



© Ivan Steiger MMXXI

***There is a way which seems right  
to a person, but its end is the way  
of death. (Da 2:21)***

**SEPTEMBER 2021  
DEAR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS OF  
THE REACH BEYOND MINISTRY  
TO THE PEOPLES  
OF CZECHIA AND SLOVAKIA**

A turbulent September unfolded hard-to-believe events in Afghanistan, with the memories of 9/11. There were West Coast fires, hurricane Ida raged up the East Coast, etc. Thank God, as far as we know, none of our close friends and family suffered serious damage.

Our son, three teenagers, and his wife in NH were Covid positive. Our



other son in Colorado had Covid about a couple of months ago.

On our end of the world, life remains calm. Masks are compulsory in public transportation and shopping centers, while outside they are mostly ignored. School has started with Covid testing, and the strong urge to mass vaccination, including children, continues. We experience daily pressure and scare tactics for a third dose, even though the number of infected and hospitalized is presently low. The Czech Republic has gone from least infected to most infected and back to least infected. According to some experts, the population was already exposed to Covid and they have some collective immunity. The bottom line, people are tired and many no longer trust the experts or the government instructions.

In a previous prayer letter, we shared that the new congregation we began to attend is cold and nonresponsive.

We have received several responses on this matter, not only from former missionaries who have served in CZ but

also from several local pastors who shared with us similar frustrations about the current state of the church. This means that even after a year, we are not anchored. It is nearly impossible to find a theologically and biblically sound church in the near vicinity. Children and youth ministries in some churches are active, but that is about all.

We took an extra step to bond with this church and joined a weeklong vacation retreat. Can you imagine a church retreat where, day by day, morning by morning, people do not greet each other; they do not smile or start small talk to get to know each other? Not even most of those we were acquainted with on Zoom Bible study showed any closeness, just total indifference.

Indeed, Czechs are usually reserved and formal. Normally, no stranger will address you, say hello, or smile. This mannerism is not the result of historical experience or the time of communism. Much has changed in the last 40 years, but the spirit of distrust persists. This is a result of a spiritual ice age.

**Just a few shared thoughts from those with firsthand experience:**

*The focus of salvation and the new birth, of church planting and discipling, had been replaced with the mission to pay for the building.*

*The building was still new... One Sunday a young couple came to church*

*and I'd not seen them before. The church had 75-90 people at the time. Afterward, this nicely dressed couple stood against the back wall waiting to be greeted. I said to the former pastor and interim leader, "Do you know that couple?" "No, I've never seen them before." I requested, "Will you please go welcome them?" He replied, "I could never greet a stranger in church." ... I went to another elder and was told again, "I could never talk to a stranger in church." I went to a third elder, a woman this time. I asked her to greet the visiting couple. She told me she was too busy doing other things. I went to a fourth man, a former elder but not active as an elder at the time. He told me, "Oh thank you, I'll go talk to them right now."*

*As I left church that day, I looked up to heaven and asked, "Father, was that a test today? I wonder if you will ever send another stranger to this church. Were they angels?"*

**Not all churches are like that.**

*... A few weeks later I visited a small Baptist church of 30 in the Czech-Moravian highlands because an English Camper would give her testimony in preparation for baptism the next week. I was the first person there...had to wait for the church building to be unlocked and the fire started in the stove that heated the church. One by one, people came in. Each adult saw me as*

*a stranger and each came to greet me...shake my hand...tried to chat with me. 100% greeted me whether they were 25 or 85. When they understood I was an American who still couldn't communicate in Czech, they would giggle, shake my hand even more warmly and some hugged me. The contrast between the two churches was amazing. God bless you...*

**This time words  
from a Czech pastor:**

*I would like to add the case that led to my leaving XY as the administrator. I was losing the meaningfulness of being a preacher when the priorities were Alpha courses, entertainment, and somewhere in the back, the Word, preaching, teaching, and theology. ... This made me lose more and more the logic of meaningful work. The church becomes a kind of club with some morality but no transformed born-again people.*

*Since 2000, I have been trying to get people to read the Bible more and take it seriously. That is why I founded our Czech organization for promoting Bible reading in groups in connection with the American Community Bible study. I did it interdenominationally because all Czech churches are in a similar situation. If you want to preach so that people accept as much as possible, it is not enough to teach them theology, but they need to stand on*

*their own feet and read, read, read. Then they will understand the sermon better and the word of God will transform them. I don't believe in transformation by a strong charismatic personality, I don't believe in experiential coercion like the man-centered conferences, etc. I believe that honest thorough and systematic reading and study of the Bible will change people's convictions and their character.*

Because we are "free," we attend small congregations or fellowships of believers who are not part of liberal churches of the post-communist era. We get one or two visits a week from believers who share with us similar frustrations. In the end, and face to face, we find a new delight and calling to serve in other capacities. People we met at the beginning of our ministry show up or their descendants come to us. These contacts do amaze us. There are former radio listeners and they remember what the programs were about. They remember topics we addressed years ago. We experience the amazing blessing and joy of knowing that our ministry has encouraged, is encouraging, and with God's help, will continue to encourage. The needs of those who come to see us inspire us.

At this time, we do not know where to look for a new church home or to what extent we will be involved in Prague (we have one last chance, the Bi-

ble Church in Kladno). The writing and translations keep us busy, excited, and optimistic. Klara is writing, translating articles and themes for the Wrestling for the Soul magazine and the Slovak Broadcast and Radio Logos website.

To say the least, life is not boring and we are not depressed. We know that this phase is for a reason. We can go to various places not only in the area but also in Slovakia, Poland ....

Recently we saw the movie about Czech Olympic gold medalist Emil Zatopek, a man who won three gold medals at the 1952 Olympics while setting world records in all of these events. He has become a legend of indomitable willpower that continues to inspire thousands of athletes around the world today. His motto was, "If you can't run anymore, speed up."

May his motto be the inspiration for our ministry:

***I have fought the good fight,  
I have finished the course.  
The Czech Bible translates this:  
I have fought the good fight,  
I have finished the race"  
(2Tm 4:7).***

### **PLEASE PRAY FOR**

- For the church in the postcommunist era.
- For Geoff Volker and his travel plans to see us in Prague. This trip was

postponed many times due to Covid travel restrictions.

### **PRAISES**

- Pavel's book is already in the hands of proofreaders in Poland. Their meeting in Poland went very well.
- Pavel is writing another book and translating one, which is needed here.

**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>

<°))))><

#### **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**