



**HOME MINISTRY JULY 2024
DEAR FRIENDS AND PARTNERS OF THE
REACH BEYOND MINISTRY
TO THE PEOPLES OF CZECHIA
AND SLOVAKIA**

JULY 5, IN CZECHIA

While America celebrates Independence Day on the 4th of July, there are two national holidays in our country that date back to long before the discovery of America. The first is for Roman Catholics and the second is for Protestants. For the majority of the population, these are just two days off from work.

The first holiday concerns the arrival of the Thessalonian brothers, Christian missionaries and saints Cyril and Methodius. Thessaloniki, the former capital of Greek Macedonia, also known as Thessalonica, became part of the Roman Empire. The Apostle Paul founded the first church here.

Between 863 and 885, Cyril and Methodius brought not only the message of Christ, but also literacy, a canon law for the laity that forbade pagan sacrifices and oaths, to the territory of Great Moravia and the western Slavic parts of Central Europe. Until that time, German missions had been operating in the territory of Great Moravia, although only three languages of worship, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, were originally recognized by the Pope.

The brothers Cyril and Methodius translated the Bible and the liturgical books into Old Slavonic and succeeded in defending before the Pope the use of the liturgy in an unauthorized local language. The Gospel epistles had to be read first in Latin and then in Old Slavonic.

The main contribution of the mission of the Oracles was the proclamation of the Gospel, the creation of the Scriptures and their translation into the local language. The clarity brought the Scriptures

closer to the people, and the knowledge of the Scriptures led to criticism of the Roman Catholic Church and subsequently to the crisis of the Western Church. The 16th century saw the worldwide Reformation; the doctrines of the Reformation led to the emergence of Protestantism with its emphasis on the Bible and the Holy Spirit. Protestantism actually means to be pro both testaments, i.e., to be pro-gospel. This movement led to subsequent religious conflicts and wars.

JULY 6, IN CZECHIA

After the fall of communism, the first holiday was instituted by the Roman Catholic Church. The second holiday is set aside for the Protestants and refers to the commemoration of the event when the reformer Master John Huss (Jan Hus in Czech), was burned at the stake by the Roman Catholic Pope on July 6, 1415. John Huss, although ordained a Roman Catholic priest, was a religious thinker, university teacher, reformer and preacher who sharply criticized the moral decline of the Roman Catholic Church, the accumulation of wealth, commerce, the enrichment of the Church through the sale of indulgences, the growing influence of the Church in secular politics, and sacrilege. Thousands of people from all walks of life in Prague came to hear Huss preach in Czech. The burning of Huss in Constance led to the dispute between Utraquists (Calixtines), and Roman Catholics in the so-called "Hussite Wars"; the struggle for religious freedom and reform of the church and society lasted from 1419 to 1436. The political and social, demographic and economic conflicts of the 14th and 15th centuries caused the so-called crisis of late medieval Europe and the modern transition. The legacy of John Huss for our time is the motto:

*"Seek the truth, hear the truth, learn the truth,
love the truth, defend the truth until death, for the
truth will set you free."*

**DO NOT LAY UP FOR YOURSELVES
TREASURES ON EARTH**

In the same spirit of these religious holidays, we are reminded of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, where he warns that earthly treasures have no lasting value, but that we should reveal God's mighty deeds to the world. The wealth of believers is not in the amount of accumulated possessions and worldly glory, but it is in fulfilling God's will that we recognize that our earthly life is temporary, but our daily lives and actions can reach into eternity, for it is written:

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)

THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

What does it mean to lay up treasures in heaven? Pavel is a careful administrator. This is a good time to look back and remember the extraordinary dedication and generosity of all of you. Over the last 34 years, a total of 55 churches have supported our ministry on a regular or one-time basis, plus 347 individuals have contributed. In addition, we know that we are prayed for and interceded for by countless others who are interested in the ministry in Czechia and Slovakia. Many have shown us thoughtfulness and hospitality in word and deed, to the point that we have gladly returned again and again to encourage one another. In this way, friendships and bonds have been formed that are strong and lasting. We often say goodbye with the words, "Goodbye, if not here, then..." and gesture to each other to show where our true home is. Many have left this world and are rejoicing in the presence of God.

Reach Beyond's ministry to the Czech and Slovak speaking people is a testimony of how the treasures of believers are stored up in heaven. Since 1987, thousands of listeners have been reached through radio programs, hundreds of which have been preserved and are still available in the radio archives. Many thousands of readers have been reached through the magazine, "Wrestling for the Soul," many have been brought to Christ. Radio and publishing have become an inspiration, an opportunity to lay up treasures in heaven. Dozens of books and publications have been translated and published with the help of many.

We currently send our Prayer Letter by mail to 131 and by email to 260 fellow servants. 7 churches and 26 individuals have supported us in 2023.

JULY PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

For those who do not receive the electronic prayer letter by e-mail, we will briefly summarize the main events of June:

- The May trip to America and the marriage of our first grandson in NH was a time of family celebration.

- It remains a mystery how the son of parents both born in the small dormant kingdom of Bohemia found the blue-eyed princess in a remote area of NH. The bride's grandfather became a preacher in the area in 1988. No wonder there were about 250 guests at the wedding.
- The North Shore Baptist Church in Queens and Pastor Ed Moore gave us a warm welcome.
- The visit to Manhattan was more nostalgic. This time we didn't walk tens of thousands of steps like before. Our first stop was the New Gallery near Central Park, where a portrait of the Lady in Gold (Gustav Klimt 1903-7) is on display.
- The next stop was NJ; just a 40-minute bus ride from Manhattan. Our friend Jana was one of our first contacts in the early days of our ministry in what was then Czechoslovakia. She was the first in her family to believe and involved us in evangelizing her siblings and their families
- June was an eventful month. Before leaving for the States, Geoff and I visited the newly opened Lety Holocaust Memorial in South Bohemia. Two scheduled ministry meetings and classes in Prague and Usti were a great blessing and encouragement.
- The radio program in Slovakia, Ask Pastor John, continues as does the internet broadcast. We look forward to meeting Milan Hudec in Slovakia in September, Lord willing.
- Pavel is making good progress with the English translation of his book.

***Thank you for your prayers, support and participation in our life and in the Czech and Slovak ministries.
In His sovereign grace,***

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