



JANUARY 2020
DEAR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS OF
THE REACH BEYOND MINISTRY TO THE PEOPLES
OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC AND SLOVAKIA

Our 2019 five-week tour came to an end on December 10. On November 4, we landed in Colorado. We spent a week with our son, and with Klara's brother, met with Reach Beyond supervisor David and some friends, and one supporting church. During those days we enjoyed a number of friends from days long gone by. We lived in Denver for 5 years (1979-84). Our friendships are as cordial as ever. The next flight took us to Oakland, CA. We stopped in San Francisco, Santa Rosa, Madera, and Simi Valley. In the last two places, we have had supporting churches since 1992, wonderful friends and supporters. Altogether, we reconnected with over 20 individuals and mission people of supporting churches.

From California, we continued to Arizona to see friends who took us under their wing when we started to raise our support in 1991. Phoenix area, Tucson, Flagstaff, including the Grand Canyon and Prescott became well-known territory to us. We were overwhelmed by love, hospitality, and like-mindedness. Now retired pastor Randy from Madera sent us a message:

The wonder of God' connecting us over the years cannot be minimized. It was wonderful to see you here in our country/our town/our home!

We also shared with the lovely couple who used to raise five chair-high blond boys; now six brave men—including their dad, not forgetting their most beautiful mom. How wonderful it is to see the baton being passed on.

From Arizona, we crossed New Mexico and entered the big country of Texas. From Tucson to Midland was our longest drive in one day. The weather through Arizona was treacherous. Finally, it cleared in NM. In Midland, we met our close friends we know from Indonesia when Pavel was working as an engineer in Indonesia. In Austin, we met with Georgina and her family. She was the founder of Czech broadcasting in Ecuador and we stepped in. Austin is a lovely city. From Austin, we continued to San Antonio as tourists. We travelled from San Antonio via Waco, Allen to Frisco in the Dallas area. In Allen, we met Jim and Trish Allen whom we met in Quito as newcomers to HCJB, now Reach Beyond. Those days we will never forget. The last position Jim held was membership care. Their lifetime commitment to the Lord and the mission is exemplary. Later we got an email message from them: *"We enjoyed so many wonderful times with you in your home!"*

BIG THANKS

We want to thank you all for your prayers and for hosting us during our five weeks of our home ministry. We met with part of our family, seven remaining supporting churches and five pastors, some of whom we have known for 30 years. We met a number of new mission people, supporters, friends, and individuals who played a special role in our 30-year ministry in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. On our 5-week home ministry, we had only one new hosting family in Tucson; retired missionaries who spent 23 years in Papua New Guinea. Now they are very involved in the church ministries. We lived for four years in Indonesia and Pavel visited Irian Jaya, the Indonesian western part of Papua in 1987. What a joy to spend Thanksgiving together with their extended family.

In Texas, we met, in different places, four couples we were acquainted with while we lived in Jakarta. The fifth one lives in Denver. All of them played a major role in our lives and encouraged us to leave our secular job and become full-time missionaries and return to the country where we were born.

In Dallas, we ran into mother-daughter volunteers in the new Creation Museum. They used to attend Grace Community Church in Los Angeles that has been pastored by John MacArthur for over 50 years. It was at the same time that we lived there and were members of that church. They asked us about our conversion and we shared what an impact John MacArthur's preaching and teaching had on us. As new believers, we wrote a letter to John MacArthur in 1978 and he read it to the congregation. The letter was later published in his Commentary on Ephesians (pg. 310):

In Czechoslovakia, the great majority of women work, and children are at kindergarten since several months of age. The impact on family ties is horrible. My wife and I know it from our own experience. The godless doctrine pumped into little children's souls brought up the most cynical generation you can imagine. Most young people do not believe in anything, not even God. My wife recently visited our native country and returned with sadness in her heart. The godless system destroyed in great part the will of people and produced an obeying array of cynical, indifferent, disposable robots. What scares me most is that the same process of liberation movement and jargon I heard twenty-five and thirty years ago is happening right now in this country, and we have to go through it a second time. We must tell you that this collapsing morality and growing indifference are some of the reasons we received Jesus Christ several months ago as our Savior, even though our background of dialectical materialism (that is another name for Communism) is enormous and unimaginable to the average American.

We are startled that what we expressed 42 years ago is speaking to our days. It sounds almost prophetic and just shows us that there is "nothing new under heaven". On one hand, America is still the greatest country in the world, and we are proud to be Americans. On the other hand, we can see how far from the Gospel many countries have moved. We praise the Lord that godly people are standing firm.

BACK HOME

As soon as we returned back, we stepped into the Christmas season. With those impressions, we felt as though our five-week absence was like being away for five days. Our small Bible Church of Prague with the help of several musician friends put together a wonderful Christmas concert. We reunited with our church family and their friends and families. It was held in a lovely historic building and truly, it was the best gift for us. The sad part was that some of the visitors, friends, and parents, came "prepared and warned" that our people are known for being spiritually strong and knowledgeable. As soon as our pastor stepped onto the podium to bring the Christmas message, they disappeared. We enjoyed numerous Christmas concerts; carol singing in public places, streets, and at the railroad station:

https://www.irozhlas.cz/kultura/hudba/ceska-mse-vanocni-hlavni-nadrzi_1912231755_pj

People are singing together, but most of them worship only the tradition. They do not know the Lord, and Baby Jesus does not save anyone.

As we shared with churches and supporters stateside, most believers in our Prague Bible Church come from non-believing families. They have non-believing parents, grandparents, siblings, relatives, friends, and coworkers. This means that we are for them parents, grandparents, brothers, and sisters. Our ministry is not finished yet; actually, we feel that people of our generation are needed more than ever.

The most unreached or hardest to reach generation are those who grew up under communism. Those are people around our age. Only by God's grace, we were saved from our atheistic upbringing and education/brainwashing. Only He could redirect our lives and give us a heart desire to return after 24 years to our native country as missionaries.

OUR OBSERVATION

The greatest difference between the American church and European churches is their size, the number of attendees and programs available to all ages. We saw many new church buildings. We listened to Christian radio while driving. We stopped in our supporting church of about 40 members as well as in churches with an attendance of several thousand.

Our church plant is small; the theatre auditorium we rent for worship is smaller than the stages of most churches stateside. We preach to a "host" of 30-50 souls. Our worship is simple. We do not have electronic sound equipment, no orchestra, no choir, no worship teams; just piano, an outstanding pianist and our voices. We are all singing and can hear each other. Our Sunday messages are video recorded and available in MP3 or written form. This way our audience is more than doubled. We have people attending regularly, and occasionally from quite a distance. A few Czechs are following us from overseas.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

J. A. Comenius

We received from the Institute of Czech Comparative Literature, Faculty of Philosophy, Charles University, Prague, the following acknowledgment:

With great pleasure, we are following the activities of the publishing house "Poutníková četba / Pilgrim's Reading" concerning the works of J. A. Comenius. We appreciate your effort to adapt this significant work in the contemporary Czech language. It is very important to bring this treasure in this manner to the present generation of readers. We sincerely appreciate all your efforts in this direction".

Comenius was a bishop of the Unity of the Brethren Church (Reformed Church). One of his most famous theological works is the "Labyrinth of the World and Paradise of the Heart" which was published in 1631. Praise the Lord: "Labyrinth" is in its third printing and two more books by him were adapted to the contemporary Czech and published. You can read this extraordinary book in English online. Please do:

<http://www.labyrint.cz/en/contents>

The influence of Comenius was in formulating the general theory of education. Comenius introduced a number of educational concepts and innovations including pictorial textbooks written in native languages instead of Latin, teaching based on gradual development from simple to more comprehensive concepts, and lifelong learning with a focus on logical thinking over dull memorization.

One message from a Slovak listener:

Greetings to you,

Last night I was listening to the message from a Czech speaker about baptism. It was a great message but my family did not hear it. Is there a way I can get a recording? I did not find it in your archive. Thank you and may the Lord bless you all.

Letter from our partner in the magazine publishing ministry:

My dear Pavel and Klara,

You do not even know how you have pleased me with your New Year e-card. It proves that you sometimes remember me, as I do you. Especially when I receive the journal Battle for the Soul. It immediately reminds me of the many years we have been allowed to cooperate and what we have lived through. However, these are only brief moments of a recollection of how we will remember the Lord and enjoy the common moments we were allowed to experience here on earth, my dear friends Pavel and Klara. Thanks to the Lord, He still gives me the strength to work in His vineyards in different ways, even when approaching 88! My wife passed away 9 years ago; however, my daughter Irenka takes care of me. In addition, I have a congregation in which there are so many with whom I may walk toward the heavenly goal. So also for you, Pavel and Klara, I wish new experiences with the Lord this year: strength and the necessary health to sow the seed of the Word and to please the redeemed as you do. I hope you are well. There are many trials around us even with the redeemed ones. We live in the "last days" and time is running out. I cordially greet you both in the love of our Lord.

Your Jan O.

PRAISES

- For safety on the road, we drove over three thousand miles.
- 30 years ago, we joined HCJB World Radio, now Reach Beyond. It looks as though we are "the last Mohicans" from the original group in Ecuador.
- For many blessings while serving in Czech and Slovak Republics.

PRAYER NEED

- January 25th we are conducting a Winter Conference with the topic: "God's love – difficulties in teaching about God's love". Please pray for travelling mercies and good health of the speakers as well as those who plan to attend. At the conferences we meet up to four generations of believers we know or remember.
- For the Bible church of Prague, pastor, and families.
- For the Czech and Slovak countries, where the Lord has entrusted us to represent Him as well as every one of you.

**Thank you for your prayers,
Support and participation
In our life and in the
Czech & Slovak ministry**

**In His Sovereign Grace,
Pavel and Klara Steiger**

<pavel.steiger@gmail.com>

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