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In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the



Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her. (Luke 21:26-38)

December 2013

**Dear Friends and Partners
of the HCJB Global
Ministry to the Peoples
in Czech Republic and Slovakia**

This time you are getting our Thanksgiving and Christmas letters almost side by side due to the unforeseen delay.

As we mentioned in our November Electronic Prayer & Praise Report, Thanksgiving is not celebrated here in CZ. We really miss this special day. It is for us another opportunity to thank you all for the love and your support of HCJB Czech and Slovak ministries.

ADVENT IS HERE

As we are weeping in our reports about godlessness in our native country, we have a reason to rejoice this December. As soon as the last page of the November calendar sheet is turned over, this country starts to look like a Christian nation. The advent spirit is manifested in many ways. People bring home beautifully decorated advent wreaths, light the first candle, hang the golden mistletoe, and the Christmas baking madness starts. Most of the cities install a large Christmas tree in their main plazas. The Catholic Churches and cathedrals display various beautiful mangers. Markets with Christmas decorations are everywhere. Music, hot wine or fermented honey drinks are served, and all kinds of traditional sweets and snacks are offered. Prague is especially beautiful during this festive time.



The next big event is the eve on December the 5th. That is the tradition of Saint Nicholas with his angels and devils. After this kind of Santa, children are expecting an Advent of the beloved Baby Jesus, since the Infant Jesus passes on

the Christmas gifts. The Advent weekends become unbearable shopping frenzy.

Since we listen almost all day to the local state radio, we enjoy Christmas music. About half of the carols are in English, the rest in Czech. Almost daily we can hear "Amazing Grace", all kinds of classic hymns and traditional Christmas hits. Just traditions, traditions, traditions... It is truly an amazing time of the year in mostly atheistic country.

Recently we listened to "The Strange fire", the theme of the last Sheppard's Conference in Grace Church in L.A. It was not only an eye opener but heart bypass surgery. Looking through conference spectacles, we can see how far the church has slipped, not only in America but around the world.

For quite a while we have been burdened with the lack of interest our Christians are showing for Bible study. In our church, we have around 200 people attending; however, only about five of them are regularly attending the class Pavel teaches. The rest of our group, 10-15 people are from other churches. Our church has only an e-mail prayer support group. To tell the truth, we do not have one couple of our age to develop and enjoy any theological conversation with. Our elders are all young men with families. We appreciate their willingness to serve the church in an administrative capacity, but as to the spiritual leadership, they need to be rooted in the scripture.

We meet about twice a year for a church dinner and usually there is very little spiritual food served. The church has a youth program, numerous worship

teams, Sunday school classes for children, summer English camps and family vacation but we have to admit that all that is theologically very shallow. After listening to the Sheppard Conference speakers, it seems like we attend a lifeless church.

We have a new pastor. His Sunday messages are excellent but that is all. Most of our growth and inspiration comes from our ministry partners. We are not comparing two worlds; we are comparing love for Christ with godlessness and lukewarmness that surrounds us like a dark cloud. We see only hope in the new generation.

REJOICE WITH US

We truly appreciate your involvement, interest and generosity toward the Czech and Slovak ministries.

As we are coming to the yearend we have many reasons to praise our Lord for His goodness and faithfulness. We had an excellent ministry time and feel a real bond with our young team of co-workers.

We spent a wonderful time with our kids and grandkids. Samuel is now a teenager and Nate will become one next year. Both ladies are ballerinas. Lenka (our daughter-in-law) mentioned one interesting observation. Emma was moved in her ballet class to be with older girls. When I asked how Emma is doing, Lenka said that she pays no attention to the fact that she is much younger. The difference is perceived in the same way as the fact that she is a fair-skinned blond, and Jordan, her chocolate sister, is dark complexioned.

We praise the Lord for good health,

our sons' jobs, and protection. We realize how dependent we are in everything.

A few days ago we spent "debriefing time" with Jarda (our magazine chief editor and pastor in Ustí) and his daughter. They stopped over for lunch after Maja took a special exam to be admitted to Open Gate private school for the most talented students of the country. Her IQ is really high, and she was academically admitted on the spot. Now we all pray that she will get a scholarship since the monthly tuition exceeds the combined income of her parents. Annual tuition is over \$28,000. About 70 % of students who cannot afford it are getting partial or full support from The Kellner Family Foundation, the founders of Open Gate.

ANSWERED PRAYERS AND PRAISES

We have recently shared with you that Jaroslav (Jarda) needs a reliable car for the ministry. We considered donating our low mileage Toyota for the ministry. Now we are happy to report that we successfully transferred our car to him and purchased the same new Toyota Verso model for us. Since Jarda travels a lot, the car should serve him well for years to come. Once again we could see heavy taxation in action. The price tag of a new car was elevated by sales tax of 21 % – in this case about \$4600. On top of it three days after our car was purchased, the Czech National Bank devalued the Czech Crown by 5 % to boost export. Thus we lost an additional 5 % on the exchange rate. Currency devaluation, money printing, and interest rate changes, creating additional fees, new "structural taxes" and raising income tax are

variable legal ways that the governments uses to get into the pockets of taxpayers without using proper name for acts like that. As a result of the currency devaluation, prices are going up where ever we look.

We praise the Lord and express our deep thanks to an Arizona Church for a gift toward the purchase of a new computer for the publishing work.

PRAYER CONCERNS

After the New Year, a new Citizens law will be effective. All nonprofit organizations and registered citizen's assemblies like we are will have to go through a name change, to comply with an avalanche of new administrative registrations.

Our newly elected political parties are not able to agree on deputy heads positions. In the meantime a non-elected transitory government is making changes and very important decisions which complicate the lives of many people.

COMBINED MINISTRIES OUTREACH PROGRESS

- Pavel is working toward his goal to finalize his new book. It looks like the final version will have close to 250 pages. It is one thing to write the book, but it takes a lot of time to proof-read, edit, organize cross references and quotations, etc.
- Letter from publishers in the USA: *I have received your printed copies of the Czech translation of Leading Little Ones to God. Thank you very much! It looks fantastic and I am thrilled that your hard work has paid off. I hope*

that the book does well as a ministry tool for you. Kind regards, Tom DeVries, Subsidiary Rights Manager

- The 5th Winter Conference in Brno is just ahead of us. Please pray for good attendance and no flu attacks on anyone. We are quite pleased that our close co-workers are placing on the internet more and more dubbed video presentations from speakers of different conferences and ministries. Web pages and internet tools are a really a great help in sharing the Gospel.
- On our last board meeting we chose a theme for the 6th Winter Conference in 2015.

**Thanks for your participation
in our life and ministry.**

**Your HCJB Global Missionaries
In Czech Republic and Slovakia
Pavel and Klara Steiger
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