



Ivan Steiger MMXVI



AUGUST 2016

Dear Friends and Partners of
The Reach Beyond Ministry to
The Peoples in Czech Republic
And Slovakia

OVERSHADOWED SUMMER DAYS

O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against a hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few. For he saith, are not my princes altogether kings? Is not Calno as Carchemish? Is not Hamath as Arpad? Is not Samaria as Damascus? As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem and of Samaria; shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols? Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. (Isaiah 10:5-12)

This year's summer was lovely. Temperatures were rather mild, we got enough rain, and grass was not scorched. It was a great time to work and relax close to home. However, this idyll was disrupted by several terrorist attacks and events too close for comfort. We were shocked as France and Germany, places we know so well, were hit. Some European countries are less safe than usual. For those reasons people travel less and spend their time more often close home. That news overshadowed Brexit. Brits are leaving the European Union and this was overshadowed by Turkish coup. Immediately a three-month state of emergency was declared; and a crackdown on the military, judiciary, civil service, police and educational institutions. Over 100,000 Turks were arrested. All those events make all of Europe nervous. There are about 8 million Muslims in France; and 25 % of French youth under 15 were born to Muslims. Great Britain has its

share too. About 5% of its population is Muslim; and 47% of UK's Muslims are already UK born. Almost 80% of them live in the Greater London's inner city. Germany has about 5 million Muslims, predominantly Turks. Turkey is an important NATO member. However, now questions arise about the new local power triangle Ankara – Moscow – Teheran. Turkey is becoming far from stable and safe democracy. As an Islamic country they openly support unrest in the Middle East. In 2013 we had an HCJB European Conference close to Istanbul, Turkey. We shared the hotel's conference facilities with the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood. Turkey is the key player in Europe and Middle East. It controls most of the refugee flow to Europe. Over 3 million refugees and migrants are in Turkey waiting to be smuggled to Europe. At the present time there is over 65 million of people who left their home and are seeking asylum. Half of them are from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Somalia, more than half of them are young males.

KLARA'S SHINGLES

All this bad news was overshadowed by Klara's shingles. She knows many people who had it and it is really bad. Pavel got vaccinated while we were in the States some 5 years ago, and Klara thought that it cannot hit her. She was wrong and now she suffers. Since her family doctor was on vacation and the first signs happened on a weekend she missed the critical point. All that she cares about now is to survive pain. After Herpicin tablets the blisters are healing but the pain remains. Now she is using prescription medication to control pain. However, when we read all the side effects it is scary. For now her great summer days are over. Hopefully, she will make it to RB meeting in Spain.

LETTERS

On the other hand, we rejoice as the ministry is reaching out to more people:

A friend of mine lent me your magazine and it really caught my attention. I would like to be regular reader. Jan Polívka

Hello,

My name is Vra Hájková I listen to your internet sermons from your Church. I already signed up for electronic „The reformation“ and „The battle for the Soul“ magazine. I would like to have them in paper form, since I like to mark what I read. I found out about you from friend, who recommended your web pages and your sermons. He is right. Because I live neither in Prague nor Usti, I am not able to attend in person. Please send me all sermons and news on my e-mail. Please send me all magazine back issues as far as you can to my home address.

I have only issue 120,123,124 and 127. I would like to come to your office in September and meet you all in person. I am born again believer and I love to listen to meaningful messages and sermons. Thank you for everything Vra Hájková

PRAISE AND PRAYER TIDBITS

- Praise the Lord for the new people of the Bible Church Prague. Please pray for them to grow in closeness and togetherness as well as for their numerous needs. Health issues, job situations, family problems, marital issues, premarital counselling, visa issues, etc.
- Please pray for our daily lives. New security rules and safety regulations are in effect. Hand bags are checked at the Prague's castle. Long lines to be checked are easy target for the villains. We think twice before we go to shopping mall or nearby area. We are much more aware of crowd places.
- Please pray for Klara's recovery
- Please pray for the Reach Beyond conference in La Linea, Spain – close to Gibraltar.
- Pray for a smooth transition as Rev. Steve Harling becomes September 1st president

of Reach Beyond while the outgoing CEO, Wayne Pederson, moves to president emeritus status for the next six months. Pray for safety, strength and health as they travel together this fall, visiting all five of the mission's regions. Steve Harling has spent 36 years as a pastor in the US and is the son and grandson of missionaries. Early in his career he served as a missionary with SIM and as pastor of the Khartoum International Church in Sudan. Jack Harrison, a member of the Reach Beyond board commented, "One of Steve's greatest qualities is his ability to motivate and mentor people to maximise their Godgiven potential in ministry and missions."

- Please pray with us that our labor and your prayers will bring fruit in the land of thorns and thistles. The day of reckoning is coming. How sweet it is to know that we are never alone.
- Please pray for a hostage situation of a Czech Christian we know who has been detained in Sudan since Christmas.
- Please pray for Milan's Slovak radio ministry and the future broadcasting.
- Please pray for all of us as we bear the load of ministries.

A BIT OF CZECH PROTESTANT HISTORY

The Bohemian Reformation (also known as the Czech Reformation or Hussite Reformation), preceding the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, was a Christian movement in the late medieval and early modern Kingdom and Crown of Bohemia (present-day Czech Republic) striving for a reform of the Roman Catholic Church. Lasting for more than 200 years, it had a significant impact on the historical development of Central Europe and is considered one of the most important religious, social, intellectual and political movements of the early modern period. The Bohemian Reformation produced the first national church sepa-

rate from Roman authority, the first radical apocalyptic religious movements of the early modern period, and the first pacifist Protestant church.

The Bohemian Reformation was not an internally unified movement and did not remain immutable. Although it split in many groups, some characteristics were shared by all of them – communion under both kinds, distaste for the wealth and power of the church, emphasis on the Bible preached in a vernacular language and on an immediate relationship between man and God. The Bohemian Reformation include particularly the efforts to reform the church before Hus, the Hussite movement (including e. g. Taborites and Orebiters), the Unity of the Brethren and Utraquists or Calixtines.

Together with the Waldensians and the Lollards (led by John Wycliffe), the Bohemian Reformation is considered to be the precursor to the Protestant Reformation. These movements are sometimes referred to as the *First Reformation* in the Czech historiography. Despite the influence of the German and Swiss Reformations, the Bohemian Reformation did not bleed into them, although many of Czech Utraquists grew closer and closer to the Lutherans. The Bohemian Reformation kept its own development until the suppression of the Bohemian Revolt in 1620. The victorious restored King Ferdinand II decided to force every inhabitant of Bohemia and Moravia to become Roman Catholic in accordance with the principle *cuius regio, eius religio* of the Peace of Augsburg (1555). The Bohemian Reformation ended up being diffused in the Protestant world and gradually lost its distinctiveness. The Patent of Toleration issued in 1781 by Emperor Joseph II did not lead to a restoration of the Bohemian Reformation. Joseph II did not respect the Bohemian religious tradition and therefore only Lutheran, Calvinist and Eastern Orthodox faiths were made legal in the Crown of Bohemia and other parts of his realm. In spite of the extinction of the Bohemian Refor-

mation as a distinctive Christian movement, its tradition did not disappear. Many churches do not forget their legacy, refer to the Bohemian Reformation and try to continue its tradition, e. g. the Moravian Church (the continuator of the scattered Unity of the Brethren), Protestant Church of Czech Brethren, Czechoslovak Hussite Church, Church of Brethren, Unity of Brethren Baptists and other.

ORIGINS

The Bohemian Reformation started in Prague in the second half of the 14th century. In that time Prague was not only the seat of the King of Bohemia but also of the Holy Roman Emperor. Prague was one of the Europe's largest cities and after Avignon, Rome and Paris was the city with the highest concentration of clergy in the Western Christendom. The beginnings of the Bohemian Reformation were closely related to the criticism of the lavish lifestyle of many priests. In the late 1370's and early 1380's the Prague University theologians and intellectuals called for the reform of the decadent priesthood in the spirit of emerging conciliarism, for education of unsatisfactorily educated priests, and for more frequent accepting of the Eucharist in the spirit of Devotio Moderna. The most significant representatives of the university reform movement were Henry of Bitterfeld and Matthew of Cracow.

Apart from the university theologians there were also reform preachers, such as Conrad Waldhauser (died in 1369), an Austrian Augustinian from a monastery in Waldhausen who preached in the Old Town of Prague in German and Latin especially against simony and low morals. Another influential preacher was Milí of Krom íž who preached in Latin, Czech, and German. He helped many prostitutes to begin a new life. Matthias of Janov (died in 1394) who studied at the University of Prague and at the University of Paris wrote *Regulae Veteris et Novi Testamenti* (*Principles of the Old and the New Testaments*) which is an essential book of

the early Bohemian Reformation movement. The Bible was the only reliable authority in all matters of faith for him and only sincere followers of Christ were true Christians in his opinion.

The complete translation of the Bible into Czech in the mid-14th century also contributed to the origin of the Bohemian Reformation. After French and Italian the Czech language became the third modern European language in which the whole Bible was translated

OUR LINKS

Our newly planted Church:

<http://www.krestanep Praha.cz/>

Here is the link to our publishing efforts:

<http://knihy.reformace.cz/books/bjmm/#p=1>

Those of you who receive this hard copy Prayer Letter and not by email, please e-mail us so we can mail it to you electronically.

**Thank you for your prayers,
support and participation in our life and
Czech & Slovak ministry
In His Sovereign Grace
Pavel and Klara Steiger
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