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And the vision of all this has become to you like the words of a book that is sealed. When men give it to one who can read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot, for it is sealed." And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, "Read this," he says, "I cannot read." And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men, therefore, behold, I will



again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden." Ah, you who hide deep from the LORD your counsel, whose deeds are in the dark, and who say, "Who sees us? Who knows us?" You turn things upside down! Shall the potter be regarded as the clay, that the thing made should say of its maker, "He did not make me"; or the thing formed say of him who formed it, "He has no understanding"? (Isa 29:11-16)

JUNE 2019
DEAR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS OF
THE REACH BEYOND MINISTRY
TO THE PEOPLES
IN CZECHIA AND SLOVAKIA

PREACHING IN "SUDETENLAND"

In the first week of June, we were once again on the road. Pavel was preaching in a church plant in Liberec. We have had a great relationship with its founders since 1989 while they lived

in Germany. The history of Liberec is very interesting and stands out until now. The Sudeten crisis of 1938 culminated by annexing part of Czechoslovakia (Bohemia and Moravia) by Germany through the Munich Agreement (darker area on the map) that was ratified by Germany, Italy, United Kingdom and France. Liberec or in German Reichenberg (at north), became the capital of mostly German-speaking Sudetenland; see it on the map.



OUR TRIP TO D.A. CARSON CONFERENCE IN WISLA, POLAND

From Liberec, we crossed to Poland, on the way to Wisla, the place of the conference. We made several stops in historical places.

First on the list was a city of "Vratislav (Czech), Breslau (German), Wroclaw" (Polish). As the Czech, German and Polish names suggest, the place had a very colorful past.

The town was first recorded in the 10th century as Vratislavia, part of the Bohemian (Czech) established by duke Vratislaus. Poland conquered Silesia including Vratislavia and became known as Wroclaw, one of three capitals of the Polish Kingdom. After the Mongol invasion, the town was partly populated by German settlers. In the following centuries, Wroclaw gradually became German "Breslau". German law was adopted in 1242. In 1335 Breslau was incorporated back into the Kingdom of Bohemia, then part of the Holy Roman Empire. Between 1469 to 1490 Wroclaw became part of the Kingdom of Hungary. After this, The Kingdom of Prussia again annexed Wroclaw and most of Silesia.

The place was swept by Reformation, Counter-Reformation and several catholic orders settled there, starting 1610. Wroclaw has numerous churches, cathedrals and Universities founded by different orders. During the Napoleonic Wars, Wroclaw was occupied and looted. The Unification of Germany in 1871 changed the name back to Breslau. It became the sixth-largest city in the German Empire before WWII. The town had the third-largest Jewish population of all the cities in Germany.

According to Nazi ideology, Poles were seen as fit only for slavery and further elimination to make room for the Germans. About 1.7 million Poles were

deemed Germanizable, including between one and two hundred thousand children who were taken from their parents. A total of about 6 million Polish citizens were killed during the war, of which approximately half were Jews or of Jewish descent. All these actions resulted in significant changes in Polish demographics at the end of the war.

In August 1944, Adolf Hitler declared the city of Breslau to be a fortress, ordering that it must be defended at all costs. Even after the fall of Berlin, the fortress Breslau kept resisting for a few more days. The Siege of Breslau became house-to-house street fighting (February/May 1945). Because of self-destructive German action, half of the city was in ruins and an estimated 80,000 civilians were dead. See some pictures: <https://www.molon.de/galleries/Poland/Wroclaw/all/>

Next place we visited was the historical town of Krakow. In modern history, Krakow is remembered as one of five major Jewish Ghettos created by Nazi Germany. About 60,000-80,000 Polish Jews have lived there since the 13th century. Out of that a number, about 15,000 Jewish workers became "economically useful" and their families were permitted to remain in the Ghetto. This is where the movie "Schindler List" is based. We had an op-

portunity to visit the tinware enamel factory museum there.

Most of the inhabitants of the Krakow ghetto were sent to their death in concentration camps in the radius of 35 miles. The turbulent history of Krakow left deep impressions in our hearts.

There is little known or mentioned of the Krakow history. Most of the major cities of pre-war Poland were devastated during World War II, while Krakow made it through the war with hardly any damage.

Inhabitants of Krakow surrendered to German forces in 1939 without a fight and the city became the governmental capital of Nazi Germany. The purpose of this was to have an agricultural and light industry supply base for German Armed forces.

Our third stop took us to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Wieliczka Salt Mine. This is truly an amazing place. The Salt Mine reaches a depth of 1,073 feet, and extends via horizontal passages and chambers for over 178 miles. A wooden staircase provides access to the mine's 210-foot level. A 1.9-mile tour features corridors, four chapels carved out of the rock salt by the miners, includes dozens of statues and religious scenes. A chamber has walls carved by miners to resemble wood, as in wooden churches

built in early centuries. The older sculptures have been supplemented with new carvings made by contemporary artists including a statue of Pope John Paul II. The chapel and a reception room can be used for private functions, including weddings.

In the depth of 443 ft. is a large underground lake. The water there has similar density as the water of the Dead Sea. Many thousands of timber trunks are supporting the ceilings and walls of the excavated space. The timber supporting the tunnels and area is in places salsified (not petrified). Those who do not believe in the universal flood should come to examine the evidence.

About 1.2 million people visit the Wieliczka Salt Mine annually. This is an example how the Salt mine became a productive money mine.

We esteem Poland and its people for how they have recovered from all the past atrocities as well as from the era of communism. They have been building excellent infrastructure, freeway and railroad systems, and their agriculture produces 150% of their national consumption. Economically, they keep constantly growing. We could observe the changes. Tourist are coming in large numbers. Now, as a most important NATO ally in Europe, they have a bright future ahead, unless ... only the Lord knows.

PRAISES

- The topic of the Wisla Conference was Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility.
- Trilingual thinking is an interesting experience. Conference lectures were translated from English to Polish. Since Czech language used to be historically close to Polish, we could understand translators as well.
- As most of you well know, D. A. Carson is an excellent teacher and we all were blessed.
- I found a comment from Jay Childs, Senior Pastor describing this topic: *"As Carson notes, we dare not water down truth in Scripture. God is fully sovereign: nothing can thwart His plans, period! And human beings are fully accountable for their choices, period! If this conundrum gives you a headache, you are not alone. Let it be a reminder that God is far more complex than tiny dust people could ever imagine! Praise be to His glorious name! What a mighty God we serve! To God be the glory."*

PRAYERS

- Our prayer is that love for theological implications in ministry and missions of today will live on.
- Poland has a population of 38 million people. The country is mostly Catholic. The conference attendance was

about 350 souls. As far as we know, about 250 e-mail invitations were sent to Czech Christian circles. Only six of us came. On the other hand, when annual Leadership conferences are held in Wisla, close to one thousand people attend.

- Please pray for Eastern Europe spiritual revival.
- We were trying to reach a few of you. However, it looks like the more electronic communication avenues we have, the harder it is to reach each other in person. Landlines are almost gone, cell phones have all kinds of filters, Skype is replaced by other communicating services. Facebook is time consuming, e-mail boxes get so cluttered that no more messages can be received.

FAMILY MATTERS

- Our grandson, Samuel Anthony, graduated from "Steiger Academy" with Honor. Our thanks go to Filip and Lenka, mom and dad, for their love, dedication and patience to home school all four of their children.
- Please pray for Ivan and his time of mourning and recovery.
- Among our relatives, we stand alone as believers. As we all are getting older, it is painful to see them leaving to eternity without Lord. We know that this situation is similar to many brothers and sisters.

JULY EVENTS

- Summer mini-conference with Geoff Volker in Prague.
- We are looking forward to family mountain week of three churches (Prague, Kladno, Ústí) opened to nonbelieving friends and families.
- Time spent with summer visitors and guests

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS,
SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION
IN OUR LIFE AND
THE CZECH & SLOVAK
MINISTRIES**

**In His Sovereign Grace,
Pavel and Klara Steiger**
<pavel.steiger@gmail.com>

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