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***For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"—and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. (2Pe 1:17-19)***

**JUNE– JULY 2017**

**DEAR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS OF  
THE REACH BEYOND MINISTRY TO  
THE PEOPLES IN CZECHIA AND SLOVAKIA**

In our May Electronic Praise and Prayer Report (EPPR) we mentioned that in June we usually have a steady flow of visitors. The first ten days of the month we drove to the airport six times. We welcomed and hosted visitors from NY, AZ and Canada. We met and spent time with other visitors from far away who came to visit our church. Another "mix marriage" couple visited from Las Vegas. The lady, originally from Czechia, was touched by the message with a comment: "I never heard such message in Czech language yet." They found our church via web pages. The first contact was made through MacArthur's Grace Community Church. It directed them to a Church in Kroměříž, where Lance Roberts is a missionary supported by Grace. Lance's directed them to



Kladno where pastors Marcus Denny, another US missionary. He sent them to our Rock Theater where we meet on Sundays. Both of those churches are very closely related to our Prague ministry. Our new friends attended three times and pledged to support the church plant ministry. PTL. Web pages are great tool to reach out. In our last EPPR we shared this letter from Canada:

- "I do not know how to express my thanks for the link to your fellowship. I love Australian book titled "Jumping Over the Puddles Again" (The story of a boy, who contracts polio at the age of six, but whose resolve helps him overcome his debilitating condition and keep up with his peers). Now I can say „I am Attending Church Again“ thanks to the link you provided for me. Now I long so much to have communion. I did not partake for such long time.“ Joseph K.

Here is another recent letter:

- Good day, I will try to be brief (hopefully we will have more time if you will find time to answer my question). Here is my question: What is God thinking about all what is done the world by Muslim during last years? How it is possible that Christianity was during the past centuries „reformed“ to the point that it tolerates homosexuality; it tolerates today society's values; it is opened and friendly (in my view) to anything, while Islam represents violence and evil? My question is this: Is it sin to feel growing rejection to Muslims and what they represent? I am a kind man, but what is happening in the world evokes in me hostile feelings and

*to tell you the truth, I am unpleasantly surprised about myself, because I never thought of myself that way. I think God does not expect of me that I will look at murderers with smile and understanding... Thank you for your answer, Andre*

### MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

Geoff Volker a pastor from AZ is one of our friends, a regular visitor and our mentor. This time we drove together to a small village of Javorník (Moravia) about 220 miles away. This is the Evangelical church we mentioned previously that was founded in 17<sup>th</sup> century and is older than the United States.

Brief Wikipedia history of Counter Reformation:

„The Battle at White Mountain (about three miles from our apartment) marked the end of the Bohemian period of the Thirty Years' War and decisively influenced the fate of the Czech lands for the next 300 years. Its aftermath drastically changed the religious landscape of the Czech lands after two centuries of Protestant dominance. Roman Catholicism retained majority in the Czech lands until the late 20th century.“ ... In 1621, the Emperor ordered all Calvinists and other non-Lutherans to leave the realm in three days or to convert to Roman Catholicism. In 1622, he forbade practice of the Lutheran faith. In 1626, he ordered all Lutherans (most of whom had not been involved in the revolt) to convert or else leave the country. By 1627, Archbishop Harrach of Prague and Jaroslav Borzita of Martinice set out to convert the heretics, as they were termed, by peaceful means; most Bohemians converted, but a significant Protestant minority remained. ... More than 140 years later The Patent of Toleration (German: *Toleranzpatent*) was an edict issued in October 1781 by the Holy Roman Emperor, Joseph II of Austria. The Patent extended religious freedom to non-Catholic Christians living in Habsburg lands, including Lutherans, Calvinists, and the Eastern Orthodox. Specifically, these members of minority faiths were now legally permitted to hold "private religious exercises" in clandestine churches (we were told that the believers of this particular village of Javorník met previously secretly at a saw mill, in that noise no one could

hear their singing). Edict of Tolerance for Jews was issued in 1782.

No matter what we saw and heard in Javorník all touched our heart. It was a testimony of great faith. All of the Catholic churches are located in cities or village's centers and are visible from far away. Most Protestant churches built after Tolerance Edict were hidden from passersby. Some Catholics ridiculed Protestant believers that their churches look like barns. No steeples or bells. The Protestant reply: "You did not allow us to build them." Till now there are most protestant churches hidden in courtyards behind apartment buildings. You have to know where you are going. Now you have a street notice board announcing to the public that church is in the back.

Peter Kulik, the pastor of Javornik church, was concerned that people will be too bashful to ask any questions. They were not. After the meeting as we were shown the historical places around the village, we run into small groups of those who attended the meeting as they kept discussing what they have heard. What a blessing this was.

After so many years serving in Czech Republic we can see how important the solid biblical teaching is. So many people out of a small number of believers are starving under mediocre teaching. Faith of these believers is an ocean wide and an inch deep. The Church is full of compromises in the name of false unity. A number of pastors do not believe fundamental biblical truths; so many people are hurt by false teaching. So many believers gave up since they have no bible teaching church around. In Czech Republic is about 150 towns with population around 10,000 and there are no churches!

Religion in Czech Republic:

Undeclared	45,2%
Nonbelievers	34,2%
Roman Catholics	10,3%
Others	9,4%
Protestants	0.8%

About 700 thousand people are not affiliated with any church however they claim to be believers. There are about 6,000 Buddhist (mostly Vietnam and Korean believers), 3,500 believers in Islam, out of about 15,000-20,000 Jews living in Czech Republic, is about 3,000 registered in 10 Jewish communities.

Decline of believers in ranks of Roman Catholics and traditional Evangelical churches in past 20 years is significant; however interest in small and independent churches and fellowships is on rise.

*(Czech Statistics Information Service, SLDB Praha, February 2014, code of publication: 170220-14)*

### **PRAYING, SENDING, PLANTING AND REJOICING**

Sunday May 21, our Prague Church had a joint fellowship in Ústí with churches from Kladno (Pavel used to preach there for almost a year). Kladno and Ústí Churches prayed several years for Church plant in Prague. Later Ústí became the sending Church. Now we worship twice a year and hold together English Summer camp. June 11 the two new believers were baptized.

### **SLOVAK WOODEN TREASURES**

June 18-25, we spent in Slovakia with a group of believers from Brno, Prague and Bratislava. Pavel delivered several messages. Our hearts and minds were blessed in many ways. Fellowship and His word is always inspiring.

During this time we visited five so called "Articular Churches" built in years from 1689 and on. Articular evangelical churches were erected under terms of the Congress of Sopron of 1681 at the time of Austro-Hungarian Empire. Permission was first time granted at the time of severe Catholic persecution, religious friction and continuing threat of invasion from Turkey.

In July 1683 Vienna endured the siege of a vast Turkish army. King of Poland and Duke of Lithuania, Austro-German contingent fought for European survival. While the allied victory had strained, rather than cemented, the ties between the Holy Roman Empire and Poland, the rest of Christendom celebrated. In the streets of Vienna and in the cities of Austria and all through Europe there was a feeling of euphoria. It was the greatest victory over the Turks since 1571 over the Sultan's armada:

<http://warfarehistorynetwork.com/daily/military-history/the-1683-battle-of-vienna-islam-at-viennas-gates/>

The articular regulations determined severe restrictions on the Protestant congregations. The building had to be outside of the city walls and en-

trance facing away from the city. The construction material had to be the cheapest possible (wood at that time). No foundations, no floors, only dirt. No nails, no steeples, no bells. Instead of nails they used pegs from hard wood. Church had to be completed in one year or less. One of the churches was built in eight month – the builder with 40 carpenters! Wood framed structures are mind boggling – capacity to seat over 1000 up to 6000 people is amazing. The construction was financially supported by Protestants from various countries, and presents elements of German and Scandinavian architecture blended with domestic folk art and wood carvings. On the outside the buildings are not interesting but the craftsmanship is spectacular. Some of the churches are painted with heavenly scenes on the ceiling and what was most amazing and inspiring were scenes from Old Testament (promise) and New Testament (fulfilling).

The Holly Cross Church shape reminds two inverted boats – the size of Noah Ark over 130 ft long, 90 ft wide and 33 ft high is supported by 4 massive columns. Three of the churches are on UNESCO World Heritage list. Take a look:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Articular\\_church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Articular_church)  
<http://www.drevenykostol.sk/v1/en/video-gallery/promotional-video>  
<http://www.drevenykostol.sk/v1/en/video-galeria/visit-of-the-church-2>

### **HIKING IN THE TATRA MOUNTAINS**

The Slovak countryside is spectacular. During one of the outings we met with Milan Hudec, our radio man in Slovakia. It was time of sharing and encouraging each other. With radio ministry in Slovakia everything goes "In His time". We trust that there will be more exciting opportunities to report later. Together we had a wonderful hike, reached the top of Chopok 6640 ft as well as Demanova caves discovered in 1921. To make it you have to climb or descent 960 steps:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Demanova\\_Cave\\_of\\_Freedom](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Demanova_Cave_of_Freedom)

More hikes followed later during our stay. In one sentence – we all had great time of togetherness.

### **PRAISES**

In our last EPPR letter we shared about Klara's Croatian Thrive Retreat. This was a life-time experience. Klara was overjoyed to link with volunteers from places we know well, CO, CA,

AZ. Arizona volunteers were especially close; since Tucson is a relatively small town, and there were so many connections, happy memories. Together we could recall great friendships and events. The goal of the Thrive Ministry is to encourage and empower global women to thrive and to be their advocate. Here are few ideas how to pray for your missionaries in the field and the obstacles they face:

- Missionary attrition – one out of 14 sent leave
- 2/3 for potentially preventable reasons
- How to live in culture where lies are acceptable way of living. Pictures express more than a thousand words:  
<http://photos.thriveministry.org/2017-Croatia-Retreat/2017-Croatia-Retreat-Volunteer-Staff-Attendees/>
- Pastor Ed Moore from Bayside NY and his daughter Madison made a quick stop in Prague. What a joy to be together once again. We praise the Lord that we have faithful praying partners in NYC. Short video clip from perfect day:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHZzSyWa1EU&t=15s>
- See the progress of our Bible Church in Prague:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUHIWhzWSTk>

### PRAYERS

- Pray for spiritual growth and increase in numbers so that our church will become a self-sustaining body of believers in the near future.
- Please pray for those who are preaching and teaching in the sending and sister churches praying for this church plant.
- Building a body of believers with many needs is tedious work. We see how damaged believers are coming from liberal churches. More and more people are finding their spot to serve.
- Pray that the Lord will give us opportunities to reach the unreached.
- Please for our joint summer ministries as well as continue to pray for Slovak ministry.

### A FEW THOUGHTS FROM REACH BEYOND

Jesus, the guy who could have died from exhaustion long before he died on the cross, is our Teacher. He provides a wonderful example of

Rest. After all, he had a pretty important job to do, a high calling if ever there was one, and only 24 hours in a day, just like us.

May we do the same. May our time with the Father, resting in his presence, drive us to love people. And after a time of loving and serving people, may we take our bone-weary souls back up the mountain to Rest with our Father.

Rest is not a bad word.

Rest is not a waste of time.

Rest is holy, and commanded.

Rest forces me to admit my humanity.

Rest reminds me to agree, once again, that He's God and I'm not.

To conclude we have to say LIFE IS GOOD when you serve the Lord.

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

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

<pavel.steiger@gmail.com>

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