



## Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie

September 22, 1999



Dear friends,

Greetings in the wonderful name of Jesus!

It is a beautiful fall day here in Minnesota. Leaves are starting to turn color, and we are marking time by October 9, the date of our daughter Jen's wedding to Scott Blair. It will be a grand reunion of family and friends, plus new acquaintances from Scott's side. Even weddings need prayer, so **thanks for praying** with us for all arrangements and provisions needed. Jackie has been the busier one regarding wedding arrangements, so far. My time will significantly increase during the next two weeks! I will have the privilege of walking Jen down the aisle, giving her away to Scott, and also preaching to both bride and groom! Our home church pastor Gordy Steck will also help officiate.

Marrying our youngest and last child certainly is a milestone in life. A good one. It's not the end of parenting, of course, as any of you know who have married children. It is just a transition to the next phase. It is a blessing to be friends with our children and their spouses, and watch them maturing year by year. It is a privilege to have a place in their lives, and to know we have the authority to pray God's blessings into their lives. We are so glad for the blood covenant, the foundation for believing prayer, starting in our own family!

### **Life after Oct. 9...to YWAM, California, Holland and Ukraine**

Next month we will travel again, by God's grace. A few days following the wedding, we will teach for a week at the YWAM Discipleship Training School in Rockford, Minnesota. Then we will fly to Big Bear, California, in the mountains east of L.A., to speak in a missions conference at Big Bear Christian Center. This church has sent two pastors to Krivoy Rog, and enthusiastically desires to continue to serve the churches in Ukraine. The church is former home base to our friend and evangelist Mark Johnson who took these pastors to Ukraine -- which is the connection. We have not yet met these men or the church, so it will be a great opportunity to build friendships for Ukraine.

We will return to Minneapolis on November 2, to meet our outbound flight to Amsterdam on that day. We will spend several days with Steve and Marilyn Hill in Holland. (Steve has also been to Krivoy Rog, and is going in December.) They are involved, among other things, in helping to plant new churches in southern Holland and Belgium, and are hoping we can join them during these days for some on-site intercession in this region. Like much of Europe, this is a region of great spiritual darkness, with very few Christians.

From Holland it is on to Ukraine, accompanied by our friends, pastor Roger Sutch, and Ann Jamison, who is an urban missionary within our Twin Cities. Our time in Ukraine will be filled with teaching in the Bible School, ministry in the churches, praying for the sick, praying for new believers, baptizing new converts, and generally spending every day serving with all our energy and time in the revival and harvest. We will arrive home the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

**Please cover us in prayer during these next few weeks.** All our travel funds for going to Holland and Ukraine are still needed. How will God do the miracle this time? We are also laying plans for next year. We need wisdom.

God is giving us new marching orders, and we believe He will supply abundantly. As George Mueller, great English man of faith said, "Where God guides, He provides." We have seen hindrances to this recently. But we have learned that, in the long run, though the enemy may hinder, he cannot prevent the will of God from happening --as long as we trust God totally, stay clothed in His armor, covered by His blood, declare His promises, be obedient and never give up! Somehow, **your prayer** makes it easier for us to live this way!

### **We're still called to help the Church to pray...**

We believe that the Lord is encouraging us to continue promoting prayer, and training believers to be prayer warriors. He has been speaking in fresh ways that confirm many years of guidance -- direction that indicates Jackie and I are both called to help the Church to "pray without ceasing". Fourteen years ago, I read Power Through Prayer by the classic author on prayer, E.M. Bounds. This quote arrested my heart, and was as the voice of God to my spirit. It was this:

*"Where are the apostolic leaders who can put God's people to praying? Let them come to the front and do the work and it will be the greatest work which can be done...We do greatly need somebody who can set the saints to this business of praying. We are not a generation of praying saints. Who will restore this breach? The greatest will be of reformers and apostles, who can set the Church to praying."*

Those words became God's challenge to us...to be leaders who would help "SET THE CHURCH TO PRAYING". Now, many years later, Jackie and I still hear this challenge, and are praying about the next chapters in this challenge. "Lord, how do you want us to help the Church to pray?" **Please pray** with us about this.

We now have at least four different schools of prayer in our hearts. One is the Foundations for a Life of Prayer, which we have taught for many years. The second is Living in His Presence, the first one we did this summer. The third is Spiritual Warfare in Daily Living, which we have usually done in YWAM Discipleship Training Schools. The fourth is yet to be done, but we have taught it in pieces at various times: Redeeming the Land: a School of On-Site and Strategic Intercession. We had hoped to do this as a seminar in our city this summer, but time marched on too quickly. It is our conviction that the Lord wants to greatly increase the praying presence of the Church on the streets and ground of all communities, cities, and nations. There are many strongholds yet to give way to the presence of the Lord.

There is associated with these schools, the work of writing and publishing that is yet unfinished. We have a large storehouse within us, and are seeking fresh guidance to know how to make

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the best use of our time and energy to impart these lessons to others. We want to do only what the Father releases us to do. **We need your prayer** to help us teach others to pray!

***We are still called to go to the nations...***

There remains in us the ongoing and increasing burden to go to nations, and help others to go. **Please pray** that we will be able to see clearly how to more effectively be involved in international missions, and how to more effectively help others to do the same.

***The ongoing needs in Ukraine...***

Among the churches in Krivoy Rog, Ukraine, the needs continue for Bibles, medicine, childrens' ministry materials, and for feeding the Bible School students. **Thanks for praying** with us in these areas.

There is also another urgent need for prayer in Ukraine. The government seems to be tightening their control on the new churches, and people like us who go to help them. They are requiring more detailed information on our church affiliations, and seem to be more reluctant in issuing letters of invitation that are needed in order to get visas. Their recent delays have been causing us to pay double price for late visa applications. The latest delay may prevent the team from Germany from going at all, who are scheduled to go to Krivoy Rog in October. This may be the beginning of restrictions similar to the increasing obstacles in Russia. **Please pray** for the Ukrainian churches to find favor in high places of government, and that the president and high officials will not succumb to forces which desire to shut down the expansion of the gospel.

**Please pray** for our team and all the teams that will go to Krivoy Rog during the school year, that we will also find favor with the Ukrainian government, be able to obtain visas, and minister freely while we are in Ukraine.

***God overrules a KGB shutdown of a crusade in Krivoy Rog...***

Even if restrictions do increase, God is not limited. We have enclosed a testimony from a friend, an excellent Canadian missionary in Ukraine who has been visiting the work in Krivoy Rog. He was scheduled to be the main speaker at an evangelistic event in a soccer stadium the weekend after I left the city (August 26-28), sponsored by pastor Gregori and the churches. They spread advertisements that blanketed the city. The KGB shut down the crusade before it started. This sort of thing is a new sign of restrictive control measures. However, God turned it for good. Here is Ed Dickson's testimony:

"I arrived in Krivoy Rog about ten days before the crusade and I was surprised by the level of excitement and anticipation. A week before the crusade I was praying and there was a "quiet knock at the door of my room. I got up to answer it and there wasn't anyone there...I sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit, and so I invited Him in! The Holy Spirit said that He wanted to do something "special". I replied by saying, "What can I do?" He said, "Move aside."

The day before the crusade was set to begin, the KGB contacted the pastor (Gregori) and told him that I (Ed) would not be allowed to address the people of Krivoy Rog. (because my visa did not officially allow me to be there...and because I did not have certain documents about my church affiliation). The next day, the day the crusade was supposed to start, the head administrator of the city contacted the church and told them that they would

NOT be allowed to use the stadium as planned...they were simply against the evangelization. We were devastated.

We decided that it would be best to go to the stadium and wait by the gate and explain to people what happened. As people came we explained everything. Some people left. Then as we were standing there, something strange happened. Many people were NOT leaving. The crowd was growing and about six men had formed a circle in the center of the crowd and were praying. I joined them. Soon the circle was about fifty people around and about ten deep. One of the worship leaders picked up his guitar and, filled with the Spirit, he moved to the center of the circle and began to worship God. As we sang, the crowd grew...it was the greatest spontaneous praise I have ever been in. An hour seemed like a minute. Dima (a Bible School student and new church planter) entered the circle and began to testify. There were some police officers around us, and Dima pointed to one of them, named him, and said, "That officer remembers me when I was a criminal and drug user!" The officer smiled and nodded in agreement. Then Dima testified and sang about Jesus.

Pastor Gregori made his way to the center of the crowd that was still growing. People were climbing up the gates and fences to see better. Gregori, who had earlier been in physical pain because of all the difficulties, testified and then cried out to God, and invited people to come to the center of the circle for salvation. There were so many people moving to the center that the crowd just swelled up and we became a sea of saved and unsaved. The people moved out into meandering bunches up and down the street and prayed for each other...and there were many reports of healings.

The meetings on the street outside the stadium went on all three nights. No one had the nerve to stop us! There were also large meetings in the main church that spontaneously broke out!"

Hallelujah! God was victorious!

***We are still giving thanks for you...***

It is, as always, a privilege and honor to write this letter to you, and as always, we are deeply grateful to you for reading it and praying. We know some of you pray for us every day. We know others of you are not led that way, but do pay attention and pray for us as the Spirit leads. We will never be able to express enough thanks to each of you who is able and led to give financially to our ministry. Not only do we thank you for supporting us personally, but also thank you for giving to the needs that we present -- most of which has been for Ukraine and for the work among the Chantik Muslims in Asia. These needs continue, and we have enclosed a reply card to help you remember these needs, and make it easier for you to respond, as the Lord leads you.

***May you be blessed...***

May you experience the blessings of the Lord in every way. It is your inheritance in Christ, given by the Father Himself, who has "blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." (Ephesians 1:3) Jesus has taken away the curse, that through us the blessing would go to all the nations. (Galatians 3:13,14) He has granted to us all things pertaining to life and godliness. (II Peter 1:3) So, may you experience all that has been provided to you in Christ, as you stay close to Him and do what He says!

With love,

***John and Jackie***

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

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