



January 30, 1999

Dear friends,

With joy we bring you greetings from Krivoy Rog, Ukraine, where we are enjoying the presence of the Lord and the fellowship of believers who are hungry for God. Every day we have the privilege of teaching a room packed with Bible School students who drink in every word from God with great enthusiasm! We have learned that the anointing for teaching and preaching is largely in the hunger of those who hear. Yes, we must totally rely on God and we invite the Holy Spirit to help us minister. It seems that in this place the Lord is especially eager and ready to help us, for He knows that these people are longing for more of Him, and ready to obey what He shows them.

Our journey here. . .

Unlike many of our trips, this one had some stressful moments and delays which required immediate flexibility and quick decision making. Jackie and I, along with pastor Ken Maxwell from St. Paul, arrived here a day later than we planned, due to bad weather in the USA and flight cancellations on our day of departure. Jackie flew a different routing than Ken and I, since her decision to go was only five days before departure, and a seat was not available for her on our flight to Amsterdam. Can God supply an airline ticket only five days before departure without money? This time He did just that for Jackie, through a businessman who offered her all the frequent flyer miles she needed to fly to Kiev! We were to meet in Amsterdam, and then go on together to Kiev. Upon arrival at the Minneapolis airport, we discovered Jackie's flight to Detroit had been canceled, but they were able to reroute her through Philadelphia and on to Amsterdam. Ken and I were scheduled to leave two hours after her, through Chicago. Not until after she left was our flight also canceled.

We were able to leave that night, however, on a direct flight to Amsterdam, but it arrived there after our intended connecting flight to Kiev. Jackie didn't know this was happening until her arrival in Amsterdam, and she had only 30 minutes to figure it all out and decide what to do. She decided not to fly to Kiev alone, and waited for us, thank the Lord! Following an unscheduled night of rest in Amsterdam, we took the next day's flight to Kiev. After some hassle with customs and finding all our luggage (Jackie's luggage had come the day before), we met our weary brother from Krivoy Rog who had been waiting for us since the previous day.

Ukraine harvestime activities. . .

Today we participated in another water baptism. At least 200 new converts from the associated churches were baptized. This happens every two or three months. In November we helped baptize 163. This is always a

time of great celebration!

Sunday we will help dedicate new ministers, meaning those who have recently been set in new places of leadership over home groups, musicians, counselors, etc. anointing them with oil and praying over them. There are dozens of these new ministers! Pastor Gregori said that almost all the Bible School students are now functioning in some kind of ministry. That is good news! We have seen too many schools where students are too long in classrooms and leaders are too slow releasing them into ministry. Not so here. A decision has been made to start a second year in the Bible School. Most of the present students are planning to return, and a large group of people in the churches are wanting to be new students in the fall. Evangelists and church planters are arising in the school, and some are planning to be missionaries. Some are already starting new churches. Some are planning to start new works in other cities, and vision is in motion to send missionaries to other countries, especially the Muslim countries of the former Soviet Union in central Asia - Azserbarjan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, etc. Needless to say, it is spiritually invigorating to be here!

A few Ukrainian stories. . .

...A man works on the church building every day. He came homeless, just out of prison some months ago. He got saved, and led his family to the Lord, who had rejected him. After some time living and working in the church, he was restored to his wife and family, and still comes daily to work on the church building, walking several miles each way. He has constant pain in his feet, perhaps due to freezing them when he was homeless. He would ask pastor Gregori frequently for money for transport home on the bus. Later Gregori discovered he was using the money to buy bread for his family, and still walking home. So now, Gregori gives him bread and sometimes gives him money to ride the bus.

...One Sunday, the Lord spoke to Gregori to ask who in the congregation wanted to plant potatoes, but had no money to buy seed potatoes. 25 people came forward. He gave each of them money to buy the seed potatoes.

...Last night Gregori was walking home from the church building, where he stores his old Lada, the Russian made car that seems to have eternal life. A man approached him in the dark covered with mud. He asked if anyone could help him out of the mess he had made of his life. At the same time, a man was walking towards Gregori from the church, one of the homeless workers who had been saved and delivered from alcohol. Gregori asked that worker to take in this mud covered man, help him wash and spend time with him. Just a normal occurrence in a day. ...Up to thirty new people a week show up at the church asking for help

(apart from the meetings), many coming in asking how to be saved. Some of them have come into the Bible School classroom when we have been teaching, coming to be saved. We stop everything, bring them to the front of the room and lead them to Christ. Such a thing happened two days ago. Another normal occurrence in the life of this church. ...The other day, Gregori got a phone call. The unknown man on the phone said, Are you still alive? You are in grave danger. Your life is hanging by a thread. . . Just another detail in a busy day.

And on our return to Minnesota. . .

Twin Cities YWAM. . .

Mid February we will teach for a week in a YWAM DTS in Rockford, MN, on foundations for spiritual warfare. This is a bilingual school, with a Spanish translator. It is great have a part in this first Twin Cities DTS, and it is wonderful to be required to teach with a translator right near home! Missions in action in Minnesota!

Jesus loves Mounds View!

Our home church is in the suburban city of Mounds View — four square miles of land and 12,600 residents. We have never had a goal to reach this city, though it has been home to our church for 27 years. I have taken on the task of coordinating in our congregation a project to reach everyone in the city with the gospel by the end of 2000. (I think my qualification is being the one in the church who has neglected this little home town the longest!) We're calling it Jesus Loves Mounds View - and so do we! We are looking forward to working, between mission outreaches, with our home church friends and all creative means possible to reach this city at our doorsteps. Thanks for praying with us for the Lords anointing in this local outreach ministry. We will have a church workshop February 19 and 20 to launch this project. Mounds View, here we come!

Pray Minnesota!

We will be giving a chunk of 1999 to help mobilize churches throughout Minnesota into united intercessory prayer. Most of you know I have carried this burden for many years. This work will be done with the Pray Minnesota steering committee, made up of leaders of several prayer networks. What a joy to see this effort blossoming finally! On October 9-12 there will be an event called Pray Minnesota at Immanuel Christian Center in Fridley, MN. The goal is to have praying people gathered from every city in Minnesota! So, there is much work to do, and we want to help. Please pray with us for the Church of Jesus in Minnesota to rise to her highest privilege and greatest responsibility unceasing, united and persistent prayer.

Redeeming the land seminar. . .

We are planning to host a seminar in the spring called *Redeeming the Land*, with the goal of training prayer warriors in on site, strategic intercession. The vision is to see intercession teams traveling all over Minnesota this year applying the precious blood of Jesus in prayer and faith. Please pray that we will have the time in February to plan this seminar and to get the word out to praying people in the Twin Cities.

A return to the Chantik people?

We are praying about going soon to visit our missionary friends Rob and Ria in Asia, who have asked us to come to help encourage the growing number of workers who have joined them in bringing the love of Jesus to the unreached Muslim people whom we call the Chantik. Nearly 30 missionaries are now there, both foreigners and those sent from other parts of the country, all of whom look to Rob and Ria as the senior missionaries. Please pray for wisdom, that we would know when the Lord wants us to go.

June excitement in Ukraine!

We will help celebrate the first Bible School graduation, and join a team of 15 or more youth who will come from our home church to do children's and youth crusades in Krivoy Rog. This will be a wonderful breakthrough!

We are continually giving thanks!

We want to thank each of you who pray for us, and who support our ministry. Last month we asked for special prayer for an end-of-year deficit in our personal finances. We give the Lord glory and say thanks for the unusual giving that took care of that deficit and gifts that provided for this journey! We are continually amazed at the Lords grace and the faithfulness of people who pray and give under the direction of the Holy Spirit. It is a privilege to rely on Him and His people for all of our support. There are so many memories between Jackie and me — memories of unique and wonderful miracles along the way! Some of you have had such a wonderful part in these memories!

May God meet your need according to His riches in glory. May He show you His wonderful love and care, and strengthen you to do the will of God with all your heart. We live in tumultuous times. He is our Rock, our Strong Tower of Refuge, our Shelter in the Time of Storm. May you dwell in the Secret Place of the Most High. In that place, you can go anywhere He sends you and be secure. It is not a time for any of us to fear, but to take courage. It is time to do His will. Our hearts say, do His will now! Not later. Now is the time to obey God.

With love, *John and Jackie*