



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

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:1-7)

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

While some believers in America are anxiously following events in the Middle East in light of the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the "last generation" is expressing concern about the state of the world and civilization. Some turn their attention to the Millennium and the joyful expecta-

tion of peace, while others see themselves as the generation that can still reverse the climatic collapse of our planet.

If these activists partially succeed in ending the use of fossil fuels, oil production, internal combustion engines, and imposing restrictions on air and sea travel by 2030, the world may face the darkness of an ice age. Years ago in Spain, we saw truckers blocking highways and within days grocery stores were empty.

The eschatological end of this world is also expected by almost all world and marginal religions; especially in times of war, political, economic and financial crises, natural and ecological disasters and social unrest. Historical circumstances do not repeat themselves, but without the knowledge and experience of previous generations, future generations can hardly be prepared for the future.

On September 1, 2024, the 85th anniversary of the most terrible war in history passed without the attention of the media and political commentators. World War II affected more than 100 million people in 30 countries. Sixty-two million people paid with their lives during six years of war, rage, and suffering, crimes against humanity, genocide and massacres. How did this happen? Let us mention one memory after another.

LESSON ONE

In March 1938, Austria ceased to exist and voluntarily became part of Hitler's Germany. This was called annexation. A year later, Nazi Germany incorporated Bohemia and Moravia into the Reich as a protectorate in order to maintain "peace" in Europe. Bohemia and Moravia was forced to cede part of its territory to Nazi Germany without resistance. The world not only watched these events, it was silent. Six months later, Nazi Germany invaded Poland.

It is little known, and not mentioned in history books, that the Soviet Union signed a non-aggression pact with Hitler's Germany before the outbreak of World War II. This was followed by the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact to divide the spheres of Europe.

On September 17, 1939, Nazi Germany invaded Poland and a few days later, hand in hand with the Soviet Red Army, redrew the borders so that Poland ceased to exist. Two months later, the Red Army invaded Finland, which, unlike Czechoslovakia, had the courage to fight back. A peace treaty was signed in March 1940, but Finland was caught between two millstones.

The alliance between Nazi Germany and the Communist Soviet Union lasted barely two years. On June 22, 1941, Hitler invaded the USSR and waged a war of extermination based on racial ideology.

The conflict of World War II lasted from 1939 to 1945. After Nazi Germany surrendered, Europe was divided into East and West.

LESSON TWO

How and why do wars start? Can we learn from history?

The Western powers and the Soviet Union became partners in a new peaceful world order. In other words, the real winner of World War II was the Soviet Union. It took the following territories: (1) a large part of Finland; (2) Estonia; (3) Latvia; (4) Lithuania; (5) half of Poland; (6) East Prussia with Königsberg; (7) Subcarpathian Ruthenia from Czechoslovakia; (8) Bessarabia from Romania, which is now Moldova; (9) the Kuril Islands, and in the Far East, half of the island of Sakhalin from Japan; and finally (10) control over East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Bulgaria. The Baltic countries were then devastated by Stalin's deportations, executions, resettlements and russification of the population. The USSR suppressed the liberation movement in East Germany (1953), in Hungary (1956), and the "Prague Spring" in Czechoslovakia (1968). The countries of Central Europe did not regain their sovereignty until after the fall of communism in 1989. In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed economically and the republics of Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia were freed from Soviet domination.

Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin is now trying to re-establish the Soviet Union to its "original borders" and to control Central Europe.

LESSON THREE

Today, some Central European countries are part of the European Union. The independent Baltic republics became members of NATO. Finland (2023) and Sweden (2024) have joined. The exception is NATO's smallest member in terms of population. Iceland is the only independent state with no armed forces of its own, only a lightly armed border guard. Nevertheless, Iceland is increasing its own defense budget. NATO planes guard Iceland's airspace.

All six Arctic states are strengthening their security within NATO. What else do Central Europe and the Baltic states have in common? A long history of betrayals and bad experiences with a large, aggressive neighbor.

DID YOU NOTICE?

After centuries of historical experience with Russia, Poland is emerging as one of the most powerful military forces in Europe. As of 2024, the Polish military ranks third in NATO, behind only the United States and Turkey in terms of personnel strength within the alliance. With over 216,000 military personnel, Poland has surpassed other major European NATO members like France, Germany, and Italy. The Polish government is heavily investing in its military, aiming to have the strongest land army in Europe within the next few years, largely in response to growing security concerns in the region. Poland's defense spending is projected to reach 5% of GDP, one of the highest in NATO, and the country has been modernizing its military with advanced weaponry, including tanks and fighter jets from the United States and South Korea.

SEPTEMBER IS BACK-TO-SCHOOL MONTH

Summer ends, meteorologically on August 31st, astronomically usually on September 23rd, when the autumnal equinox ends. The

return to normalcy means traffic jams, crowded trams, crowds and memories.

The past few weeks have given us the opportunity to take a closer look at the hospital environment and the long-term health care orientation. Pavel's brother Ivan remains in intensive care. He is connected to several monitors, receives artificial nutrition, and breathes partially through a tracheostomy tube. His condition remains serious. After weeks in an unconscious state, he beginning to respond in small ways, nodding his head, squeezing his hand, stretching his leg. The right side of his body remains stiff. He is slowly learning to swallow and cooperates with the rehabilitation staff. The battle is not yet won. We don't know how badly his brain is damaged. After weeks in intensive care, resistant bacteria were found in his intubated organs. His consciousness oscillates between eternity and an earthly existence that has a beginning and an end. Thank you all for your prayers. Let's keep praying, because the battle for Ivan's soul is still to be won.

LILI

Klara is working on several literary projects that focus on events that should not be forgotten. One of them was the project of Lili, co-founder of the Czech and Slovak Voice of the Andes short wave radio broadcasting. We prayed that the comics story of her life, a Jewish girl who was sent to the Theresienstadt concentration camp at the age of 16, would be told. Not only did she survive, but shortly after her return she married the Christian man who had been waiting for her all along. Lili became a believer and after the communist takeover, the whole family emigrated to Ecuador. There she met HCJB World Radio missionaries. Lili and her husband built a Christian retreat center, and their children, born in Ecuador, are serving the Lord. What a privilege to know and love such a family. It was a joy and a privilege to have the book translated and printed. Lili lived to see the book published before passing on to glory at the age of 99.

Her legacy has tremendous significance, especially in this day and age when the younger generation is experiencing anxiety, depression and self-harm or suicide. Life is too precious and can be appreciated through trials and sufferings. Living in a virtual world of peace and prosperity without realizing that it may all come to an end can be hopeless.

THE RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS

The next project goes back to the wartime deportations of Jews to the Theresienstadt concentration camp. This fascinating story concerns Pavel's family, his father's cousin, and the small Moravian town of Tršice. The dramatic story of the hiding of a family of four would have been forgotten forever, but thanks to the initiative of the niece of the main character of the story (born and raised in San Francisco), it came to life. The first book Klara used was *The Diary of Otto Wolf*, first translated and published in the USA in 1986. Although the diary was originally written in Czech, it was first published here 25 years later, in 2011, with little interest. Many similar stories have been written, but this project is exceptional. Klara has the opportunity to supplement the original story with the written memories and documents of those who lived at the time. It is not often that one can follow the lives of their descendants. In addition, Pavel remembers from his childhood a number of people who were involved in the events of that time. They all had one thing in common: they kept silent about the event. They lived for four years in fear that the Nazis would execute their families.

It is almost a detective project, perhaps beyond Klara's abilities, but it is worth a try. She keeps finding new information all the time. The atmosphere during the wartime events in the Protectorate is a fascinating picture of how people react in times of real danger and oppression. The additional experience is personal contact with descendants of both sides of the story, whether they lived here, emigrated, or were born and raised in Ameri-

ca. Now they have dual citizenship and we have become friends.

Klara's goal is to find answers to the emotional struggles left by some of the unanswered and unresolved questions of the descendants. The challenge is to understand that emotional reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles comes only through Jesus Christ.

THIS IS MY LIFE

The third project Klara has begun is to write the story of her life for our children and grandchildren. The fact that the text needs to be translated into English takes much longer.

Only recently has Klara begun to marvel at the plan and purpose God has for each generation and each individual. Only a lifetime of hindsight reveals the connections, the kaleidoscope of individual shards that are a foretaste of eternity.

***Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of
them, the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.
(Ps 139:16)***

The Indonesian language has just one special word *belum* meaning *not yet but already*. We used to hear and use it often.

Klara started with the birth of her grandmother in Ukraine in 1900. Her mother was born in 1923. As a child she survived the Stalinist famine of 1932-1933. At the beginning of World War II, at the age of 17, she was taken to forced labor in Germany where she met my father.

PRAISE AND PRAYER REQUESTS

- We are thankful for today's medical care, which is not only high quality, but more importantly, available. We have four top-notch facilities within a 5-mile radius. Without medical intervention and medication, Pavel would not have survived a ruptured appendix (1978), Covid-19 (2020), and heart attack in November 2023. Only through God's intervention did he survive. Therefore, we appreciate the opportunities to serve for His glory all the more. There is no need to fear the news of coming tribulations, disasters,

wars, crises, but we must be prepared to meet our Creator in every time and age. The Lord of life and death (1 Sam. 2:6) determines physical healing, vitality, and the time to pass away.

- The Brno Conference on Creation and Evolution was interesting. Attendance was not great. Some retired pastors we have known for years mentioned that churches are not interested in topics like creation or eschatology. They are focused on all kinds of involvement and roles of the church in modern times.
- Over the weekend we fellowshiped with growing young and vibrant church in Kuřim (near Brno).
- During the summer, we enjoyed visitors from different parts of the world.
- We are looking forward to the visit of our younger son Vit in October. Last time we celebrated together Klara's birthday in NY, when she turned 50. This time we are not planning any adventurous expedition together, but a stay worthy of our astonishing age, the sum of 220 years.
- Pavel is writing another book. Translations of the previous book are in progress.
- The last tribute goes to our long-time supporter, missionary Gordon W., who gave "100+1" times to our ministry. Gordon passed away at the age of 101.

***Thank you for your prayers, support and
participation in our life and in the
Czech and 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.

**Attach to your check the following note:
FOR THE MINISTRY OF
PAVEL & KLARA STEIGER
ACC # 100-110329**