



© Ivan Steiger MMXX

For from within, even out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, uncleanness, a wicked eye, backbiting, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile a man. (Mark 7:21-23)

**JUNE/JULY 2020
DEAR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS OF
THE REACH BEYOND MINISTRY
TO THE PEOPLES OF
CZECHIA AND SLOVAKIA**

MAYDAY, MAYDAY

On our side, Corona is "evaporating," restrictions are diminishing, and many places are now open and almost back to normal. While mingling with the people, masks are required in closed areas and on public transportation, except at eating places. As far as church meetings, speakers behind the pulpit do not have to wear face masks as long as they are not closer



than 6.5 feet to others. That's governmental regulation. However, "wear or not to wear" is disrupting some churches' unity. During partial restrictions, we were enjoying new opportunities to get out of our immediate neighborhood. In one week we visited eight museums. One ticket at half price got us into nine museums. It was wonderful. We saw what we had "saved for later" for years. Highlights were museums of music and famous composers.

Travel restrictions are being removed step by step. From mid-June, Czechs may travel to all EU countries without negative corona tests on their return, except for the United Kingdom, Sweden, Belgium, and Portugal. However, there might still be negative test restricting demands by some countries to which Czechs may travel. Those restrictions are changing almost daily. The concern is for people returning from other countries and a possible flare-up of a new spread of COVID.

On June 15th, Pavel's birthday, we took a trip to Temelín, a nuclear plant, and spent a wonderful time in the historical town of Tabor. From there we joined a group of Christian brothers and sisters mostly from the Brno area. For the first

time since COVID-19, we were surrounded by our dear friends we have known from the beginning of our mission ministry in the Czech Republic. This was maybe our 10th retreat gatherings. As we looked at the presentation since 2008 our hearts were touched. Love, spiritual bond, and faithfulness are something to treasure forever.

OUR CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

The only constant is a change. COVID-19 exposed many hidden problems, questions, and answers to things that had been laid aside for some time. In our last communication, we mentioned the latest attempt to handle external and internal church problems. We are convinced that all involved in the church planting had the best intentions. In this country, we have just a handful of independent churches. We became almost pioneers. Looking back, however, enthusiasm is not enough. We were not aware of many traps relating to qualification. As we see it now, after almost five years, the role of a strong pastor and no elder accountability practically led to non-existing checks and balances. We overlooked a lot of warning signs, especially some points of 1. Timothy chapter 3. Our attention was focused on healthy biblical teaching as we functioned almost like a seminary. We overemphasized one side of ministry, i.e. sound doctrine and the pastor's ability to teach and organize; and we overlooked the complexity of character and the church's responsibility for the needs of the body of believers.

REACH BEYOND LATEST

At the same time, our Mission, Reach Beyond in Colorado Springs, went through some serious internal changes. Those of you who are our supporters got a letter of partial explanation of what is going on. The recent abdication of our president was a surprise to all.

On June 23rd we had a ZOOM conference with our regional director of Colorado Springs. To sum up, a trio of recent events: COVID-19, our church, and REACH BEYOND changes needs your prayers.

NEW WAY OF CENSORSHIP

Censorship in the media, websites, and Facebook was mostly imposed by oppressive governments. However, in recent months, censorship is spreading around. We are mostly communicating with friends through Facebook from the US and Australia. Some entries from Christian friends during the past month have been marked with "obj" or black screen with a message "This content isn't available right now". We well remember days when the text was blackened in our school textbooks and we learned early in our lives to live a double life in communist Czechoslovakia. Censorship ruled politics, economics, philosophy, and religion. We had to say something other than what we knew was true. We were taught what we should think. Otherwise, we could not pursue further education, get or keep a decent job, travel, etc. We had to be very careful as we lived double lives since outspoken people were

jailed. Some of our thoughts had to remain hidden in our hearts, and some of them we could share only with our most trusted friends. We have a definite sense of *Deja vu* these days.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

We believe that all lives matter and the issue of slavery does not relate only to black people. You have told us numerous times that you enjoy our historical explanations. So here is another one.

White people in Central Europe are called Slavs, derived from Latin *sclave*, i.e. slaves. "White slavery" used to describe Christian slaves. Raids on Danubian principalities (Poland, Lithuania, Muscovy), the massive slave trade in the Muslim world, eunuchs (castrated Slavic captives), and young fair-skinned girls as concubines for sultans' harems was going on for centuries. Crimean Tatar raiders enslaved between 1 and 2 million slaves from Russia and Poland-Lithuania over the period 1500–1700. In the late 1500s and early 1600s observers account for around 35,000 European Christian slaves.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_slavery

Under the Ottoman Empire, Christian boys between the ages of 8-18 were taken from their families and raised to serve the empire as "new soldiers". "Janissaries" began as elite corps made up through the *devşirme* system of tribute, by which young Christian boys, notably Albanians, Bosnians, Bulgarians, Greeks, and Serbs, were taken from the Balkans, enslaved and converted to Islam, and incorporated into the Ottoman army. They became famed

for internal cohesion cemented by strict discipline and order. Unlike typical slaves, they were paid regular salaries. Forbidden to marry until the age of 40 or engage in trade, their complete loyalty to the Sultan was expected.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Janissaries>

In September and October 1663, Ottoman soldiers from Váh penetrated through the Carpathians to the southeast of Moravia. They plundered Veselí, Strážnice, Hodonín, Uherské Hradiště, Uherský Brod, Lanžhot, Podivín, Pohořelice, Měnin or Hustopeče, in today's Czech Republic. In six days, they dragged 12,000 local people into slavery (in practice, they did this by beating people over 40 and dragging those under 40). The third attack at the beginning of October was aimed at Klobouky, Vsetín, and Valašské Meziříčí. The total balance of people abducted into slavery was in the order of tens of thousands.

The historian Karolína Srnčová summed it up interestingly on Czech TV 24: "Traffickers traveled with the Ottoman army, who after the battle, directly on the battlefield, bought their prisoners from specific fighters and then tied shackles around their necks after a certain number (20 or 30 prisoners). It was a massive business."

Do not wonder that entire central Europe today refuses any Moslem "refugees". It has a completely different history than the West. Yes, in Central and Eastern Europe, inhabited by Slavs, the formula *white* equals slave, *black* does not equal slave. Historical experience leads to considerably different patterns. For example, Ottoman Turk equals slave-owner, Moravian white native equals slave or potential slave.

PRAISES

- During the corona quarantine as well as now, we can focus our attention and communication on believers we know from the past as well as present non-believing friends and family members.
- During homebound isolation, we enjoyed many hours of streaming, online preaching, teaching, Zoom communication, and conferences. We almost got spiritually and socially overdosed. Long WhatsApp and Skype calls with people of all continents.
- It was wonderful to get out wearing masks and roam the city without hordes of tourists.
- One of the reasons that Czech Republic had a low number of deadly corona cases (less than 400) was probably due to the immediate shut down of borders.
- Prague is a charming and inspiring city. We created several YouTube videos for Facebook to encourage those homebound.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

- Please continue to pray with us for wisdom, guidance, peace, and unity in the churches broken down by this time and trials. We have peace of mind now but we are exhausted.
- Please pray for our recovery. We will be focused on writing, translating, and being available to those who seek our encouragement.

WORDS OF WISDOM

Peter Hammond, friend and fellow missionary in South Africa wrote:

Time is Life. Do not waste your time. Time is precious and valuable. Today many people say time is money, but time is far more valuable than that. You might get more money, but you will never get more time. When a person is late or wastes your time, they steal more than money, they steal part of your life.

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

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

<pavel.steiger@gmail.com>

<°))))><

You may mail your U.S. tax-deductible contributions to:

REACH BEYOND
P.O. BOX 39800
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80949-9800
U.S.A.

You may mail your Canadian tax-deductible contributions to:

REACH BEYOND
3 - 44 SALTSMAN DRIVE
CAMBRIDGE, ON N3H 4R7
CANADA

Attach to your check the following note:

**FOR THE MINISTRY OF
PAVEL & KLARA STEIGER
ACC # 100-110329**