



## Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie

August 3, 1999



Dear friends,

It's been a hot summer here in our home town. We finished our "Living in His Presence" event during the hottest days yet, in our old, non air-conditioned church building. Every attendee was a brave pioneer (for Americans who think they are suffering if they aren't in air-conditioning!) Eighty came from forty churches -- Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Pentecostals, non-denominational, etc. It was the widest assortment of church backgrounds we've ever had in a school of prayer. They were gracious, and spiritually hungry people, and there was a wonderful spiritual unity among us. It was hot, but someone said, "Hell is hotter!" Having the right perspective can help you keep your joy!

### *"Living in His Presence" school of prayer was a pleasure for us...*

We had a wonderful time in the presence of the Lord. Good friends from our Sunday night home fellowship helped us out. Phil Billings, the most skilled keyboardist we know, backed me up as I led from the piano and his wife Janie was on the flute. Guy and Kathy Jordan were vocalists, along with our daughter Jen, who added a beautiful flair to the evening sessions with her solo singing. When she sang "We Shall Behold Him", I was ready for heaven right there! Thanks also to Popes, Gladens, Clarks and Richmonds for your help!

As we taught, I was surprised to realize how much our subject pointed to heaven. We are not only learning to live in His presence here on the earth. God is getting us ready for eternity. Forever we shall behold Him in His glory and enjoy His presence! Living in His presence here is just a taste of heaven!

We led the whole event with the communion table set up in front of us. This was to focus our hearts and minds on the finished work of Christ. Hebrews 10:19-25 was our theme: *"Since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus....let us draw near.."*. We didn't so much teach an exposition of these verses as paint the pictures which the Bible gives us about drawing near to God. We hoped to demonstrate, through music and worship, teaching, eating and drinking of communion, and the experience of His presence, God's way of drawing near to Him and STAYING THERE. We introduced Biblical illustrations which show clearly God's heart and plan for us to enter in and live in His presence. From the Old Testament to the New, we sought to show clearly the blood-sprinkled way into the Throne room. All of this leads to the heavenly city itself -- God and His children living together forever!

In this school, we saw more clearly than ever that a school of prayer is also a school of worship. Worship and prayer are intertwined. Both are necessary. Like the elders seen in heaven in Revelation 5, we need to have the "harp" (worship) in one hand and the "bowl of incense" (prayer) in the other.

Please pray that God would show us His wisdom for future schools of worship and prayer. We'd love to see the reality of Living in His Presence be experienced by the whole Body of Christ!

### *To Ukraine...finally...*

I will be on my way to Krivoy Rog in a few days -- August 13 is the departure date. Jackie will stay home this time. Many things caused another delay of departure, but it is settled and we have the peace of God about it. I am going there in order to have quality time with leaders and pastors, minister in churches, and have an extended time with Gregori and Galena for goal setting and problem solving for the next year. My travel expenses are covered, thanks to those who gave for our intended June departure, and other recent gifts. *Please pray with us for this important journey.*

### *A review of our Ukrainian connection...*

It is now six years since we first travelled to Krivoy Rog to assist Gregori in the planting of a church. What a glorious friendship and partnership has developed since then! We have watched that first church become 16 churches. The mother church has outgrown a hardly finished sanctuary that holds 600. It is now being doubled in size to hold 1200. One year of the new Bible School has passed, with 65 full time students finishing the first year, and 120 finishing part time in the evening. A second year of training is being added when the new school year begins the third week of September.

We are sending ministers and teams there every month to teach in the Bible School, minister in the churches, and help with evangelism. Teachers and teams are now scheduled to go for several months ahead, and others praying about going. All who have gone to Krivoy Rog come back changed, touched by the spirit of revival there, and enthusiastically desiring to return. The Ukrainians have told us that they have highly appreciated every teacher, minister, and team that has come. For us, it is all a great joy: a beautiful partnership of faith and love in God's harvest field. It is God's vision, God's work, and God's mission. You are a wonderful part of it all! Thanks!

Krivoy Rog is a city ripened for harvest, with one million broken people. It has the highest drug addiction and alcoholism rate in all of Ukraine, full of devastated people and families. In America there are hundreds of churches in cities this large. Krivoy Rog has very few churches, old or new. This city illustrates Jesus words: *"Lift up your eyes and look on the fields: they are white unto harvest."*

We have joined that harvest to serve the vision of the Ukrainian believers, not build up our own ministry. They are committed to reach their city and beyond. We desire to help lay firm foundations for new believers and families, train new pastors and leaders, provide Bibles, help get church buildings constructed, and continue helping with humanitarian needs. Your partnership makes these things possible. Thanks!

The Ukrainians are not simply poor people needing our help. They are the people of God with a destiny to reach their city and their nation, and have the same Great Commission that we all have: to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth. Ukraine has a heritage of being a bread basket for other nations. We know that the Ukrainian church is called to bring *spiritual bread to nations* -- especially to the very large Russian speaking world. Even now, in the midst of their economic difficulties, they have sent missionaries far beyond what we would have thought possible.

Missionary activity such as our partnership in Ukraine is a great privilege. You are our partners in this vision. Without you, we can't make a move. Your prayer for us and your giving is what gives us the spiritual covering and the provision to live and to go. Our trust is in the Lord, and it is to Him that we look. We also know that we are members in His body, and cannot work and move apart from the other members. So, you are "comrades in arms" with us, fellow soldiers in the battle, whether or not you travel with us. (We'd love for you to with us!)

We hope to see the Krivoy Rog connection become stronger. Teachers and teams have come from churches in the Twin Cities, plus two in California, one in Boston, another in Toronto, as well as Holland, Germany, and even *New Zealand...that's for you Albert and Jeanette...when can you go back to Krivoy Rog?*

Oh that such partnerships would be multiplied into other places. We are trusting God to release more people, resources, and wisdom so that the same activity may expand to other cities and nations.

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Time is short. We don't know how long Americans and other Westerners will have freedom of movement around the world, but let's take advantage of it now. Jesus said *"I must work the works of Him who sent me while it is day; the night is coming when no one can work."* Night may mean social disorder, economic chaos, political upheaval, or other things that inhibit the free flow of outreach to the nations.

***Our Chantik connection in Asia...an urgent need, and an open door...***

**A severe upheaval in the nation is opening doors for our friends R. & R. to provide humanitarian help to thousands of Chantik Muslims who have become refugees in their own homeland. Here is an excerpt from their update that just arrived:**

"R. led a small team into what we understand to be the worst area for the refugees here. She went to four different camps. For the most part, a 'camp' usually means the largest mosque in the area and the yard surrounding it. Often the camp contains other buildings usually used for Islamic education, such as a school. There is a strong military presence surrounding these camps. All the military personnel are armed with live ammunition. Once you make it past the soldiers the refugees have set up their own security (with live, loaded machine guns). These guys are suspicious that you might be spies for the government; you have to win their trust.

"The first area R. was able to get into, there were an estimated 17,000 refugees in that one camp. There were two bathrooms, one community kitchen and no bathing facilities for all these people. These people have been in this camp for several months now. Several people are dying in this camp every day, some from sickness, and others from starvation. Children with little or no clothes on surrounded the van as they entered the area. Many were extremely thin and had bloated stomachs. Most were showing serious signs of malnutrition.

"Before R. and her small team began to distribute the items they had brought, she met one of the men in charge of the camp. R. said to that man, "We have come here to help...We are Christians and the things we have brought are from the Church of Jesus Christ. We come in the name of Jesus. We have food and clothing to help you; but according to some people, your religious laws say you are not allowed to receive help from us. It is up to you whether you can receive these items from us or not. There is no obligation, no strings attached."

"The leader then spoke saying, "According to our book, Christians are our relatives. Last week a Chinese Buddhist businessman sent us a truckload of dried fish, we received that from him. This businessman did not come in person, but merely hired people to bring the fish to us; you have shown great bravery by coming in person. Anything Christians want to give to help us we will gladly receive."

"The other three locations were much the same conditions. The second had 10,000 refugees, the third 16,100 and the fourth 26,000.

"In these camps the men are on one side while the women are on the other. Children are with the women. There is a distribution processes that the refugees have set up themselves to distribute items within the camp. We will bring the items to the camp and let the leaders of the camp deal with the individual distribution. They are keeping detailed records of who gets what and we do have access to these records. We are putting together van loads of supplies to be delivered to different camps. At this time we will be taking two vans filled with items once a week. This means two vanloads per week. Each van load will cost us approximately \$400. We cannot take donations of food or clothes at this time from outside the country as shipping costs and customs is simply too difficult, but cash donations can be sent..."

**NOTE FROM US: This tragic and urgent situation may be a wide door of service will that help bring many Chantik to Christ. It is a need that even secular organizations or unchurched people could be asked to assist. Perhaps some of you may be able to tell someone about this need. Please pray that many van loads (\$400 each) would be provided. People may write checks to Scarlet Thread for tax deductible donations for this need.**

***Hometown comments...***

We continue to reserve some time and energy for our home church, and the body of Christ in our city. These last two months have found me in prayer many days out in our community and in various areas of our Twin Cities. I hope to continue this whenever possible. There has been unusual grace for me to pray through neighborhoods, and around the city -- even in rush hour traffic. I seem to have had more anointing for intercession in my car than in a church or in my own office! It has made me realize even more how much God loves our communities and every person in them!

We all need to move through our cities in prayer. The spiritual atmosphere can change wherever we put our foot (or even our tires). As prayer pushes back the powers of darkness, hearts soften and spiritual eyes open. Imagine what God could do if we would all take some time to pray in our cities and neighborhoods. It is our privilege and responsibility to invite the mercy and glory of God and power of the blood of Jesus into the world around us.

The result of such prayer will be that many of us who thought we had no courage or desire to witness to the lost will find ourselves reaching out in love and with unexpected boldness -- because prayer has changed US as well as our neighborhoods! Furthermore, we will find people eager to hear the good news and even begging us to pray for them and tell them about the Lord!

***Family comments...***

Thanks for your prayer for us and our children. As most of you know, we have three adult children. Jay and his wife Lana have just moved to Phoenix where Jeff and his wife Jermaine already live. Two sons and their wives there makes Phoenix an inviting city to us! Our daughter Jen, engaged to Scott, will be married October 9 at Way of the Cross church here in our city. Marrying a daughter, as you might know, brings extra challenges to us -- pleasant but big. Jackie is designing and sewing five bridesmaids' dresses, plus Jen's bridal gown. Now that's a challenge! (but she loves to do it)

***You are in our hearts...!!!***

We will never stop saying thanks to you for allowing us to stay in touch with you, and for praying for us. Always we give thanks to all of you who are led to support us financially. To any of you who do not yet know, we are unsalaried and depend on the support of friends of our ministry. We have not been led to actively raise money, but to communicate, ask for prayer, and trust the Lord to lead people in financial support. It is a challenge to live this way, but also a privilege. Every month needs a miracle! *God has never failed us...not even once!*

We carry you in our hearts, and we are believing for blessing in your lives. God wants to bless His people more and more abundantly, so that they can be a greater and greater blessing to others near and far. May His blessing increase in your life, and may you increase in being a blessing to many!

Blessings in Christ,  
***John and Jackie***