



SEPTEMBER 2015

WEDDING AND SOME TOURISM

Our family reunion in Seattle and Spokane area and the wedding of our daughter-in-law's brother Jonáš (Jonah) was a dream that came true. One by one we linked together and stayed together for ten days. Our New Hampshire family with our four beloved grandkids arrived first. A tour of Boeing in Everett, WA was on the boy's list for a long time. We all enjoyed the plant excursion. We could hardly believe that the fuselage outer "tube" of the Dreamliner is only 1/3 of an inch thick. From there we continued to Vancouver, BC, and further by ferry to Victoria on the Vancouver Island. Our time in Vancouver and Victoria was great time for us girls. What an irony! Parts of the Whistler rain forest in Vancouver was being watered with sprinklers because of drought.

What struck us most? It was the crossing the US Canadian border either direction. There was an hour waiting queue in Blaine, and quite a thorough questioning by immigration officers. Gone are the times when we used to be simply waved without even stopping. This was something we had never experienced while living in America. In those cold war days it never crossed our mind that a time would come when we could freely move without checkpoints almost all over Europe. With the present refugee exodus from all Africa and Middle East that freedom may also cease soon.

What struck us next was that in the Vancouver Outlet Shopping Mall we seemed to be a minority. Most of the shoppers, both locals and tourists, were either Chinese or East Indian. We felt like we were visiting a foreign country.

A week later after having a great time in British Columbia we all returned to the Seattle airport to pick up the groom's mother Mirka who arrived from Prague, and our younger son Vit from Denver. By this time our wedding ensemble consisted of 10 people. Of course the flower girls and groom's best men were the most important ones. The international bonding party before the wedding was forged by last minute yard work. A couple of days before the wedding a big truck dumped an enormous load of mulch. This is one way how communication in another language with each other works best. No time to be shy or reserved.

The day of the wedding rehearsal in National Park was filled with smoke from big fires moving from south to north. From then on we had days of red sun and moon. The rest of days we spent in America and Canada were mostly filled with smoke.

While in the area we made an enjoyable, nostalgic side trip to North Idaho. We visited Coeur d'Alene (for long time the best kept secret), our first home town Osburn, Wallace and Lookout Pass Ski Area on the Montana state line. Those were the places where we started our American dream as a refugee family from communist

Czechoslovakia in 1970. Our big boys with us met with Cathy, their first babysitter. One of the highlights was The Lookout Ski Area where our younger son Vit broke both of his legs when he was 5 years old. We rejoiced that we could be together and show our grandkids where their dad and best uncle started school and grew up a little. We have many great memories of friends who are not living any more, but memories in our hearts are alive. This trip we had a perfect sunny day.

As newlyweds, the bride and groom decided they will not start their life together in America, as is most commonly the practice in “mixed marriages.” They both decided to live in Czech Republic. Ani is linguistically very talented and she is admirably above all very successfully learning that impossible Czech language. Instead of losing one believer in Usti we are gaining one. Praise the Lord. She was first in the Czech Republic in 2010 as part of a Spokane Church team that comes faithfully each summer to run a Summer English Camp. Thus, the marriage is an outcome of the Spokane Church team annual summer ministry. The rest was managed by both of them through Skype. This connection was great for all of us since we already knew a number of Spokane people from English Camps here in Czech Republic.

As a wedding coach—Ani and Jonáš left the wedding place in real big truck driven by Ani’s uncle.

VISITORS

This time we changed our usual roles. Instead of being hosts we became visitors of numerous Czech friends, especially in Canada, from the old times. Most of them we had not seen for almost 40 years. We had all changed, but in spite of that, all the reunions were really nice. Some of the couples are not together anymore, either due to death or divorce. To live without the Lord and fellowship is lacking the anchor. Speaking of anchors, one of our Czech friends is a real, professional, Alaska fisherman, and the other is an accomplished sailor crossing all oceans. The fisherman, his wife, and another lady are the only ones who know our Lord from among our numerous Czech friends who immigrated either to the USA or Canada in our time. The good news is that a few of them could celebrate 50 years together as we did in 2015. It is hard to imagine how marriage without the Lord can survive. We realize how important it is to be in close touch with children, grandchildren and friends. Life is too short and we do not want to miss unique opportunities and special moments. Our time together was really exceptional.

We want to thank everyone for their hospitality and warm reception. Somehow we realized that at this point in life visitors to those who live away from their country of origin are much more appreciated than ever before.

OUR CHURCH PLANTING

As soon as we arrived things started really move. Jarda (Yarda) spent most of the summer working in Prague. Our statement of faith for church planting is ready, legal registration is on the way and his family moved into the apartment which for about 10 years used to be our office. A number of you visited and stayed there. Now it is going to serve ministry again. With the new school year the bible study started.

BACK HOME?

The migration crisis in the Euro Union continues. The German policy to embrace anyone from Syria with open arms was short-sighted. To absorb one million refugees in such a short time is not an easy task, even for a highly organized country like Germany. Three countries are real magnets for refugees – Germany, Sweden and Britain. Other countries are one by one taking measures to have some control over what goes on. Denmark recently cut the social welfare for refugees to half and it dropped to 4th place as a desirable destination. Hungary has built 110 miles of 12 ft. high razor wire fences with neighboring countries. Tens of thousands of refugees are trying to get in to be one step closer to their destination, usually Germany. Daily the news reports about refugees who are rescued from sinking rubber boats and are in desperate situations. Those coming by boat are paying about \$2000 dollars per head to get on the ship. The cost for the land passage is about \$10,000 dollars. It takes them a month and uses the “help” of people smugglers. The pressure on neighboring countries where refugees start their land journey has gotten out of hand. People are trapped, tension is growing, violence sparking and news reports appear similar to a battlefield situation. At this time numerous transit places are under siege while cities in Austria and Germany are full to capacity. No one knows how to handle the situation except to build more fences, stop the trains, restrict air space and check the border road traffic. Lines at the borders are now 20 miles long and it takes hours to cross since border patrol (with the help of police) check all vehicles.

The Schengen territory of the Euro Union used to guarantee free movement of their people, free movement of goods and trade from Baltic countries to Portugal was as smooth as crossing between states in the USA. Now the borders are one by one being closed. A big fat a fence was built, reminding us of the Iron Curtain era with one great exception—Iron Curtain fences kept people inside, these new ones keep people outside.

ALL IS UNDER HIS CONTROL

It looks as if the peaceful, careless, tranquil and prosperous days of Europe will face some big upheavals. The continent will change politically, economically, demographically, and racially. The values related to the Christian heritage will begin slowly but surely disappearing. It is only a matter of time before more unrest and troubles will spark some clashes:

***As the toes were partly iron and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly strong and partly brittle. And just as you saw the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people will be a mixture and will not remain united, any more than iron mixes with clay.
(Daniel 2:42, 43)***

REUNIONS

Klara had two reunions one week apart since she and all her classmates are celebrating their 70th birthdays. Our home room teacher from the 1st grade attended the grade school reunion. He is now 91 years old and remembered Klara's maiden name in spite of the fact that she moved away in 1962. They had not seen each other since about 1958. What a memory. Another teacher, who is now 85, made our time together very special. Both of them remembered the end of the WWII and changes after the

German population had to leave Czech territory. The sad situation is that among all classmates there is not one believer. About 1/3 are already dead. Two of them are severely depressed with suicidal thoughts.

The second reunion was with her high school mates. The spiritual situation among those classmates is not any better. The part of the country where Klara grew up is a spiritual wasteland. The ground is so hard that we do not know where to start.

PRAYER REQUEST

Please pray for the church planting effort in Prague and the hardened hearts of Czech people.

Milan and broadcasting opportunities in Slovakia is entering new avenues in close cooperation with Trans World Radio. There are three FM licenses possibilities in work. We rejoice.

Thank you for standing with us, for your love, prayers, support and concerns.

***Reach Beyond missionaries (formerly HCJB Global)
in Czech Republic and Slovakia
Klara and Pavel Steiger***

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