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For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." (Rom 1:16-17)

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

OUR SPECIAL HISTORICAL EVENTS

The month of August is loaded for us with anniversaries and special events. First, we met 55 years ago, and a year later (1965), we got married. Second, 50 years ago, we fled Czechoslovakia (1969) to the United States as the Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia (1968). The invasion resulted in over 100 people shot, hundreds wounded, and about 250 thousand Czechs and Slovaks escaped the communistic regime at that time. At the first anniversary of the Soviet invasion (1969), there were nu-



merous protests against the Russian occupation. Seven people were shot and about seventy wounded by the Czech Communist Militia and military. Over 2,500 people were arrested and thousands interrogated. Those who did not conform their mind and refused to call the occupation "brotherly help" lost their professional positions, jobs and higher education opportunities for their children. The political situation in the country had been "normalized." Communist oppression reigned for the next 20 years. That was the end of the so-called Prague Spring (1968). "Brotherly help" and the presence of the Soviet military became a reality for the next 21 years (1968-1989). One of the banners of those days said: "Cain and Abel were also brothers."

We praise the Lord that he led us out of those days of darkness and betrayal. True, we lost contact with our families and friends; but on the other hand, we felt the first breath of freedom and friendship of common Americans who tremendously helped us in our beginnings in the United States. It never crossed our minds that unbelievers such as us would return 24 years later as missionaries to our birthplace.

Now we see that each of those events had a profound influence on where we stand today and what we are doing in our native country now.

SUMMER CHURCH EVENTS

Together with other believers from our church, we had several opportunities to be part of or to attend different summer programs, like English camp, counseling retreat, family week and other events, most of them in the mountains. As we interacted with people from "sister churches" and other denominations, we got interesting feedback.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

We had some interesting conversations with Czech believers about how some local believers view American missionaries and those young Czechs who gather around them to improve their English. Thus, some churches may be divided into two groups. Those who speak English and those who do not. Them and us. It came to our attention that some non-English speaking Czechs interpret this as a sign of pride or superiority. We never ever as Czech/Americans felt that way or were aware of this hopefully infrequent problem. Yet, they may have a point. It is true that with English speaking people, especially in Christian circles, we feel a special bond. We have so much in common. The same applies to locals. They have family, relatives, friends, and memories growing up together. They enjoy friendship with people since their childhood. Our lives were different. We had the privilege to live in a free world; they did not. American missionaries are usually focusing on teaching and

applying Biblical principles in a different way than is customary in the local church. This is sometimes perceived by locals that missionaries are proud that their methods are better and that they know best. Some of them feel that missionaries are trying to Americanize or Mac Arthurize local Christians. It is true that many missionaries and mission organizations are focused on all kinds of programs, methods, training, growth, etc. In spite of that, most missionaries are trying with pure intentions to share the best they gained in America. We translate and publish great sermons, books, invite different speakers and teachers. Nonetheless, we all have to be sensitive to this cultural discovery. Fortunately, as far as we know, these complaints are rare.

One thing to add: the spirit of America was, is and will be for us an inspiration. On our behalf, we can say that we try as hard as we can, to be delicate and give opportunities at conferences in the first place to local speakers, teachers, and pastors. There are not too many of them.

PRAISES

- To overcome the issue of differences, we are happy to share with you another accomplishment of Pilgrim's Reading Publishing House, with which we are associated: A book by Martin Luther "The Bondage of the Will" originally written in Latin and published in 1525. The first translation in English was published in 1823. It is acknowledged by theologians as one of the great masterpieces of Reformation. It was never translated into the Czech language. Finally, almost 500 years later, our Publishing House trans-

lated it straight from Latin. It is amazing how the Latin original and two translations, English and Czech, came together so close. Practically there is no difference.

- As the summer moves along, we remain quite busy. We had another pastoral conference with Geoff Volker as the speaker. The topic was "Blessings of the New Covenant for the Contemporary Church." For more than 20 years, Geoff has traveled to Belorussia and Romania to train local pastors. This time he was coming to Romania with a group of 15 young people from two churches to help with children's programs. His first stop (plus five of his co-travelers) was in Prague. It is wonderful to reconnect with a faithful servant and friend.
- Klara tried to translate loosely Ed More's sermon "Who Do You Think You Are?" It took her four days and a lot of editing and proofreading since she did not have written text. She learned new skills again.
- We keep in touch with numerous unbelievers we know from olden days or we befriended during our ministry or travel. For some reason, we are invited to their gatherings. This is rare since we are for the world oddballs. On one side, it is sad that they remain worldly and so far untouched by the Lord. They know where we stand and why. On the other hand, it is a reminder to us that we were once like them until the merciful Lord dragged us out of the world.
- This summer Pavel underwent varicose veins surgery. The procedure took about 10 hours with local anesthesia. For one

month, he had to take an hour walk four times a day, with two to three-hour rest in between. He walked daily between 5-10 miles and he is recovering and walking quite well.

- Our web pages are growing as well as the need for additional volunteers. So here we are. Klara is expanding her video editing skills under Pavel's supervision. We edit Sunday guest messages and conference recordings. It is a tedious and lengthy job.
- Two more conferences lie ahead of us. This time we will participate as visitors just to keep up with a wide range of believers.
- Our grandson Samuel is the first one flying out of the nest. He joined the Norwich Academy in Vermont. A year ago, the University celebrated the 200th Bicentennial Anniversary. Schooling began with intensive boot camp. This is the time when mama boys become men. Well, there is the third generation of the Steiger family in America. Our son, Samuel's father Filip joined the military at 18.

OUR HOME MINISTRY

Don't you feel now we need a break? Here it comes. Pavel is getting together our autumn U.S. itinerary. The first try to get the best fare failed. There were "inexpensive fares" but so many additional payments for this and that that it might be better to get a more expensive fare that might be less than the "cheap" one.

Our plan is to fly to Denver, where we have one supporting church. The last time they saw us was in May 2011. Our younger son Vit, Klara's brother and several dear

friends live there. Last, but not least, Reach Beyond headquarters are in Colorado Springs. There were so many changes in recent years that we need to introduce ourselves to those we communicate with while we are trying to comply with all changes, new regulations, forms, instruction, and communication. You can see Denver stop is going to be loaded.

From Denver, we would like to fly to Oakland, CA. From there we plan to drive and visit our supporting churches in Santa Rosa and Madera. During the upcoming weeks and days, we would like to make numerous stops while driving to Los Angeles, Phoenix, Tucson, Austin, and Dallas. We sent the message about our coming and we got immediate responses:

- *We look forward to your visit! I have put those dates on the calendar.*
- *Yes, stop by.*
- *Thanks for the update. Those dates are fine. We look forward to seeing you guys. Let me know if there's anything specific you want to do during your stay.*
- *We would be thrilled to have you stay with us in November! We will certainly look forward to being reunited with you again. Please keep us posted as time grows closer.*
- *That would be great! We're looking forward to time with you again!!!*
- *Hi Pavel and Klara. It is nice to hear from you ... look forward to seeing you in November... blessings*

We are moved by such responses by our Christian brothers; we all are one in Christ. This time we are going to make no stop on

the East Coast. Perhaps next year. To cover both coasts would be too much to handle.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

- Central Europe spiritual revival.
- Pray for the Czech and Slovak people and churches, for the majority of the people around us are unreached.
- Pray for Pavel's brother Ivan's spiritual condition since his wife Eva recently passed away.
- Please pray for Reach Beyond's directions and guidance.

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

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