



Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie

March 31, 1999



Dear friends,

In this letter we want to focus on our outreach to the Chantik – the missionary “code” name for an unreached Muslim people group in Asia. If you have followed our letters, you know that we have been to this Islamic province repeatedly in the last eight years, supporting the work of our friends Rob and Ria, and the many others who have joined them in recent years.

The Chantik mission field is very different than our experience in Ukraine. In Ukraine, like many other parts of the former Soviet Union, it is God’s harvest time – a harvest ripened by the work of the Spirit over generations. Ukraine is a land where souls are ready for the gospel, their hearts softened by decades of hardship, and softened by generations of united worldwide prayer. Also, countless Christians there have served Jesus against great odds, and many have been imprisoned for their faith or laid down their lives as martyrs during the Communist years. That has all been seed for what is now the harvest time – a time of rapid evangelism and church planting. We have been learning in Ukraine how to serve in an already ripened harvest field, and encouraging and helping others to go.

A harvest just beginning to ripen...

Among the Chantik, it is a different season. We have been learning there what it means to serve in a field that is only beginning to soften — having been previously hardened by 2000 years of false religion and neglect by the Church. The land of the Chantik has not yet benefited from decades of worldwide prayer or from the investment of generations of believers giving their lives there for Jesus. On the contrary, our friends Rob and Ria, are perhaps the VERY FIRST MISSIONARIES TO EVER LIVE AMONG THESE PEOPLE. Only in recent years, has the prayer of the Church began to soften this hard spiritual ground. The Church and missionaries in that part of the world had said for generations “You can’t go there. It’s too hard. It’s impossible.” Rob and Ria had to go against this “Christian” counsel, and obey God. Books could be written of just the last eight years of mission work — history unfolding before our eyes as we watch God prepare an unreached people to receive Jesus!

Creatively living and ministering in a strict Muslim culture....

Rob and Ria have lived there for eight years, and it is home to them and their three children Naomi, Joshua, and Sarah — who were all born since moving there. Not known among the Chantik as missionaries, but known as Christians, they have become respected and loved by hundreds of their Muslim neighbors. Through promoting “tourism”, they have entertained hundreds of foreigners (more than the local chamber of commerce.) Of course, these “tourists” have been Christians who have come for research for future mission work, friendship

evangelism, intercession, and simply to do what God directed them to do. Some have gone home, made preparations, and have now moved long term to join Rob and Ria among the Chantik to bring the light and love of Jesus. Some have come as teachers, others have started businesses. God gives creative ways to “make a way where there is no way”. As Brother Andrew has said, “there are no closed doors”.

God is sending more laborers...!

The Chantik province may look “closed” to missions, but there are now about twenty-four foreigners there, plus their eleven children. More are preparing to come. Eight years ago, Rob and Ria were the only ones there! Eleven are on the team

of nationals at the moment with eight or ten more expected to join this team by June or July. By the end of the summer (Aug or Sept) there may be fifty long term (2 yr. or more commitments) M’s there – all who look to Rob and Ria as leaders!

Helping to save two young lives...

Rob and Ria have very busy days and a many unexpected activities in their relationships with the Chantik people. Following is a report from them about a Chantik girl that came to work for them, then got pregnant out of wedlock by a Muslim acquaintance. In this culture, the family is required to kill the mother and baby! Rob and Ria had to hide her in another town, then got her Islamic family to be willing to let the baby be adopted instead of killing the child... Rob reports: “The girl that I have called LIGHT in this letter had her baby this past week. The baby was breech and so two weeks before she

was actually due she began to encounter some problems and an emergency C-section became necessary. This was on a recent Wednesday. Both the mother and the baby are now doing fine. This is truly a miracle that we have managed to get this far. There were a couple of attempts to abort the baby that failed, there were threats on LIGHT’S life by members of her own family and opposition from the father’s family. We know that it is because of your prayers that both this mother and this baby are still alive. Another piece of good news is that we have been asking you to agree with us for LIGHT’S salvation in all of this. We have become convinced this past week that she has come into the kingdom. Ria. is with them in another city, so I get the job of Mr. Mom for the time being.”

Starting businesses to be “salt and light” in the Chantik culture...

Rob refers to some of the business activity that is in development, in order for them to be “light and salt” among the Muslim Chantik. He says, “I have mentioned a few times in the past that we run a couple small-scale businesses here. I thought it might be good to bring everyone up to date as to the goals behind these endeavors. They are:

John and Jackie's itinerary:
Wed., April 7: leave Mpls.
Fri., April 9: Arrive in Penang
With missionaries
Charlie and Jane Curtis & Penang churches.
Monday, April 12:
Arrive in Chantikland.
With Rob and Ria and others working together
to bring Jesus to the Chantik
Upon arrival back in the USA, we will spend a
few days with Jackie's family in California, and
with our son Jeff and his wife Jermaine in Phoenix,
before coming home.
Monday, May 3: Arrive back in Mpls.
Please Pray for: *Large part of travel funds still*
needed, health, strength for much travel (15
plane rides), anointing to minister to missionaries
and churches, many divine appointments,
wisdom for future Asian outreaches.

"Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they shall reign upon the earth."

1. Access to remote villages and a reason to have our workers living there.
2. Discipling and teaching new national workers.
3. Financial support for national workers.
4. Evangelism.
5. Discipling new converts or those we feel are seeking truth.
6. Economic assistance for these villages.

He said, "At the moment this includes coconut processing, chicken farming, vegetable farming and a sewing/craft project. The chickens have turned a profit (although small) for the past seven months in a row. The quilting project is doing great. We now have 15 people working in this and 4 of them are m's. Most of the girls sewing on the quilting projects have enough work to keep them busy for the rest of the year and I think we have now got a contract with a US company to sew for, that will financially be very good for us. We are needing desperately to expand both the chicken/coconut project and the quilting to accommodate all the expansion. Plans are to start a second chicken farm very soon. We are looking at buying land. This is quite a daunting task at the moment for me (especially since there is no money)."

An unknown visitor opens a village to Jesus...

Here is an interesting note Rob gave concerning one of the villages not far from their home: "Several people that work for us are from a certain village. In recent months, whenever someone close to one of our workers has been sick, they ask us to come to the village and pray for them in the name of Jesus. We did not understand why they would request this, but were always more than happy to go with them and pray. Because of the events surrounding this pregnancy and all the conversations we have had with people in this village, we have learned that several years ago a visitor came to this particular village. Living in that village was a blind man. The visitor prayed in the name of Jesus and the blind man was healed. Everyone in the village knows this story, which is why they ask us to come and pray in Jesus name. Who the visitor was, we have no idea; but, we are certainly excited about what God is doing and how He is taking this situation and turning it around for His glory."

A desperate need for teachers of English...

a golden opportunity...

Rob then reminds us of an ongoing opportunity for Christians to live and work in the province. He says, "At the moment we have openings for 35-40 teachers that need to be filled. These are tremendous openings that we need to take advantage of soon. Please be praying with us for the right people to fill these positions." Teaching English is a golden opportunity for being a missionary among the Chantik. The teachers (they are even known and welcomed as Christians) are assigned to spend as much time with their students as possible! Witnessing for Jesus happens naturally in these positions.

Rob and Ria's home is a place of hospitality for many...

Rob and Ria's home is usually full of people — visiting teams, Muslim neighbors, other m's needing care, etc. They wrote this recently: "We are doing fine. Our house has finally cleared out a bit. Since Dec. 1st there simply has been too many people in our home. The least amount of people living in our home since Dec 1st has been 15. Our home is not that big. Anyway, right now it is just our family, one helper and one national girl."

We must stand beside these courageous workers...

It is amazing to Jackie and me that, during a time of great turmoil in this country where Rob and Ria work, when foreigners are leaving in the droves, God is increasing the number of missionaries to the Chantik! Both foreigners and nationals are moving to the province of the Chantik, willing to give them-

selves for Christ's sake at a time when there is great turmoil in the country. Can we not all stand beside them in prayer and support? Our April travel is far past the time they had wanted us to come. How can we not go to encourage them, and strengthen them in the Lord? (Probably we will find ourselves strengthened by them!) **Please pray** that our days there will be fruitful, and that the Holy Spirit will guide us and use us in any and every way that He desires. **Pray** also that we may have fresh understanding while there concerning future ministry among these people.

An added blessing, to visit missionaries in Penang, Malaysia...

In addition to visiting Rob and Ria and others with them, we have the privilege of stopping in Penang, Malaysia to visit our good friends Charlie and Jane Curtis, now missionaries to Asia, formerly pastors in Anoka, near our home. Since arriving in Penang, doors of ministry have been opening to them in China, India, Thailand, Indonesia, and other countries. We hope to be an encouragement to them. We know they will be an encouragement to us. Please pray for our short stay with them, that the Lord will fulfill His purpose for our being there.

A few days with our family out west...

Upon arriving back in the USA on April 23, we plan to spend three days with Jackie's family in Pleasanton, California (near San Francisco), then two or three days with her sister and mother in Los Angeles, followed by three days with our son Jeff and his wife Jermaine in Phoenix. We'll then return to Minneapolis on May 3.

Prayer Requests:

*Health and strength. (Much travel in a short time!)

*Remainder of our travel funds. Every outreach takes the miracle of God's provision. He is Jehovah Jireh!

*Wisdom and anointing for ministry to the missionaries

*Divine appointments along the way.

Thanks!

Thank you for having the patience to read our long letters, for praying, and for giving as you are able and led by the Lord to give. It continues to be for us a wonderful adventure of trusting God, whether we are in Minnesota or in other nations.

May you also have many wonderful adventures in trusting God. We hope you will find ways to get involved in God's harvest, for it is the most important and rewarding work you can do. It may be in your own neighborhood. May the Lord soften our neighbors, and give us all more opportunity to love them and be a light to them. May He also call you to help carry the gospel to the nations. It is the work of this end time generation to bring the gospel as a witness to all nations. (Read again Matthew 24:14) It is a work for us all — praying, giving, and going.

What's next?

We'll be in Minnesota during May, then go to Ukraine in June. Perhaps twenty-five of us from Minnesota will be in Krivoy Rog, Ukraine (four teams, four trips) between mid-May and mid-June. What a privilege it is for us to see this work in Ukraine multiply. It has been our deep desire to open up pathways in missions — to establish "highways" for others to become involved. We see that now happening almost every month on the "highway" to Krivoy Rog!

We would like to see more mission highways open in other places. Join with us in faith and prayer that God show us where and when to go, and that He will release more and more people into the work of end-time missions. Maybe you will find yourself on one of them!

With love,

John and Jackie

Remember: for tax purposes, write checks to "Scarlet Thread Ministries"

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