



December, 1994

Dear friends,

We bring you holiday greetings from eastern Ukraine! We are writing this letter from the city of Kraspoarmeysk, which means "Red Army". We were to be in the town of Gorlovka this week, but plans must sometimes change. We have been with pastor Leonid, who has started many churches in this region. Hundreds of new believers are in these new churches. The worship is energetic, and the preachers are zealous. Most of the believers, however, have no Bibles.

Few cars are on the road and buses run intermittently, due to lack of fuel. People seem to be able to put food on their table (we have been fed royally). but the monthly incomes are \$60 or less. Many people only get \$5 a month, and with rapid inflation some of the elderly have had heart failure.

Our flights to Ukraine were without incident, and we were met in Kiev by two wonderful ladies from Krivoy Rog who accompanied us to the train and then back to their city. The worst trial was glare ice on the ground, making the train station very dangerous. Some people slid off the platforms under the waiting trains. We barely escaped such a fate ourselves!

Our pastor friends Gregori and Pavel met us in Krivoy Rog, and we stayed in Gregori and Galena's home. The first night we taught in the Bible school - a house packed with people. We spoke about how faith works, and we all interceded for the three churches for which Gregori is responsible. None are legally registered, nor have they the formal right to have property and build churches, but Gregori has been given property by government officials on which to build a church; some of these officials are even providing materials to build! Unheard of!

The next night we spoke in Gregori's church (150 in attendance), prayed with half the church for victory over sin and led twenty others in the sinner's prayer. A long line of sick people kept us praying until late, and many testified later that they had been healed. The third day found us ministering for ten straight hours right in Gregori's home, first to those with addictions, then to leaders. In the evening the room overflowed with young converts and unbelievers, including several alcoholic husbands. I spoke on Jesus forgiving the woman caught in adultery, and at the invitation to accept Christ, ten or more crowded in the middle of the tiny sitting room. It was a tender moment as these dear people prayed with tears for their sins to be forgiven and to receive Christ.

The next day found Jackie in one home teaching women, and I in another home teaching men - through an unsaved woman interpreter! Jackie had an unsaved Jewish lady as her interpreter! These two fine ladies were our mouths in Krivoy Rog. We preached, ministered to the sick, prayed for the baptism in the Spirit, discussed church problems and everything else. . . all through unconverted interpreters!

In another meeting we prepared thirty new converts for water baptism, and led eight or ten of them into the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Another time we spoke to leaders of the churches; two times we taught on family - a great need here, and prayed with many regarding family problems. We had the joy of ministering in pastor Pavel's church, which we helped start one year ago. About 75 were in attendance; we taught them about being seated with Jesus in the heavenly places.

We left Krivoy Rog on Thanksgiving Day with pastor Leonid, who had come from Krasnoarmeysk to get us. We bounced by bus across eastern Ukraine, the road passing through huge farm fields with rich black soil, plowed and ready for spring planting. Some of these fields were so large they stretched

over the horizon. Their beauty is marred by the fact that individual farms were eliminated under Communist rule, forcing farmers into these huge collectives.

Krasnoarmeysk is just a short distance from the western Russian border. We ministered in several young churches here, teaching on the person and work of Jesus Christ, and ministering to the sick. In most meetings people came for salvation, and some were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The pastor's home is a typical Ukrainian house of brick with a metal roof. It has a small yard with chickens, ducks a goat, a dog and an outhouse - which we came to know well. Water comes from the well, except for the odd day when it actually comes out of the faucet in the house. The house is warm, heated by city gas, and the electricity is only off for part of the evening.

Shopping seems to take place mostly on weekends when a giant open market rises in town, with everything from food to wedding dresses sold by small vendors. Jackie went out Sunday at 6 in the morning in snow and ice to shop for teacups in this open market. There was a traffic jam, and a huge crowd! She didn't find any teacups, but found Italian mohair scarves made in India and imported by Georgians. They were put to use immediately. Jackie proved it again: "When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping!"

We want to thank you for praying for us and for the Ukrainians while we are here. Keep praying! We will be home on December 14. Please pray for us during the days after we get home. Many times Satan tries to attack right after a missionary journey, with sickness and discouragement. Please stand with us as we quickly "shift gears" from overseas to family and Christmas season. Please also keep praying for Ukraine. There are many needs here; we will let you know later how you can help the Ukrainian believers.

Today we leave by train for Kherson, near the Black Sea - a twenty four hour journey. We wonder what adventures await us!

**Jackie and I wish you a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**

The story of Jesus's birth never loses its wonder. God Himself took on flesh, actually becoming a baby! No babies in creation are more vulnerable than human babies. How could the creator become so vulnerable and weak as to be born a baby? He was not even born in a dignified manner. It appeared that He was illegitimate and His birth seemed ill timed to his parents being on a journey. Then, when they needed emergency housing, there was none available! They ended up with the animals.

Yet, it was exactly as the Father wanted it. Such a birth displayed the majestic humility of God, His awesome fearlessness, and His total preparation. He needed neither army, nor fanfare, nor armor for His Son. God wrapped Him in seven pounds of humanity, with total assurance that one day He would sit on His Throne as King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

And He will reign for ever and ever! In English, Russian, Telegu or Achenese . . . the response in the same: "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!"

We love you!

Yours in Christ,  
John and Jackie