

Dear friends,

The night before we were to leave for Moscow, Yeltsin's troops opened fire on the parliament building. He declared a state of emergency, and our state department told Americans not to go to Moscow. The next morning, one hour before we were to leave for the airport, a call came from AIMS office in Virginia Beach...the outreach was canceled. Eighteen church planting teams were told to stay home.

It was a shock and a disappointment. However, Jackie said to me "Don't unpack!" I've learned to respect her prophetic nudges, but I was pretty sure we wouldn't go...How could 72 people going to a dozen cities be rescheduled on short notice?

Bill Moberly, our AIMS regional rep., tossed and turned all night. In the morning he faxed Virginia Beach, and urged them to reconsider. God was on the move...by that night the word came that we would probably go. Wednesday A.M. at 9:30 the call came..."Your plane leaves at 11:00 a.m.!" Glory to God, we were on the way...skipping Moscow and going straight to Ukraine! 39 hours later (three planes to Kiev, and an overnight train from there) we arrived in our assigned city of Krivoy Rog, happy to be part of such a glorious adventure!

"Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest."

These words of Jesus have been ringing in my ears for years now. They came like an avalanche into my soul last May 1, when Howard Foltz of AIMS — just back from the former Soviet Union — spoke to our Watchmen's gathering. He preached through tears about the whitest, most ripened harvest that the world has ever known. In that little meeting was birthed an outreach that was to launch several church planting teams from the Twin Cities into Russia and Ukraine.

On October 6 — two days late due to the trouble in Moscow — these teams flew to Ukraine and Russia, along with a dozen other teams from around the US. At least 16 new churches were planted, and several thousand people gave their hearts to Jesus.

Jackie and I (with Ed, Brian and Betty) were sent to Krivoy Rog, a city of 900,000 souls in the heart of Ukraine. It is actually a "necklace" of communities 100 miles long and 20 miles wide, built around 21 iron mines, where few churches exist. We had come to help one of these existing churches birth a new one in a part of the city where 50,000 people had no church. Why were we needed? More people will come to see and hear Americans!

So much happened while there, it seemed like "the sun stood still" during the few days we were in Krivoy Rog. In addition to the evangelistic rallies for which we had come, we also ministered in a high school for gifted young people and in the church which was our partner in church planting.

We were there just long enough to observe the difficulties of the Ukrainian people with practical things — no gas in the gas stations...few goods in the shops...things like toothpaste or even newspaper to wrap a loaf of bread was scarce. But we were amazed at great hospitality shown us, and they fed us with the best they could find — at great inconvenience and sacrifice.

We had two evangelistic rallies, attended by about 1400 people in total. At least 600 people made a first time decision to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The first service of the new church was held in the same place a few days after we left. Please pray for the new pastor Paul (age 29) and his wife Svieta and their four children. He is a Ukrainian with a shepherd's heart and a love for people. Gregory, (age 33) pastor of the "mother church", is Paul's cousin, so there will be a good support for him right in Krivoy Rog. Project World, the mission agency working with these church planting projects, will continue to train both these pastors and provide spiritual oversight for their churches.

Can such a beautiful thing happen in only a few days? Can hundreds of people hear of Jesus and accept Him, and a new church come into being where there was none — in so short a time? We were there, and it was happening! Six organizations cooperated in birthing this church: Prayer International, our home church, AIMS, CBN broadcasting, Project World, and an existing church in Krivoy Rog. Only by working together was such a glorious thing possible.

Is anything more important to God than the salvation of souls and the establishment of His church?

From Krivoy Rog we took the train 26 hours to Moscow, accompanied by pastor Paul, who waited on us and served us abundantly with food which Svieta and Helina (Gregory's wife) had prepared for our journey. As soon as he knew we were safely in our Moscow hotel he got on the next train to ride 26 hours right back home to Krivoy Rog!

In Moscow we heard reports from all the teams, who all told similar stories of God's faithfulness and of many people coming to Christ. Then, rising at 2:30 a.m., we were all bussed to the airport, and were homeward bound.

It is clear to Jackie and me that we *rode on the wind of prayer* all through this journey. Thank you for praying. The results are yours along with all who had a part.

We remain grateful for your love and concern for us, and a special thanks to those of you who have given financially to our family and ministry. Your gifts are seed sown into the Lord's work. May you experience His harvest in your life!

May the Lord bless you abundantly as you trust Him with all of your heart...remember, He is absolutely trustworthy. He cannot fail.

Yours in Christ,

John and Jackie