



## Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie



Special Edition, Dec. 21, 1997

Dear Friends,

We want to wish you a very merry Christmas! Jesus is the Lord and Savior of the world!

Last Wednesday we returned from Krivoy Rog, Ukraine. It was twenty below zero with a big wind chill the night we stood outside waiting for the train back to Kiev. We saw no Christmas trees. Christmas is celebrated on January 7 in that part of the world. Besides, trees are for New years, not Christmas. But they are rarely available, and few have money to buy one.

For some reason we no longer feel far away from home when we are in Krivoy Rog. Perhaps it's because we've been there enough to make it feel like a second home. Perhaps it's because the people are familiar friends now, like a spiritual family. Or, perhaps it's just the presence of the Lord that makes us feel at home wherever we are.

Going from church gathering to church gathering, it was a joy to say hello to the people we have come to love (and who lavish so much love on us -- they make us feel like royalty!). It was also great to see many new faces in the meetings! Once again we had the privilege of leading many to the Lord for the first time. In a midweek service at a church which we helped plant on our first journey here, forty people came to the Lord in one service! That many more also came to be filled with the Spirit (some whole families) and then we prayed with many for healing. What fun it is to watch the Holy Spirit bless people and change their lives. Countenances change dramatically when Jesus comes in and fills people with His Spirit. Healings sometimes happened as we watch. Others we hear about when we return the next time. We visited a village church where a woman, whose eyes sparkled, told of asking Jackie to pray for her alcoholic husband and her family last time we were here. Since then, not only did he get saved, but 15 other family members did also, some of whom were with her in the meeting, bursting with joy in the Lord!

Listen folks: once you have tasted the joy of serving God's harvest of souls, you will be spoiled for ordinary life. Go get involved somewhere, or come along with us! You were made for this harvest time. You were saved to be involved in the greatest revival in the history of the church, which is already happening. If it isn't happening where you are, then cry out to God for it to come. There are too many places to get touched by God's fires of revival, and your life is too short and too valuable to miss what God is doing.

Pastor Jeff Orluck, who travelled with us, visited a village church pastored by Galena and her two children in their late teens. The three of them work at jobs all day, then travel by bus and foot for a three hour round trip every evening to take care of this church. It has been a village of violence and great darkness, and ALL the converts in this church were all drug addicts, alcoholics, and mentally ill. Last year the church was only a few broken people. We talked to them about walking the village and "redeeming the land" in intercession. This they did, having communion regularly on the streets, and praying over the ground literally, ground that had know so much violence and bloodshed. Now they have twenty-four solid members, people healed and set free by Jesus. **With just those twenty four, they have become a twenty-four hour a day, seven day a week, house of prayer!** Each member takes one hour a day, covering all twenty-four hours of the day. And every Friday night they pray all night! It was reported that the atmosphere of the entire village has dramatically changed! Healings and miracles are now happening. Jeff reported that the faith level of that little church is so high, a donkey could preach there and see miracles. He prayed for a little lame boy in his mother's arms who had not walked. After Jeff prayed, the boy leaped out of his mother's arms and ran across the room!

We had a great translator with us, Lubov. She is from Kiev, she speaks six languages, and works with Teen Challenge in Croatia. More than knowing the language, she understands the anointing of the Spirit, and for me (John) it was the first time in Krivoy Rog that I have been able to preach fully "under the anointing", because the translator needs to yield to the same anointing

"This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him."

1 JOHN 4:9 NIV

for it to flow freely. What a blessing! In previous years we have had to plow and plod along with unsaved translators, some who had never seen a Bible, some who had never spoken to a native English speaker. An anointed translator is the next best thing to knowing the language yourself!

We had a conference of celebration and dedication in the new church building, and the presence of the Lord was strong. The Church was filled with 800 people from 13 churches (all called "Church of Praise") exuberantly rejoicing in the Lord! Three cars were parked outside, the total number owned by these people. We dedicated the building to the Lord with a thunderstorm of prayer. You must realize that every window, every bench, every brick in the wall is a miracle to them! And they built it all with their own hands, without machines. No building will be used more for God's glory than this one. Later in the conference, **the people dedicated themselves as the real house of God, committing themselves to the Great Commission with a thunderstorm of enthusiasm!**

The theme of the conference was, "You can have a ministry like the apostles!". It reminded us of Acts 4:13: *"As they observed the confidence of Peter and John, and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were marveling, and began to recognize them AS HAVING BEEN WITH JESUS"*. To be with Him, and to be sent by Him: this is what qualifies us in ministry. Are you recognizable as "having been with Jesus"?

These people are. Most are only two years old in the Lord or less. Thirty more accepted Christ during this conference. As always, we have prayed personally for many people with severe problems that only Jesus can fix. Jackie prayed for a father who was deaf in one ear since age six. The following day, he testified that upon arriving home, it was as if he was hearing "in his whole head!" His family, who were unbelievers, tested his hearing over and over and found that it was restored.

Pastors Gregori and Galena, pastor Uri, pastors Elena and Sergei, pastor Anatolie, and the other leaders send you all their love and greetings. Some of you gave us wonderful dress clothes to take to the pastors on this trip. Pastor Uri had prayed and looked all summer for a sport coat, but everything was enormously expensive. Now he is wearing a coat given by Greg Davis. It is a perfect style and fit! Pastor Uri is a wonderful musician and thrilled to be wearing a "singers" coat! Pastors Elena and Sergei had no winter coats, They walk miles to their village churches. Now Elena wears Dr. Bev's coat, and Sergei looks great in a warmly lined "London Fog" coat given by Mark Warner! You should have seen these pastors and wives lay their hands on these gifts of clothes and pray out a river of thanksgiving to God!

We saw the study Bibles which have been given to the pastors, containing all the resources of the NIV study Bible. Thanks, dear friends in a new church we won't name, for providing these wonderful Bibles! We passed out perhaps a hundred regular Bibles to new converts who had been baptized shortly before our arrival. Words can't express the thanksgiving and joy in these believers to get a Bible.

Pastor Gregori said his church is called to be a MISSIONARY CHURCH. We know God wants to use them throughout Ukraine and out among the nations. They are wanting to start a Bible School here to train and send out new church planters and missionaries. May God grace them to do so. This could happen next fall, which would mean us helping to send Bible teachers there throughout the school year. Pray for this vision of a Bible School. We believe it is essential for the future spreading of the Gospel in the Russian speaking world.

We asked pastor Gregori about the law which has been passed in Russia taking away legal standing of all new ministries started since the fall of communism. A similar law was "on the table" in Ukraine. Gregori reported that the president of Ukraine has said, "As long as I am president, we will have no such law in Ukraine. The people have enough problems now." This is great news, and as far as we know, indicates the Ukrainian government is not following the repressive lead of Russia towards the churches. Please pray that this will be a permanent stand of the government. We believe the church in Ukraine will be used (as she has in the past) as a missionary force beyond her borders. These Ukrainians may continue to have access in Russia, etc., even if Westerners are kept out. For this reason, it is imperative that the Krivoy Rog churches catch the missionary vision, and train their young people to "go into the world and preach the gospel" Another hopeful sign is that the Ukrainian government has passed a law to officially celebrate the birth of Christ in the year 2000, and is asking all the churches to work together in this celebration with public events and social action. We saw these documents. This is a great opportunity for outreach.

Thank you for helping us travel to Ukraine again. Almost all of our travel money came in the last three days before departure, but...we didn't need it until then, so it was right on time! Thank you for praying and giving. Whether you give or pray, you share in the harvest from this fertile soil!

Pray with us for these churches to thrive and to multiply, and for the training of new leaders. They take each step at great odds, and great sacrifice. May we and you all live with the same commitment to Jesus as these Ukrainians. You too can have a "ministry like the apostles"! Jesus said *"As the Father has sent me, so I send you."* Just pray like Isaiah prayed, *"Here am I, SEND ME."*

With Love,

*John and Jackie*