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*To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise from on high will visit us, TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH, To guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke 1:77-79)*

#### SEPTEMBER 2009

Days are passing fast especially when they are filled with hospitality activities and travels. Since we have transferred part of the magazine publishing, Klara felt for a while like an empty nester. Instead of being the chief editor she is now a hospitality chief. We spend much more time with people and visitors. Our walking endurance is tested to the limit. When Pavel takes our visitors over hilly Prague streets, after 10 to 12 miles they are all wiped out. Visitors keep us in good physical condition.



We truly enjoy young people and adults. We were blessed to be together with more home schooled kids, now in high school or college. We share with them important history that they know only from textbooks. What a joy to see how well they turn out when they are raised in Christian homes. Our respect and admiration goes to all of you home schooling parents. We praise the Lord that our grandkids are home schooled. What a difference to witness non Christian homes and families, since every other marriage here ends up in divorce.

#### AN EYE OPENER

Every other year we take vacation for educational purpose. This kind of vacation is more like a boot camp since we travel many miles through remote areas. This time our destination was Eastern Turkey. During two weeks there was only one destination near Ankara where we met four tourist buses. Otherwise we were traveling alone. Historical places we visited were going back to 1800 B.C. Generally we traveled along a part of the Silk Road. They were very important paths for cultural and technological transmission that linked traders, merchants, pilgrims, missionaries, soldiers, nomads and urban dwellers from different countries for almost 3,000 years, extending over 4,000

miles. The routes enabled people to transport trade goods, serving as a conduit for the spread of knowledge, ideas, cultures, and diseases. Trade on the Silk Road was a significant factor in the development of the great civilizations of China, India, Egypt, Persia, Arabia, and Rome, and in several respects helped lay the foundations for the modern world. Cultural exchanges and trade developed rapidly. Merchants traveled immense distances, from the shores of the Pacific to Africa and deep into Europe, without trespassing on agricultural lands and arousing hostility.

The history of Eastern Turkey covers many cultures, nations, including beginnings of Christianity, kingdoms, tribes, crusades, wars, plundering, genocides,... We crossed the Euphrates and Tigris rivers several times, saw bridges a thousand years old, visited a cave where supposedly Abraham was born and lived (by Muslim interpretation), the tomb of Antiochus Epiphanes, burial places of Pontius kings over two thousand years old, the Hittite civilization and much more. It was fascinating to see the oldest letter written in Cuneiform writing style that is made from wedge-shaped strokes, inscribed on clay, stone, metal, wax or other materials. Cuneiform writing has been used in several languages and was in use from about 3100 B.C. until about year 1. We met a man, one of about 36 in the world, who can read and translate it. Writing in hieroglyphs covered stone walls of immense size. In Mardin at a Syrian Christian monastery (refuge place), we listened to the Bible reading in Aramaic—the language our Lord spoke. Ani, the former capital of

Armenia, was another amazing site—where there was once over 1000 churches and chapels and tens of thousands of houses. Remnants of magnificent buildings, cathedrals, tall and wide fortifications walls, observation towers, all over one thousand years old were scattered on a large land area. This was the territory where many Armenians were chased out into the mountains to die just before the WWI. Armenians were replaced by Muslim Kurds. This was always a strategically important location; at present time one side of canyon is guarded by Turkish army and the other one is guarded by Armenian soldiers. History shows that kingdoms and civilizations, no matter how magnificent they are, are only temporary. We visited numerous Christian sites and today they lie in rubble and if the land is inhabited they are surrounded by minarets. We looked at Syria from a distance, saw Iranian border patrol observation towers, were about 30 miles from Iraq, and drove around Mount Ararat—absolutely great!

Magnificent geological sites are out of this world. They are of volcanic origin and reminded us of canyons in Colorado and Utah. We drove along the southern shore of the Black sea, where mountains raise up from the sea level to 9000 ft. We were amazed how rapid development is visible everywhere. Turks have a long term vision to be water, food and energy self-sufficient. How obvious is a possibility of conflict for water rights? To fill one of the large dams it takes about three years. Turkey agriculture is amazing—volcanic soil is very fertile; with plenty of water they can grow anything. You can see or-

chards, tea, walnuts, pistachio and filbert plantations, cotton fields, raising herds of cattle, sheep, ...

Highway and freeway infrastructure in a very difficult terrain is impressive. Busy traffic on newly constructed highways is directed to Iran, Iraq, Syria and further east. It is easy to imagine that a major oil pipeline could be built along the way. Oil and natural gas pipelines from the Russian Federation and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries place Turkey at the crossroads of the world's future energy transit countries. Europe is quite uneasy to be fully dependent on Russia with their energy needs. Turkey always played a major role as a bridge between East and West. We will hear about Turkey in the 21<sup>st</sup> century a lot.

Wherever you look earth is moved and new cities are built. The first building is the place of prayers—a mosque and gigantic Turkish flags are visible everywhere and from far away. There are immense areas of high rise housing with complete infrastructure. Basically they do not build single family dwellings.

The population of Turkey is set to rise while in the European Union there will be a significant increase in the number of very old people (aged 80+)—the "fourth generation" or "fourth age" while 70 % of population of Turkey is below 15 years of age. The European population has only 16% younger than 14 years of age. They will outnumber us all.

As we traveled through remote areas, people were very friendly and hospitable. Children learn English beginning in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. However, they can say only "What

is your name?" In that respect, the Eastern part of Turkey does not use English yet. We used smiles, sipped Turkish tea and enjoyed their company.

As we arrived home, the first news we noticed was a negotiation of the new U.S. administration for the U.S. radar location in Turkey. During the past several years Czechs had heated debates concerning the same U.S. radar in Czech Republic and missiles in Poland. Well, it will be in Turkey—no debates... The next news was that Turkey and Armenia will resume diplomatic services (highways are already built). Also the Kurdish people might gain some special recognition since their birth rate is higher than the Turkish one. Till now they were called mountain Turks.

We are grateful to experience history lectures like this. It is sure that Turkey will play a major role in the future in the backyard of Europe. The territory of Turkey was an important part of Christian history. We realize that most Christian attention is focused on Israel, but Christianity was carried by His followers from the place where Jesus walked to the rest of the world. The Silk Road is witness to that. We often ask—what a historical mistake did Christians in Middle East, Northern Africa commit? Not only former inhabitants of present Turkish territory, but most of today's Europeans gave up their Christianity. Godless Europeans will face religious Muslims. The European Union has nothing to offer to Muslims except greater consumption, materialism, and entertainment. The question remains—will Europe and the West turn spiritually back to Christ in face of Muslim territorial victories?

Historically, the Turks were stopped at Vienna in 1683. The Ottoman Empire attacked the Habsburg Empire. The Turks almost captured Vienna, but a Pole, John III Sobieski, led a Christian alliance that defeated them in the Battle of Vienna which stalled the Ottoman Empire's hegemony in south-eastern Europe. The second Battle of Mohács was a crushing defeat for the Sultan. Russia's involvement marked the first time the country formally joined an alliance of European powers. This was the beginning of a series of Russo-Turkish Wars, which continued into the 20th century. The decisive battle took place in 1683. It marked the turning point in the Ottoman-Habsburg wars, the 300-year struggle between the forces of the Central European kingdoms and the Ottoman Empire. Over the sixteen years following the battle, the Habsburgs of Austria gradually occupied and dominated southern Hungary and Transylvania, which had been largely cleared of the Turkish forces.

#### **PRAISES and PRAYER REQUESTS**

Almost every day we had an opportunity to praise the Lord for our physical endurance, stamina and health. High elevation and temperatures at some places were a great challenge.

During our travel we befriended several very special people. They are on our heart and we hope to continue ministering them.

In September we have one more trip, going toward Silesia and Poland. This time it is our church activity. We will visit places of revival where persecuted church

was functioning during days of great Catholic oppression. These churches were established by a special decree. In 1781, in the era of Austrian enlightenment, Emperor Joseph II issued a Patent of Tolerance for Austria that allowed other confessions. This is our favored place in the country and we are always happy when we can minister to them. This region is on our prayer list to establish radio station.

- Please pray for new radio licenses.
- Please pray for our contacts we already have and know among radio communication experts.

*Thank you  
for your support and prayers*

*In His Sovereign Grace  
With love  
Pavel and Klara Steiger*

*Your HCJB Global Missionaries  
in Czech Republic and Slovakia*

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