

**THE STEIGER'S  
E-PRAYER & PRAISE REPORT  
December 2008**

With love and appreciation we send you another special bi-monthly  
E-mail Prayer & Praise Report (E-PPR) about Czech and Slovak ministry:  
WE ASKED—YOU PRAYED—HE ANSWERED:

***And, "YOU, LORD, IN THE BEGINNING LAID THE FOUNDATION  
OF THE EARTH, AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS;  
THEY WILL PERISH, BUT YOU REMAIN;  
AND THEY ALL WILL BECOME OLD LIKE A GARMENT,  
AND LIKE A MANTLE YOU WILL ROLL THEM UP;  
LIKE A GARMENT THEY WILL ALSO BE CHANGED.  
BUT YOU ARE THE SAME,  
AND YOUR YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END."  
(Hebrews 1:10-12)***

**Dear Friends and Partners of the HCJB Global Ministry  
To the Peoples in Czech and Slovak Republics**

It's interesting that mostly atheistic Czechs hang so vehemently on their Catholic Christmas traditions. We already mentioned a year ago how they resist western Santa. He is practically missing in Czech Christmas commercials and advertisements. Instead, one may see mangers and nativity scenes everywhere including Prague's Old-Town-Square.

Czechs have "Svatý Mikuláš" who is actually Santa Claus (Saint Nicholas). However, he is clothed as a bishop and accompanied by an angel and a devil. His time is the eve before December 6. He asks children whether they behaved well during the past year. Children tell him a rhyme or sing him a song. He and an angel pacify the devil who noisily accuses children of misbehavior. Then he presents the children gifts. In no way is this "Santa" connected with a sleigh or Rudolph the red nosed reindeer. The Czech Saint Nicholas, angel and devil compose an imperfect picture of our redeemer the Christ and our accuser the devil. We pray that today's Czechs would understand the deeper meaning of it. Only a few do...

One must understand that all small populations such as the Czechs and Slovaks (only 10 and 5 million souls) are inherently xenophobic. They are afraid to be dominated by any foreign customs since they see it, and properly so, as a potential loss of their own ethnic identity especially in this precipitously globalizing world.

So, there are some excerpts from a Czech Catholic Holiday Calendar below. Notice that it is interlaced with some very old pagan customs:

## CZECH HOLIDAY CALENDAR



**December 4** – St. Barbara’s Day—On this day a branch from a cherry tree is taken inside the kitchen and put into water. The branch then bursts into bloom during the Christmas season. This is considered good luck, and if the girl tending it is of age and not married and the branch blooms exactly on Christmas Eve, she will find a good man and marry him within a year.

**December 6** – St. Nicholas Day—This is the feast day of Sv. Mikulas (Santa Claus) to both Slovak and Czech children. Sv. Mikulas walks around the village in his long red robe, accompanied by an angel holding a large book and a quill pen (not anymore) and the devil who is rattling large chains. Sv. Mikulas asks the children if they have been good during the whole year. The child should sing a song or recite something for Sv. Mikulas. A bad child is told they could be put into the devil’s sack and taken to hell! On that evening if you have been good you could expect candy, nuts, fruit and small gifts in your shoes. If, on the other hand, you were not so good, expect potatoes, rocks, or lumps of coal. A tradition was that most children got at least one rock, as no child is perfect.

**December 24** – Christmas Eve—Preparations are made for celebrating Christmas: the tree is decorated, cookies are made, and bowls of apples and nuts are set around the house. A traditional evening meal of carp and potato salad is served.

**December 25** – Christmas Day—Families gather around the table for big noon meal.

**December 26** – St. Stephen’s Day—Children used to go caroling for treats.

**December 31** – New Year’s Day—Is celebrated with eggnog.

**January 6** – Three King’s Day or Epiphany—Christmas tree is taken down and some places hold a three Kings Procession.

### Latest events

As we mentioned in our last letter, we used our frequent miles to visit our kids and grandkids. We had three tasks on our mind. Our first days in NYC were exciting as ever. We had great fellowship with our supporting church and church friends. This is ethnically the most colorful church we know. It is composed of, perhaps, forty ethnic

peoples. We stayed in Flushing, and since we always visit cemeteries we discovered the burial place of Luis Armstrong. Actually, we were told about it.

Our stay in New Hampshire was another highlight. We were there during election time. Pavel was hoping to cast in his vote. However, we have residency in no State so we cannot register. Anyway, his vote would have been on the losing side. Grandkids are fantastic and little Jordan picked up some Steiger genes. She is a vibrant, happy baby and everyone adores her. Emma is a ballerina—she is very serious about that and we happily laughed while we attended one class. A birthday celebration was the pinnacle of our stay. Sam is now eight and we sure noticed a big change. Nathan is seven, Emma three and Jordan will be two next July. If everything goes well for the family, they would like to come visit us here in Prague next May.

The third part of our trip was true rest in Florida. Last year our friend's mother offered to let us stay in her apartment in Miami. How can you pass up an offer like that? We felt the Lord had prepared another mansion for us. We had a marvelous time, beautiful weather and no responsibilities. Actually we lived without internet; we checked our mail occasionally in the library. BIG THANKS to everyone who was part of our stay in the USA this time.

We are kind of sad because of the recent economic crisis and all the bail outs. Pavel's concern is that the USA may become the USSA (The United Socialist States of America.) We are reliving times from our past. Government involvement and controls, entitlements, hopes of people that they can get something for nothing. European socialism was built over a long time and it is the main cause of why people are taxed to death.

We are overwhelmed to see the magnitude of debt in most of the countries. The Czech Republic is so far holding relatively well. Its banks were collapsing about 10 years ago. The economy is slowing down; some foreign investors are closing down factories. Most of the people have their savings in banks, not invested in stocks or similar instruments. They started to use credit cards and personal loans just a few years ago. Thus, individual and governmental indebtedness is insignificant in comparison to the USA. Combined with socialist entitlements, this is the main reason why the Czech people can live on an average salary of about \$12,000 per year and retired people on about half of it.

### **Ministry progress**

We have bought most of the electronic hardware and equipment for broadcasting in Slovakia. Target day to be on the air is sometime in January 2009. Please pray that all loose ends will fit together. All people involved need His protective hand over them. Please pray namely for Milan Hudec who is absolutely instrumental in this project. He

has done all this in his free time along with his full-time job. He matches 10 % of your contributions from his own pocket! Inspect our progress below. You see the mast without antenna. It is fastened at the top of a 10-story building that is on a hill overlooking the entire city of Banská Bystrica. It is such a beautiful picture. It looks too good to be true. It is true! We have slipped our foot in the door. It is the first evangelical FM station in all of the former Czechoslovakia. We pray that additional antennas will follow:



### **Reunions and reconnecting**

While in Florida we visited our friends we know from Indonesia. We have not seen them for 18 years. It is amazing how quickly we reattached. We saw so many alligators while we drove Highway 41 from Miami to Naples to visit them. Our last highlight was reconnecting with our exchange student from Germany, who we hosted in LA during the 1984/85 school year. Through the internet our son Filip found that he became a medical doctor—cardiologist. We read the following about his groundbreaking work:

*In Hamburg the cardiologists and cardiac surgeons working together are taking part in a new study called AMADEUS™ that utilizes catheters to repair the heart valves—without a heart-lung machine, without open chest surgery and without the high risk of operation. This approach—called percutaneous annuloplasty—is the world premiere and it can bring an alternative option for many patients. “It looks like this procedure can help some patients avoid open heart surgery”—says Hermann Reichensperner. The chief of cardiac surgery at the University affiliated Heart and Transplantation clinic that is the partner clinic of University Clinic in Eppendorf (UKE).*

Klara already talked to him. He asked about our health and said if you have clogged arteries, here I am. We are looking forward to see him and his family here or in Hamburg.

### Christmas Holidays

We planned to spend Christmas at home. We open our home to friends and relatives living here.

This was our plan. However, Klara’s mom passed away totally unexpectedly on December 10<sup>th</sup>. We praise the Lord she departed in dignity—without suffering. After we entered her room, deciding what to do first, we first turned her radio on. A few minutes later we heard “Amazing Grace” in English. This was on a secular station, not relating to anything what was said before or after. Perhaps it was due to Christmassy mood that is now prevalent on all stations. It was a touch from heaven for us. Next week on the 18<sup>th</sup> we will have a small memorial service in the Chapel of the Retirement Home where she lived. Please pray that His Name will be gloried and testimony will be clear to all old ladies that will attend. Most of them are non-believers. In the meantime we have many things to take care and our Christmas will be without usual.

### Printed Prayer letter gap explanation

We missed our regular Prayer letter in November 2008. First of all we were traveling and resting. We could prepare our next mailing State-side, however we received following message about our printing from HCJB:

*...Also, due to reduction in staff we will be unable to offer this service (printing and mailing) from this point forward. I can recommend a mail house—The Mail Room, Inc. They are in Colorado Springs and we use them for our large mailings. Their minimum quantity is 200 so you should have no problem. – We hope so. Now we are in the process of setting new service.*

## Prayer support – we need you more than ever

- *Be patient with us and our mailing progress*
- *Pray for Slovak broadcasting and timely launching in January*

To conclude, we wish you a very MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR! It is our prayer that your heart will be filled with the joy and peace that is found only in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Many Thanks

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*Your HCJB Global Voice missionaries in Czech and Slovak Republic  
Our eyes are focused on the Lord and His guidance.  
With love and appreciation,  
Klara and Pavel Steiger*

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<p><b>You may mail your U.S.</b> Tax-deductible contributions to: HCJB GLOBAL P.O. BOX 39800 COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80949-9800 U.S.A.</p> <p><b>You may mail your Canadian</b> Tax-deductible contributions to: HCJB GLOBAL 3 - 44 SALTSMAN DRIVE CAMBRIDGE, ON N3H-4R7 CANADA</p> <p><b><u>Attach to your check</u></b> <b><u>the following note:</u></b> <b><u>FOR THE CZECH PROJECTS MINISTRY</u></b> <b><u>ACC # 577850</u></b></p>
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