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You know *this*, my beloved brothers *and* sisters. Now everyone must be quick to **hear**, slow to speak, *and* slow to anger; for a man's anger does not bring about the righteousness of God. Therefore, ridding *yourselves* of all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not just **hearers** who deceive themselves. For if anyone is a **hearer** of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who has looked intently at the perfect law, the *law* of freedom, and has continued *in it*, not having become a forgetful **hearer** but an active doer, this person will be blessed in what he does. If anyone thinks himself to be religious, yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his *own* heart, this



person's religion is worthless. Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep one-self unstained by the world. (Jas 1:19-27)

**DECEMBER 2022**  
**DEAR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS OF**  
**THE REACH BEYOND**  
**MINISTRY TO THE PEOPLES**  
**OF CZECHIA AND SLOVAKIA**

The time of Christmas, the time of contemplating the approaching end of the year, allows us to reflect on how to approach another year ahead of us.

The time of safety and family gathering is the best gift we can get. **We pray for LOVE AND JOY.**

The year 2022 was not peaceful for many. The war in Ukraine continues and only the Lord knows for how long yet. **We pray for PEACE ON EARTH.**

The eve of November 17, the anniversary of the Velvet Revolution (the end of communist oppression in 1989) is celebrated as a national holiday. However, in this November a Ukrainian rocket landed in Poland. This event showed how close we are to the possibility of war spreading fur-

ther west. **We pray for THE INTEGRITY OF OUR LEADERS**

There is a saying in Czech "To je Boží dopuštění" or "It's God's allowing". This lamentation usually refers to a local catastrophe or is less intense than watching the destruction from afar. This common saying is used by both believers and nonbelievers.

**We pray for THOSE WHO NEED THE LORD.**

We all know the saying "Preaching water and drinking wine". It's the same as trying to mix water and oil. We can get an emulsion for a while, but in the end, they must separate again. Heed this verse:

*Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.*  
(Matthew 7:15)

**We pray for THE CHURCH AND ITS DISCERNMENT.**

We know that a better world will not rise from human effort to create heaven on earth. Our world is in deep trouble. **We pray for HIS WILL TO BE DONE.**

**JAN HUS / JOHN HUSS**

At this time we would like to introduce to you another courageous Czech who confronted difficult days as a faithful servant of God Almighty.

Born in the village of Husinec, Jan Hus (1372-1415) studied for the priesthood and received a Master's degree in 1396. In 1402 he was appointed preacher in Bethlehem Chapel. Jan Hus, when appointed Rector of Prague University at age 34, also began to preach Reformation principles (in the common language) in the Chapel of Bethlehem in Prague. Hus translated Wycliffe's

works into German, exposing superstitions, fraudulent *miracles*, and the sale of indulgences. In 1405, Hus denounced the alleged appearances of *Christ's blood* on communion wafers as an elaborate hoax. He condemned the sins of the clergy as *fornicators, parasites, money misers, fat swine, drunks, and gluttons*. He condemned the practice of simony (buying spiritual offices) and the taking of multiple paid positions without faithfully serving any. He described churches that sold indulgences as *brothels*.

Hus adopted Wycliffe's view of the Church as an elect community with Christ – not the pope – as its true Head. Hus' fiery sermons in the Bohemian language received widespread enthusiastic support. Hus believed pastors should be examples of God-fearing integrity. He preached vivid, accessible sermons, which captured the people's imaginations. Hus was described by his supporters as *a passionate Reformer*.

On the walls of the Chapel of Bethlehem were paintings contrasting the behavior of the popes and Christ. The pope rode a horse; Christ walked barefoot. Jesus washed the disciples' feet; the pope preferred having his feet kissed. Hus insisted that no human institution – including the church – can be ultimate in authority. Only God has ultimate authority.

In 1410 the Archbishop obtained from the pope a ban on teaching in chapels, including specifically the Bethlehem Chapel. This ban Hus refused to obey. In that same year, the Archbishop burned over 200 volumes of Wycliffe's works. Hus responded: *Fire does not consume truth. It is*

*always the mark of a little mind that it vents its anger on inanimate objects.* Hus defended Wycliffe's orthodoxy. Hus was summoned to Rome but wisely refused to go.

### **The Papacy Strikes Back**

Archbishop Zbynek excommunicated Hus. (Hus was excommunicated five times). Hus was described as *radical* and *dangerous*. Hus then openly attacked the pope's sale of indulgences in support of his war against Naples. The pope thereupon placed the City of Prague under a papal interdict. This meant that the entire city was placed under an ecclesiastical ban; all churches were closed, no masses were allowed, no confessions were received, and no marriages or burials were permitted. Until this time Hus had been protected by the king, university, and nobility from the wrath of the pope. But with the entire city in turmoil, the Reformer chose to go into exile. During this time Hus wrote: *On the Church*. He also preached in the villages and countryside.

### **Treachery at Constance**

Hus lived during The Great Schism when Europe was divided between two and then three rival popes who bitterly anathematized one another. A General Church Council was called at Constance in 1415 to heal 'The Great Schism' (that had raged from 1378). It was this Council of Constance, which aimed to bring the Schism to an end, that summoned Hus. Emperor Sigismund guaranteed Hus safe conduct in both directions, whatever the outcome of the case against him might be. However, upon arriving, Hus was imprisoned on orders of pope John XXII. Despite

the Imperial guarantee of safe conduct, Hus was taken through a mockery of a trial in which he was allowed no defense. Hus had hoped to present his views to the assembled authorities, but instead, he found himself a victim of a cruel Inquisition, which condemned him for heresies, which he had neither believed nor taught (including that he had claimed to be the fourth member of the Trinity!). Hus prayed aloud that Christ might forgive his judges and accusers.

### **Steadfast to the End**

Under pressure to recant Hus declared: ***"I would not, for a chapel full of gold, recede from the truth...the truth stands and is mighty forever."*** Hus stated that he would prefer to be burned in public than to be silenced in private *"so that all Christendom might know what I said in the end."*

On 6 July 1415, Hus was condemned to death and taken to the outskirts of the city of Constance to be burned. Hus prayed: *"O most holy Christ...strengthen my spirit...give me a fearless heart, a right faith, a firm hope, a perfect love, that for Thy sake I may lay down my life with patience and joy."*

On arriving at the execution ground, Hus knelt and prayed: *God is my witness that the evidence against me is false. I have never thought nor preached except with the one intention of winning men, if possible, from their sins. **In the truth of the Gospel I have written, taught, and preached; today I will gladly die.*** Hus died singing *Jesus, Son of the Living God, have mercy on me*. He was 43 years old.

### **Resistance to Rome Spreads**

After Hus' martyrdom, his followers organized a military resistance to the Holy Roman Empire. Remarkably, these vastly outnumbered Hussites repelled six crusades against them. These Hussites fought under Hus' motto: ***Truth conquers***. They proved that you could take on the Holy Roman Empire – and survive!

### **A Spiritual Heritage**

The Hussites became known as the Moravians. Under Count Nicholas Van Zinzendorf the Moravians started a prayer chain that lasted 150 years! During that extended prayer meeting, 2,400 Moravian missionaries were sent throughout the world. Moravians were instrumental in the conversion of John Wesley.

### **The Goose and the Swan**

One interesting anecdote is that Hus is accredited with making a prophecy at his death. *My goose is cooked!* he said. (Hus is the Bohemian word for the goose!) *But a hundred years from now a swan will arise whose voice you will not be able to silence.* Many saw Martin Luther as that voice, hence the prevalence of swans in Lutheran art and architecture. ***And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.*** John 8:31-32

Written by Peter Hammond

### **PRAISES AND PRAYERS**

The Lili book preview:

<https://fliphtml5.com/udsh/khge>

To conclude our Christmas wishes, our thanks are focused on our Lord for giving us a fruitful year, mutual love, fellowship, and joy that even as the world around us is crumbling, ours is standing on solid rock.

Our bi-monthly Electronic Prayer letter describing much more about our ministry is available on:

<https://reachbeyond.steiger.cz/newsletter/>

### **Enjoy Christmas in Prague:**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TaFiYxx\\_5IM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TaFiYxx_5IM)

### **TO HIM BE GLORY**

His Blessings, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year

**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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