07/26/rozita-swinton-s-bad-call.html> [Retrieved 17 April 2012]

SMITH, Josef. *Doctrine and Covenants* [online], 1835. Available from:

<http://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament?lang=eng>  
[Retrieved 21 March 2012]

SMITH, Josef. *Pearl of Great Price* [online], Available from:

<http://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp?lang=eng>  
[Retrieved 21 March 2012]

*Style Guide - The Name of the Church* [online], Available from:

<http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/style-guide>  
[Retrieved 22 March 2012]

*Tapestry of God's Hand* [online]. Available from:

<http://www.lds.org/pages/the-tapestry-of-gods-hand?lang=eng&query=czech/> [Retrieved 23 April 2012]

*Trends continue in church membership growth or decline, reports 2011 Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches* [online],

2011. Available from:  
<http://www.nccusa.org/news/110210yearbook2011.html>  
[Retrieved 19 March 2012]

*Výpis z Rejstříku registrovaných církví a náboženských společností*

[http://www3.mkcr.cz/cns\\_internet/](http://www3.mkcr.cz/cns_internet/) [Retrieved 19 April 2012]

WEST, Brian *Affidavit: FLDS raid spurred by girl's reports of physical, sexual abuse* [online], 2008. Available from:

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/695268544/Affidavit-FLDS-raid-spurred-by-girls-reports-of-physical-sexual-abuse.html?pg=1>  
[Retrieved 7 April 2012]

*What is the MTC?* [online]. Available from:

[http://www.mission.net/en/main\\_mtcfaq.html](http://www.mission.net/en/main_mtcfaq.html)  
[Retrieved 18 April 2012]

*What Missionaries Do* [online]. Available from:

<http://mormon.org/missionary-work/> [Retrieved 18 April 2012]

### **6.3 Personal interviews**

Bean, Emily. Personal interviews. Prague, 30 March, 4 and 12 April 2012

Curtis, Cynthia. Personal interviews. Prague, 30 March, 4 and 12 April 2012

Havlíčková, Eva. Email interview. Prague, 21 April 2012

Sears, Jessica. Personal interviews. Prague, 4 and 12 April 2012

## **7 ABSTRACT**

The Bachelor's Thesis deals with Mormon religious movement and primarily its most important denomination the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Its main characteristics are analyzed both on the basis of related literature and interviews with members of the Church. Due attention is paid to Czech mission and missionaries.

## **8 RÉSUMÉ**

Tato Bakalářská práce se zabývá mormonským náboženským hnutím a zejména jeho nejvýznamnější denominací, Církví Ježíše Krista Svatých posledních dnů. Její hlavní rysy jsou zkoumány jak na základě příslušné odborné literatury, tak interview s členy církve. Zvláštní pozornost je věnovaná české misii a misionářům.

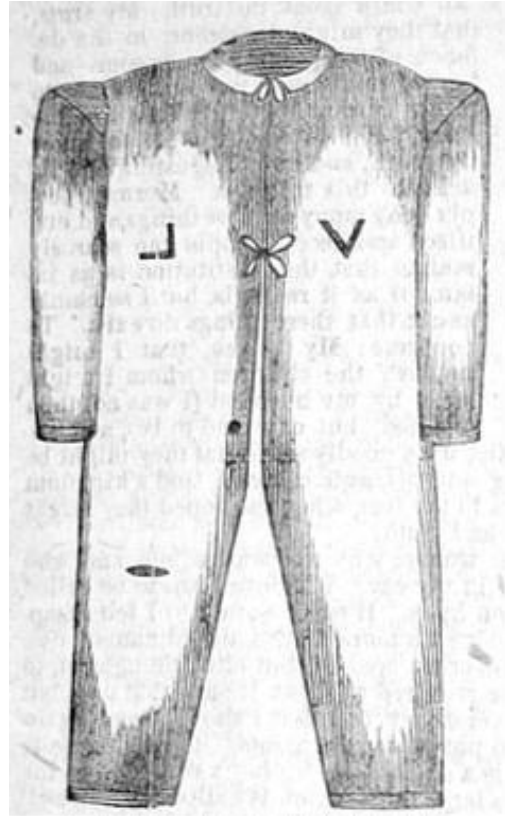
## 9 APPENDICES

### 9.1 Appendix I

Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



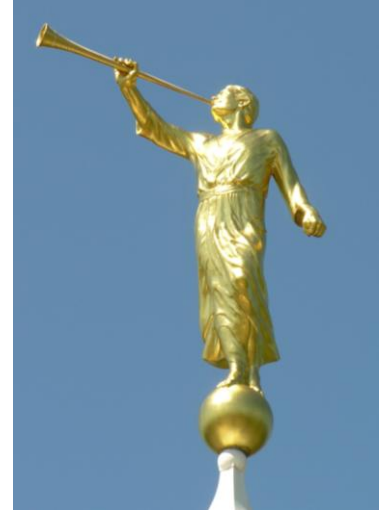
Picture 4



Picture 5



Picture 6



Picture 7



Picture 8



## 9.2 Appendix II

### INTERVIEW WITH SISTER BEAN, SISTER CURTIS AND SISTER SEARS

ON 4 APRIL 2012

#### **When you walk in the street how do you start the conversation?**

**Sister Bean:** Usually I start by saying “Excuse me, I am here as a missionary. And I am talking to people about something what is really important to our message – restoration of the gospel. That might be the Book of Mormon or that might be a family or that might be the God, Jesus Christ, things like that. Then I usually asked them a question. Something that allows them to express what is important for them about listening and talking about.

**Have it ever happen to you that someone was angry with you or did not want to speak with you at all? I ask about it because our society is quite secular and Prague is really large city and therefore people might be busy and unwilling to even stop for a while.**

**Sister Bean:** Most people are very nice about it. Even if they are not interested, they are still very kind. You meet someone who maybe had a bad day and is not quite gentile or so nice but they say just no.

**I saw here the Book of Mormon translated in many different languages. How often do you meet a foreigner? Are they more willing to speak with you?**

**Sister Bean:** We meet foreigners often, I would say. But I cannot tell for sure. Sometimes you feel like you are teaching a lot of foreigners and sometimes not. It depends.

**Did you yourselves decided to serve the mission abroad or it was not your decisions?**

**Sister Bean:** It is not our decision. No. We receive information about ourselves. We do not choose where we serve.

**Have you ever heard of the Czech Republic before you got to know that you were going to serve a mission in the Czech Republic?**

**Sister Bean:** I heard of it. Yes. I study music and I am familiar with Dvořák and Smetana. So I knew the Czech Republic for that. Also I have been interested in teaching English as second language abroad and there is a famous program for that in Prague.

**Sister Curtis:** I lived here for a year and I really loved living in the Czech Republic and really loved the Czech people.

**Did you live in Prague?**

**Sister Curtis:** In Olomouc. After my year I thought I would love to come back teach the gospel in Czech Republic. But even then I knew that it was not necessarily going to be my decision but I would have to fill in the application and then plead the Lord help to choose where we are going to serve. So we will accept wherever we will be called. Did you thing? Were we called?

**Sister Sears:** I knew a little about the Czech Republic and Czechoslovakia just from history classes. It was not kind of new but I still wasn't sure where it's on map. But I knew only little that it existed. And my mum has been to Prague. [...]

**So is this a coincidence that you are here for a mission?**

**Sister Curtis:** Maybe my prayers were answered.

**That's amazing! And what were you doing in Olomouc?**

**Sister Curtis:** I was there with the US state department programme teacher exchange.

**So you're a teacher.**

**Sister Curtis:** From United States I came to teach in Olomouc and the teacher from Olomouc went to my school in Virginia.

**And did you come with your husband?**

**Sister Curtis:** That time I was not married.

**To serve a mission was your idea?**

**Sister Curtis:** My husband and I, we both wanted to serve a mission we were excited about chance to go and teach the gospel. I have been praying that I could return to the Czech Republic. But both of us decided that when we opened the letter that said where we have been recalled we will go any place – South Pacific, Central America, Chicago, Illinois in the United States. But it is the Czech Republic.

**In which cities have been during your mission? Could you describe the system how you change places of operation?**

**Sister Bean:** Every two months we have a possibility of transferring to different city. It is the Lord who decides where we serve. The leader of the missionaries – we call him the President – President Irwin in this mission - he prays and receives the guidelines where missionaries should be serving, which city they should be in. Sometime that means that we stay in the same city for more than two month sometimes that means that we move. Every two month we have something we call transfers. Missionaries receive a phone call whether they are going to move or whether they are going to stay in that city. I have been serving a mission for 8 months and my first two months were in Ostrava and after that two months I have transferred to Prague and I have been in Prague ever since.

**Sister Sears:** I got here in the Czech Republic on Tuesday [previous day].

**Oh, I thought that you were only transferred from different city.**

**Sister Sears:** No I got to the Czech Republic on Tuesday. And before that they have a training centre so that we can learn more about the Gospel, we know better how to help people what matters to them, we know first of all what matters to us and so we can help people understand what is important in their life.

**For how long did you attend a language class?**

**Sister Sears:** The language class as a part of training centre is for about 9 weeks.

**How many students are there?**

**Sister Sears:** It depends on how many people are needed here in the Czech Republic. On average there are more than six. And you have about three teachers who are teaching in English and in Czech.

**And the teachers are which nationality?**

**Sister Sears:** They are returned missionaries.

**Sister Curtis:** They are very fluent.

**Sister Bean:** They choose teachers who were good missionaries.



**And do you attend any course here in the Czech Republic?**

**Sister Bean:** No, it's just before the leave and after you are in the country you learn the language primarily from speaking to people, from your companion who has been here longer than you have and every week we meet together as a group of missionaries from the city and learn language together.

**It is only one centre? Where it is?**

**Sister Bean:** The biggest one is in Provo, Utah. But there are several.

**Sister Curtis:** Sydney? Maybe.

**Sister Sears:** London, Spain, South Africa, there are many.

**So you may attend the training center in South Africa and then go for a mission in Philippines?**

**Sister Sears:** You go to South Africa when you're probably going on to serve in Africa. And the Spanish one, they will probably go somewhere in Latin America. [...]

**Sister Curtis:** A young Czech woman just left from Prague to the same training centre where Sister Sears was in order to improve her English because she is going on the mission in London. And when my husband and I, we were in the missionary training centre we met a young Czech boy from Brno. He was at the training centre and he was going to Scotland. Anyway they can be sent to United States.

**Did you have difficulties with the language when you were in Ostrava?**

**Sister Bean:** I think either way I would depend to talk myself in the language because when they come they really do not speak Czech at all. I only noticed that people here spoke more slowly than people in Ostrava. Everyone in Ostrava speak really fast. They do not pay attention that we are not Czech. But I am not the best missionary to ask because since having learnt Czech I have only been in Prague.

**And you have been in Olomouc, but you did not speak Czech there that time. That's right?**

**Sister Curtis:** Yes, that's right. I was studying but only a little.

**What did surprise you in the Czech Republic? Or what have you heard about it?**

**Sister Bean:** I heard that on Christmas time people kept fish in their bath. And I was like "What?!" and now I understand. But I have already been this summer in Germany and I knew that it would not be much different in many ways. So when I came I was not shocked by the shops or trams. I remember I was really happy about all of the different kinds of juice you can buy – strawberry, pineapple, whatever. Is there something what has surprised you during the 24 hours?

**Sister Sears:** Nothing has really surprised me yet. I don't know. I have lived in Chili for about a month and it's cool how similar it is to Latin America. I don't know. Maybe toilets are different.

**INTERVIEW WITH SISTER BEAN, SISTER CURTIS AND SISTER SEARS  
ON 12 APRIL 2012**

**Could you write down your names? I mean also your first names.**

**Sister Bean:** We usually as missionaries, we only use last names, like "Sister Bean".

**I know I spoke about it with Eva, that it brings more respect address missionaries only with surnames, but it would more formal more professional to mention in my thesis your whole names.**

**Sister Curtis:** I think it is ok for purposes of your thesis. But we use only surnames because we are representatives of Jesus Christ. And when they leave their mission and they go back to their homes [...] and they will be Anna or Joan or something, but here... and even when they talk to the elders they don't talk by the person's name. Like, Elder Nickel, I don't even know his first name. So we will call you.. What is your last name?

**Součková**

**Sister Curtis:** Sister Součková

**I wanted to ask you if you grew up in a Mormon family or you have become a member later on.**

**Sister Bean:** I grew up in a Mormon family.

**Sister Curtis:** Me to.

**Sister Sears:** And I, I also.

**Sister Curtis:** I should say that my husband didn't. He joined the Church when he was 27.

**Are all members of your family also members of the Church?**

**Sister Bean:** My parents are, but I have brother who is not.

**Sister Sears:** My mum and my grandparents are. But my dad is not member.

**Why? If I can ask you.**

**Sister Sears:** I don't know. I grew up with my grandparents most of the time. I don't know.

**Is he member of any other church?**

**Sister Sears:** No he does not attend any other church.

**When we speak about family, how many siblings do you have?**

**Sister Bean:** I have one brother.

**Sister Sears:** I have older brother and younger sister.

**Sister Curtis:** This is my second marriage. I have two sons and he has 5 children so together we have 7 children.

**So you are divorced?**

**Sister Curtis:** I was.

**Has it caused problems in your Church?**

**Sister Curtis:** Well, we tried very very hard to avoid it.

**I read about some recommendation which food you should eat. I mean that you usually very healthy.**

**Sister Sears:** Ah, the word of wisdom?

**Maybe, I thought that the word of wisdom is rather what you shouldn't eat and drink.**

**Sister Curtis:** Well this is the word of wisdom. This law of health that we call the word of wisdom is given to us by a prophet. So we take it as God's commend for us. It doesn't just say what not to eat or drink. This is God's good advice. And we will take a look at that. [...] (missionaries leave the room and look for the collection of Mormon holy books) And when the law was given back in 1840s, 1830s maybe doctors did not know things that we now know about health.

**In which book the word of wisdom is written?**

**Sister Bean:** Doctrines and Covenants

**Sister Sears:** First we want to talk about the things you know that you don't do what you don't consume. In verse ten and after that they talk a bit more about what is good for your body.

**Sister Curtis:** And the promises.

**Sister Sears:** Yes, list of the thing that you can and that you should do and it all about things like self control. [...]

**Sister Curtis:** Maybe she should read that loud and than we could speak about it more later on.

(I read the word of wisdom)

**Sister Sears:** The last part is talking about blessing you will get when you do these things. What do you understand about the blessing? Like sometimes when I read it I don't really understand what it is talking about. What do you understand about it?

**Sister Curtis:** What are the good that will you happen if you follow this instruction? What are the promises?

**You will be healthy, have enough energy and simply live a long time.**

**Sister Curtis:** Does it say something about wisdom? Does it say something not only about body, but also the mind? "And treasures of knowledge."

**Sister Sears:** In verse 21 I did not always understand what they talked about the destroying angel. But I was talking to another Elder one time and he told [...] and like when you don't drink alcohol you are protected from behaving like .. I mean you can have control of yourself and when we are living by the God's law he can provide me protection. That's what I really love about this, the blessing because it protects me from doing things that I don't want to do.

**Sister Curtis:** And addictions to the sugar, to overeating [...]

**What was your motivation for the mission?**

**Sister Sears:** [...] I wanted to be a better person. And to be a better person that means to follow the Christ. As I thought about it, the best way how to become more Christlike is to be a missionary to help people to find Chris and spend my time thinking of other instead of thinking of myself.

**Sister Bean:** I was almost finished with my college, with my university studies and I didn't know what to do next and so I prayed because I didn't know and I asked God what he wanted me to do. I wasn't considering a mission. I was considering several

other things. But I had a feeling that I should go serve a mission. But it does not necessary means that he wants me to do. I wanted to because I knew that it is a good thing but I also had some other important things in my life. But I talked about it with my family and talked about it with my friends and that feeling was coming to me that the mission the thing that God wanted me to do. I noticed that and I decided to go with that feeling. Because I was recommended that feeling is that God is trying to tell me something. And so I decided that I would follow that and I serve a mission. And now I'm absolutely sure that this was what I was supposed to do but it took face to me to follow that at the time. Now I can say that I am very glad to serve a mission.

**Sister Curtis:** Back in 2002, I was here teaching in Olomouc and I really loved the language and I was really fascinated by Czech history because one of the first men who recognized that the Christ Church was not led right was Jan Hus. I thought he was spurred by God to seek Christ true teaching. And I thought that he tried to spread real Christianity to Slavic people. I felt very much that I would love to come back but I knew that I would not be able to. I was teaching from time to time. I was not married that time. Unmarried older women can serve a mission but they might be limited in things that they can do. [...] and then suddenly I have met this man who had the same problem and he wanted to go on a mission. Single older men cannot go on a mission. Maybe he can help with genealogy and family history search but not that kind of mission. And we knew that it was right about to get together. We celebrated our first wedding anniversary last September here in the Czech Republic. I wanted to come to Czech Republic but we both knew that Heavenly Father will send you where he wants you to be. My husband wanted to go to South Pacific - or I don't know - any other tropical place. But I was praying for Czech Republic but I was also praying for whatever Heavenly Father wants. When we got the letter and opened it up, it said Czech Republic. I knew that it was the answer for my prayers.

#### **Could you tell me about the rules of contact with your family?**

**Sister Bean:** We send email to our families once a week. On one day we have to prepare for that. We call that preparation day. We have an hour when we read emails that our families have sent and we write emails to them. We can also send letters on that day. And we can get letters in any time. We talk on a phone to our families twice a year for about forty minutes.

#### **Do you miss them? You are used to spend a lot of time with your family, aren't you?**

**Sister Sears:** I didn't live at home for a long time. So I don't really miss my family. I'm thinking about it sometimes but I am here now and there many more important thing that I need to do so I think about this rather than whether I miss my family or not.

I also had not been at home for five years before I came on the mission. I studied in Utah. And my family is in New York.

#### **How often did you visit your family?**

**Sister Bean:** I visited them like once a year or twice a year, usually during the summer and for Christmas. [...] I see it as a sacrifice if I can bring this message to someone else's family then my family and I, we both feel that it is a good sacrifice It is hard for us to be apart but we can share that with somebody else, someone else's family because that really blesses us a family - our relationship to each other. That's how it is. We miss each other but we understand that. My father also served a mission.

**Sister Curtis:** The rules are a bit different for senior couples. We can be in contact with our families a little bit more – especially with our grandchildren. We might talk to somebody on a phone once a week and we can send cards.

## **In Czech?**

**Sister Curtis:** Yes and I write there like “This is for your birthday. This is not a funeral card.” [...] My mother is 91, she turned 91 yesterday and she knew that I would be gone for two years and maybe she might die before I come back. I talked to her on a phone and her health was good. But my husband and I receive a blessing that following the God our families will be blessed. Even if it means life difficulties for a family we both see that the blessing is coming. Our children understand that we want to give two years of our lives to serve a mission. We spend our own money to pay. But I really do miss my family, my children. But I think that it is part of sacrifice and it is ok.

## **I spoke with one missionary and he told me that the ordinance for the priesthood has changed his life a lot. Have any of your church ordinances changed your life?**

**Sister Curtis:** First of all, the important ordinance that we experienced is baptism. Because we make a choice to be part of Christ kingdom. It is stepping on his path and walking through his gate. It is performed by those who have the authority from God to perform this ceremony. [...] That is really important – making a decision - baptism. That is our first ordinance in the Church. Then as we progress and we understand things better and we want to keep the promises we made during the baptism we have the blessing – the opportunity making an additional covenant - promises - and that is called endowment. That takes place in a temple. [...] Endowment is a very sacred ordinance when we make additional promises to obey the gospel and to make sacrifices. But it is very secret so we don't talk about it a lot outside of the temple. It is just additional covenant - a two way promise. We make promise and God makes promise to us. We each receive our endowment. To receive an endowment is to receive an additional promise and blessing from God. Those are two most necessary ordinances. But you mentioned that young man getting priesthood. For man, the additional experience is to receive the priesthood from God by the laying on of hands by someone who has the authority. That is a blessing that all men may receive. The priesthood is actually a call to serve in the name of Jesus Christ. The person who has the priesthood gets the blessing for himself but also he got authority to bless others and that is a life changing ordinance for young men because he has to be serious about to keep the promises he made.

## **I thought that the laying on of hands is performed during the anointing?**

**Sister Curtis:** Once the priesthood is given a man receives an authority to confer the priesthood on another man by the laying on of hands. The laying on of hands also takes place when a person receives a blessing of healing when he is sick. One who has the priesthood can lay their hand on the person's head and pray. It is an inspiration from God what they should say to help that person. I remember the beginning of the school year, we would always have a guest - a priest to bless my children to help them be successful at school and to bless me as I got ready for another school year of teaching. Maybe you can say your experiences with priest authority who gave you a blessing.

**Sister Bean:** Sometimes we receive blessings as direction during a particularly difficult time when you need to make an important decision. In the name of God they give you a specific answer or advice or promise. It helps you to understand. [...] Also when we are sick we receive an extra blessing and we receive recovering or healing.

**Sister Curtis:** When they were called as missionaries, also when I was called as a missionary, we were “set apart” - that is the terminology. We each received a blessing, specific blessing as we were called to be missionaries of Jesus Christ. The person giving the blessing received inspiration to give us guidance and promise of specific blessing. Sometimes the things that are said during the blessing are kind of a surprise.

Even for the person who is saying that. "Ok, I said that. I don't know why I said that. But I know I should say that. And those blessings are very special.

**And maybe the last question. I see that you always wear skirts. Why? Is it also written in some doctrine?**

**Sister Sears:** No. It's just as representative of Jesus Christ when we are missionaries. Like the Elders, they always have a suit on. Sisters always have a skirt on and a blouse so that might be easily identified as representatives of Jesus Christ.

**Sister Curtis:** It's the formal attire which helps to remind us a serious nature of what we're doing. [...] But also the dignity of representing Christ and you know, we want to be feminine. Don't dress like men because we are women. And we are representing the Church. I mean we may be the only member of the Church you get to know very well and you have an image in your mind and so we do represent the entire Church of Jesus Christ. It's also a responsibility. On P-days, my husband and I, on our day for planning, cleaning the house and shopping I wear pants - as we go for shopping or hiking or the day when they play with Elder. They play Frisbee, soccer or lacrosse. Sisters are allowed to wear pants.

**Sister Sears:** I would definitely wear pants while doing sport.

**Sister Bean:** When I go home and I'm not a missionary. I would wear something just like you. This is a missionary thing. It is not something that all member of the Church have to do.

**And how often do you organise thing that you mentioned – soccer, Frisbee etc.?**

**Sister Bean:** It depends on area. So here in Prague we usually have sport day every Saturday. Well when the weather is acceptable. So we didn't do it during the winter. We started during the spring. It's every Saturday at four and anyone is invited to come.

**Sister Curtis:** Members, non-members, missionaries, people who walk by.

**Sister Bean:** Yes, everyone. So that's one thing. And they the senior couple Curtis they are in charge of lots of activities for young adults which happen weekly.

**Sister Curtis:** Monday night we all get together for a dinner. During the week there are scripture classes. Friday night is just an activity night. People just come and hang out. We play games. [...]

**What is exactly the name of organisation for young adults you mentioned?**

**Sister Curtis:** Center for young adults. [...] And you find these throughout Europe. The Church established throughout Europe for young people from 18 to 30 years old – young, professionals, students, single adults etc. [...]

**Is it also in Pilsen?**

**Sister Curtis:** Pilsen does not have a lot of young single adults who are members of the Church. They come to our activity and they will come today.

## **INTERVIEW WITH EVA HAVLÍČKOVÁ ON 21 APRIL 2012**

### **How did you get to know about Mormons?**

I was working in the USA during this summer and I was meeting different kinds of families every day. One day I met this family, the Lykins family. They were so special to me. I click with them immediately. We had so much in common and we didn't even know each other that well. I told them that I went to church and that I was protestant and they started to teach me something about their own believe. First, I didn't want to hear about it. I didn't want to believe. But they took me to the church and to some youth group and they gave me their Book of Mormon. It all sounded pretty strange to me but the people and the whole family just looked and acted like angels. They were so humble and precious. I was thinking, why these people would want me to do something bad or something what isn't good. So I started to read and learn more from them. It kind of started to click but still it wasn't easy for me to believe that The Book of Mormon was true. So I wasn't sure if I wanted to be a Mormon but I knew that I wanted to be like these people. You could feel such a big Spirit from their hearts and peace and humbleness and love and hospitality all kinds of these nice characteristics. So I read and I prayed. But I had left the USA and go home. But we stayed in touch and they advised to find the church in Prague and find some missionaries which can help me with my studies. So, I did that. And it all started to click. I started to follow all the commitments and I started feel the Spirit much more. It is like you are listening a voice which is helping you what to do and if you listened everything kinds of works out. I know, that sounds like a fairy tale. I don't know how to describe it. But you just have to try and try and then you just feel it and you understand everything. You feel God in anything and everywhere. It has completely changed my lifestyle and I felt so right about it. I got baptized and I got on a Gods way. I got a great key from the best doors ever. This way is sometimes not the easiest one but it is the nicest one and it is the right one. And this way and journey is giving me so much blessing every single day.

### **Why you were interested in religion? Were you member of another church before?**

Yes, I was a member of protestant believe since I was little. And I was very active member. When I was little I loved to hang out in the church. But I am not from Prague. I use to live in different city and I moved to Prague because of my college. And my life change very much. I didn't find any church here in Prague and I didn't pray that much and I wasn't feeling the Spirit that much because I stopped focusing on God. But during summer I found people who believed in God so much and who talked about him so much and who loved him so much. And I felt that I missed that. I felt like God was doing so much for me and I didn't that much for him. It made me realize that I had to do something about it. And this thinking brought me to this church.

### **Why did you choose this Church to join?**

I had big problem with the Mormon Church at first. I wasn't sure if this church is the right church but my Mormon family told me that they would like me to join the church because this church can give me so much more. I didn't know what they meant by this. But I felt that I matter to these people and that they want the best for me. So I just focused on this church and I felt good about it. I never felt so much joy and peace in my soul. I never felt so well and I never felt so close to God. And that made me realize that this church and the book of Mormon was true. Because I felt that I was the child of our God. I never felt so close to him and when I was praying I felt like I was talking to him and He was talking to me. It was great to feel that you asked him something and he answered. It felt so right and nice so it made me not to have any doubts about it.

**Where did your baptism take place? (If you can provide this kind of information.)**

It was in the Prague chapel. It was in the Prague's church. There is a special room for it.

**What have this decision changed in your life?**

To live according to God and Jesus Christ brought big safety and sureness to your life. You know that he is not going to put you into situation you cannot handle. That doesn't mean that he will provide us an easy life. Not at all. He is going to put us to the situations which are very hard for us but not to the situations we cannot handle. Hard situations has to come because that's sometimes a way how to make a new experiences and how to get stronger. We can learn so much from them usually. He is also giving us answers which we need to have answered and so on. God has a great plan for us. But we have to live according to him. That's what is required. Which means, that I have to be quite different than most of people in Czech. Just not drinking is already quite different and strange for most people. And because of that you get into situations which are not easy to deal with. And I am not even talking about the sexual life. And it is not easy but to me he has amazing plan. And I believe in it. I try to give every day to God which means that I want God to be every day proud of me. And I know that I struggle with it sometimes but what really matters is that I always do my best and don't worry about the rest. That's the most important and I know from my own experience that it works.

**Don't you mind the prohibitions? How did you get used to it?**

Well, it is not easy. Especially, when I use to be a person who consumed alcohol. But that's what God wants from me. He is my father and he knows what is the best for me. It is like with our own parents. I feel like that with my own parents. Sometimes, I don't understand why they are asking me to do this or why they are not allowing me to do something. I don't know. But I trust them and I believe in them.

**Did you grow up in religion family? What was the reaction of your parents when you joined the Church? Are they also members?**

I did grow up in religious family. My whole family is religious. So I am use to it that I am in church all the time. And also talking about God in my family is very normal and natural to us. We know that he is our Father and Savior.

**Would you like to serve the mission?**

Sure I would love to. It is one of the greatest thing what can somebody do. To help people to find the way to God!



### 9.3 Sources

Picture 1 – Joseph Smith's First Vision

<http://www.lds.org/library/display/0,4945,104-1-3-4,00.html>

Picture 2 - Temple garment circa 1879

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple\\_garment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_garment)

Picture 3 - Post- 1979 two-piece temple garments

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple\\_garment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temple_garment)

Picture 4 – FLDS sisters

<http://tv.yahoo.com/tracey-ullman-39-s-state-of-the-union/show/41584/photos/1>

Picture 5 – Mormon temple in Freiburg

<http://mormonmatters.org/2008/10/17/article-of-faith-12-obey-the-government-always/>

Picture 6 – Angel Moroni statue on the top of the Birmingham, Alabama

<http://mormontemples.net/qa/what-is-the-golden-statue-on-the-top-of-most-temples>

Picture 7 – The meeting house in Prague

Author's own source0F02AA3103

Picture 8 – The Second Coming of Jesus Christ

<http://jesus.christ.org/3938/second-coming-jesus-christ>