



Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie

Oct
August, 1998



Dear friends,

Greetings from Krivoy Rog! We hope you are trusting in the Lord with all your heart, and not leaning on your own understanding!

What another grand adventure with the Lord we have in coming here again! As always, it was through many wonderful surprises that the Lord provided, not only for our travel expenses, but also for special gifts for the church and the Bible School. So much was provided that we left home with more luggage than was allowed on our tickets. Carrying the extra blessings for the Ukrainians required us to give KLM airlines an extra blessing -- \$124 for the additional large bag of gifts and humanitarian aid. Regardless of the added expense, it was great to see these heavy bags all board the plane in Minneapolis, and not see them again until Kiev!

Upon entering the country, we (as always) needed the Lord to cover us going through customs. Nothing we carried required us to pay duty, all being gifts for the people, but customs officers can try to get money anyway or cause trouble. This time we carried a new laptop computer and color printer for the church, a gift from one of the churches in our city. Pastor Jeff Orluck, having just returned from Ukraine, had told us before we left home that the customs officials in Kiev wanted to know only one thing from him on entering the country: "Do you have any computer equipment?"

We approached the lady customs officer, Jackie ahead of me. "Do you have any gifts with you for people?", she asked. I watched Jackie, knowing she was asking the Lord what to say. We don't lie. Everything we had was gifts -- notebooks and pens for the Bible School, gifts for pastors and their children, the computer and supplies, a large supply of vitamins, etc. Jackie said, "Well, we have humanitarian aid, such as vitamins for pregnant mothers and babies, and other things." The lady said, "Oh! Please go right through!" She didn't want to look at our passports, nor even touch one bag. Thanks for praying!

Now we have been here one week. There are 60 full time Bible School students, and 130 evening students. A full house! We have two skilled translators. Several hours of teaching mornings and afternoons plus many evening meetings makes for a busy schedule. We are deep in the Word of God, laying the foundations of our redemption in Christ, teaching it from Genesis to Revelation! It is a great blessing to be here, and God is giving us grace and strength for long days of teaching and ministry!

Today, upon returning home from Bible School to Pastor Gregori's house, we entered to find Gregori and Galena talking with a young man. He had come to ask for prayer for his girl friend who was very ill, and he had heard that these people pray and God answers their prayers. We joined them in praying for her. We then went into the other room while Gregori and Galena continued at the door talking with him and then praying with him. After he left, they told us he had prayed to receive Jesus. Hallelujah! But before he prayed, they said, he asked them for forgiveness. He said he had been in their home before. He said he was one of the two men who had come to rob them in the middle of the night with knives, and had threatened to kill them. (They had told us of this incident on a previous trip -- how in their own home one man had wrestled Gregori to the floor, while the other held Galena at knife point. When she began to pray loudly in tongues, the man had suddenly grabbed his head complaining of great pain, and had told his partner they must leave immediately, and they ran out the door! And now, here today we met one of the offenders at their door confessing his sin, admitting what he had done to them, asking for forgiveness and accepting Jesus! After he asked for forgiveness, Galena asked him (can you believe this?) to forgive her for not serving them tea when they broke into the house!

Last Sunday was the five year celebration of the founding of the mother church (now about 500 people). It was an all day celebration of glorious praise, preaching, and praying for the sick, as well as a stream of talent from the church -- including a rap gospel music and dance team, original poetry readings, and other artistic presentations by the believers. And, oh yes, perhaps thirty people came to the altar for salvation. It was a special time for us, remembering that we had enjoyed the privilege of being here when it all began! Since that beginning in 1993, fourteen other churches have been planted by this church in the general area of Krivoy Rog, with congregations varying in size from 40 to 200 people. The goal is to have at least five more churches planted by next fall, especially through the outreach of the Bible School students.

Do you wonder why we keep coming back here? No adventure is as wonderful as an adventure with the Holy Spirit in a ripened harvest field! Don't you wish you were here with us?

But then, many of you are with us...in prayer. This is

very real. We are in that place of sensing the undergirding of praying people, and we know that we are simply walking out the answer to others' prayers. Yes, in reality, some of you are with us. And, of course, the gifts of many of you are what brought us here.

Thank you for continuing to pray for us as we finish these three weeks of ministry. We'll arrive home on November 11. By God's grace we will come to Krivoy Rog again in January to do it all again!

Thank you for praying. Please continue to do so after we return. The period after a mission trip sometimes carries spiritual warfare. To those of you who have been able to support our ministry financially, we thank you from the depths of our hearts. We receive every gift with deep appreciation, regardless of its size. We have a collection of testimonies about amazing and timely offerings that came before this journey -- in the mail, at our door, dropped in our hands unexpectedly, etc. -- they add to

the priceless memories we have of the faithfulness of the Lord and His people. Though there are so many of these stories we could tell, here is just one:

We had reserved our airline seats, but had not yet received the funds to pay for them. Then, on a certain day, we learned that KLM had suddenly reduced the fare to Kiev by almost 50%, but we would have to buy the tickets that day. How is it that on THAT day a special gift for this trip arrived -- just the right amount to buy the tickets at the reduced fare?! God amazes us.

We carry you in our hearts as our friends and we pray for you. May the Lord's blessing increase and abound in your life and in your ministry.

With love,

John and Jackie