



***Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword."
(Matthew 26:52)***

**HOME MINISTRY
OCTOBER 2024
DEAR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS
OF THE REACH BEYOND MINIS-
TRY TO THE PEOPLES OF
CZECHIA AND SLOVAKIA**

SUMMER IS OVER

Approaching colorful fall have seen a series of turbulent events in much of the world. War and terrorism have already claimed tens of thousands of lives, while political tensions between nations are rising. The combination of military and natural disasters has had a devastating impact on the lives of millions of people, bringing suffering and uncertainty to everyday life. Fires, floods, tornadoes and hurricanes

that devastated entire communities in many places. In some areas of our country, buildings and homes near streams and rivers had to be demolished unless they were directly swept away by the raging currents. Transportation infrastructure has been destroyed in many places, railroads have been undermined, water treatment plants have been flooded, farmland has been washed away from fields, and fall crops have been partially destroyed. Mud was left in these places. One of our close Christian friends, Peter, helped clean up the mud on Friday, had breakfast with his family on Saturday morning, went to rest for a while, and when he did not return for a while, his wife found him already dead. He was 61 years old. He was accompanied on his final journey by his immediate family, five children, a large number of friends, and brothers and sisters in Christ from Bohemia, Moravia, and Slovakia.

Prague was much better prepared this time. The dams were breached in time, and flood walls were installed in advance. It seems that the innovators' interventions in nature during the years of communist construction, the consolidation of private farmland into huge collective farms, the straightening of river courses, the draining of wetlands, the large-scale deforestation, and the planting of monocultures up-

rooted by strong winds, have repeatedly wreaked havoc. The slogan "We will command the wind and rain" was imposed on our generation, and it speaks not only of the ideology of the time, but also of the fruits of human pride that we are reaping today. Just one example of songs during socialism in Czechoslovakia:

*We will light the sun of happiness,
it will shine for everyone, we will
tell the wind, the rain, when to fall
and when to blow. We'll turn the
whole earth into a shower of red
flowers, we can do it, all of us,
with all of us, from east to west!*

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO KLARA

Not yet, but another decade is coming. Years ago we celebrated Klara's 50th birthday together in New York. This time our younger son Vit (Saint Vitus or Guy) flew in, and according to Pavel's plan, on Klara's birthday we all flew to the warmth of the Egyptian-Italian hotel resort on the Mediterranean near Marsa Matrouh for a week.

Two days before the arrival of our son, Klara gave the keys of the apartment to our house painter to paint our interior. It was Klara's secret plan and a surprise for Pavel. This was something we wouldn't normally have the courage to do. The day Klara handed over the keys,

she started to take down everything that was on the walls. In the afternoon we picked up Vit at the airport and together they finished "cleaning the walls of the apartment." The next morning, we flew to Egypt and left everything to its fate.

After less than four hours of flight we were delighted by a beautiful sunny beach with turquoise sea, pleasant temperature, white fine sand, gradual entry into the sea. The stunning perfection was reminiscent of advertisements for a Caribbean paradise, but without the typical Egyptian tourist vibe. All of the resort's services and amenities were aimed at four European nationalities - Italians, Czechs, Slovaks and Poles. In this sense, the Italian chefs were unsurpassed. The variety, quality and choice of food was astounding, the cheeses exquisite and the sweets irresistible.

A LITTLE HISTORY

From 1867 to 1918, the above countries were part of the multinational Austro-Hungarian Empire including Northern Italy. As a result of the surrender at the end of World War I, this largest European empire collapsed. Based on the principles of democratization and supported by the victorious powers, including the USA, new republics were established. Many of them soon collapsed

into civil war. Fringes of extremism, nationalism, the radical left, socialists, communists, and fascists became significant political forces.

World War I (1914-1918) became the bloodiest world conflict to date. It claimed the lives of approximately 9.5 million soldiers and left hundreds of thousands more permanently maimed.

SPECIAL TRIP TO EL ALAMEIN

El Alamein is a city and port on the Mediterranean coast, Marsa Matruh International Airport is 100 miles from Alexandria or three hours by road from Cairo. The two places are connected by one of the oldest railroad lines on the African continent. The line was built in 1854 under the British colonial administration. During the war, the railroad became a strategic route for the movement of troops and supplies between Cairo, Alexandria and the Western Front in North Africa.

El Alamein was and is a strategic location due to its proximity to the Suez Canal. It is therefore attracting new international investment, particularly in industrial parks and oil and gas zones. An Egyptian-Chinese consortium is preparing the first high-speed rail system, a 1,000-kilometer (621 mi) overland alternative to the congested Suez Canal. The first section, 660 km (410 mi)

long with a speed of 250 km/h (155 mph), is scheduled for completion in 2027.

Two major battles on the African continent took place near El Alamein during World War II. In October-November 1942, the Axis powers, Fascist Germany and Italy, and the allies of the British Empire - Great Britain, India, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Libya (Arab forces), France, Greece, with air support from the United States – faced each other.

The decisive battle, commanded by German General Erwin Rommel (nicknamed the "Desert Fox") and the more experienced British General Bernard Montgomery, was to gain/maintain control of the Suez Canal, Middle Eastern territory and strategic oil fields. The British Eighth Army had 195,000 men and 1,029 tanks, and the German-Italian Panzerarmee Afrika had 116,000 men and 547 tanks. In this inhospitable area, known as the Devil's Garden, some 75,000 soldiers died on both sides: 4,000 British, 23,000 Italians, 36,000 Germans, and 12,000 soldiers of unknown nationality. Tens of thousands of soldiers were wounded and many more captured. The British army defeated the German-Italian forces.

After World War II, Egypt, as the country on whose territory these historic battles took place, paid trib-

ute not only to the Egyptian but also to the foreign soldiers who fought and died there. In gratitude and recognition of their sacrifices, these memorials are maintained and preserved by the Egyptian government.

In the War Museum, each of the participating nations has its own room where its history and military activities are presented. Military equipment is displayed around the museum building to illustrate what equipment was used during the battle.

There are three separate military cemeteries and memorials nearby. The largest is the British Cenotaph, which honors fallen British and Allied soldiers and surrounds 11,866 graves of members of the Commonwealth forces. The names of the fallen are inscribed on stone slabs, and in some places two or three soldiers are buried together, as they were found on the battlefield. There are also a number of graves of unknown soldiers.

The Italian memorial is a monumental octagonal building whose arms contain urns with the names of 4,280 fallen. One of the eight corridors contains the remains of hundreds of unknown soldiers.

The German War Memorial is one of several places abroad where German soldiers and prisoners of war who died in various battles around the world are buried. The

memorial is arranged according to the different regions of Germany. Of course, we were interested in the names of the fallen soldiers from the Sudetenland, who, although born and living in the former Czechoslovakia, were forced to enlist in the Wehrmacht. Another remarkable fact was that the losses of the Axis forces (Germany and Italy) amounted to approximately 30,000, including dead, wounded and prisoners. Of these, about 5,000 German soldiers were killed, of whom only 18 were unidentified.

FROM THE PAST TO THE FUTURE OF EL ALAMEIN

We expected to find one of the typical small, dusty towns, but here is something that resembles a utopian, ambitious dream of a "smart city of the future." It is set to become one of Egypt's most important economic and cultural centers, with industrial zones, universities, luxury beach resorts and tourist facilities. By 2030, 3 million people are expected to call the coastal paradise on the north coast of El Alamein home, along 14 km (9 mi) of turquoise sea.

El Alamein may also become the future administrative center of Egypt to relieve overcrowded cities like Cairo and Alexandria. A huge presidential palace has already been

built; extensive construction of luxury modern residential complexes, office buildings, and bold architectural projects is underway. Rows of skyscrapers echo the grandeur and luxury of Dubai's high-rises. The new tourist resorts are connected by modern road networks, with 4 to 6 lane highways running in each direction along the Mediterranean coast. There is a flurry of construction activity in the desert wasteland, but there is also a flurry of construction activity within sight of the Mediterranean coast. If necessary, the highway areas could also serve as landing strips for military aircraft. The current infrastructure is mainly used by tourist buses, buses carrying construction workers, and the delivery and movement of construction materials and machinery.

Given the current political turmoil and economic developments in the Middle East, the question remains whether these ambitious plans will be hindered by the international situation.

PRAYERS AND PRAISES

- Thank God, although the floods have caused considerable damage in Bohemia and Moravia, it is incomparable to this year's fury of the elements in a vast area of Europe, America, Asia...
- The second part of our son's visit was the opposite of the two-day

"stripping" of the walls of our apartment. It took much more time and patience. His dexterity, physical fitness, willingness and perseverance were amazing. Vit brought an oversized piece of luggage with a 1942 family portrait of Pavel's mother, who had been in America since 1972. But he didn't fly home empty-handed, he took back several artifacts from our travels around the world. After he left, Klara was left with six banana boxes full of trinkets and knickknacks.

MINISTRY REPORT

It is interesting that Pavel's book, "My Glory I Will Not Give to Another," appeals almost without reservation to readers who are not versed in theology and Christian issues. Our Jewish neighbor Boris lovingly and gratefully refers to Pavel by the title "Rabbi Pavel." With unprecedented interest and joy, he not only read this book twice, but also studied it thoroughly. He is now studying the New Testament diligently and with enthusiasm. He fully understands the difference between Judaism, the Law of Moses, which condemned unbelievers to death before Christ, and the Law of Christ of the New Covenant, which brings salvation and eternal life. He understands the difference between the annual sacrifices of the high priest to appease

God's wrath against the Old Testament chosen people and the substitutionary death of the Lord Jesus Christ, the mercy seat for the chosen of all nations. He accepts the good news of salvation without reservation. More interestingly, Boris has discussed spiritual matters with only two Pauls in his life. The first was a Jesuit Paul who converted to evangelicalism. The next and most convincing is the Apostle Paul and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount; he accepted Christ as his Savior. The three Pauls completed Boris' journey to salvation.

Another recent reader of Pavel's book, a friend and high school classmate from Ostrava, was particularly impressed by the theological approach. Although he had only previous religious experience from childhood, he came to see us in Prague and we visited our church in Kladno together. Honza is so convinced of the importance of this message that even the sermon on "What is the Church" appealed to him. It was his first experience with believers. We pray that he will also find fellowship in Ostrava, where we have led him. The follow up meeting with him took place in our place.

The final editing of the English translation of Pavel's book continues. The next step is to find a way to publish it, probably through Amazon. If anyone has experience with

this route, please advise, and the rest of you, please pray.

The last thing to mention is Pavel's next writing project, entitled "They Will Reign with Him for a Thousand Years," which itself is a clue as to what the book is about.

We thank God and you for your faithfulness, generosity, and prayers that make possible the fulfillment of our fall years of ministry in writing, publishing, and personal life for the glory of God in a country with a rich Christian past, a deep knowledge of the Scriptures among most of the population, a country where the love of the Scriptures has been extinguished for several centuries.

***Thank you for your prayers
support and participation
in our life and
Czech and Slovak ministries.
In His sovereign grace.***

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