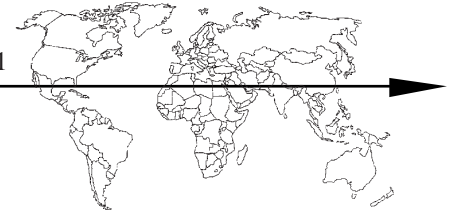




Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie

November 19, 2001



Dear friends,

We greet you again in the wonderful name of Jesus, and want to thank you for the privilege of writing to you! And, of course, your love and concern is more than a great blessing. It is a partnership in the spreading of the gospel. Thank you!

Access...

In the light of recent events, few of us can escape thinking about the days in which we live and the vulnerability of life itself. Many have said, "the world changed on Sept. 11".

Those who have lived with war and violence in many parts of the world may not see this as the world changing. Terrorism is not a new thing in so many places. Perhaps it is we who have changed -- not the world -- we who have lived with the feeling of being protected from such things. Perhaps we have had to "join the world" in its turmoil.

God has *not* changed. His character, His Word and His will remain the same. His blood covenant remains secure, and that is our solid foundation! His plan is in progress, and that gives all His children great purpose for living!

Concerning His covenant, I was reminded of the feeling inside of me when the towers collapsed. I felt something falling and collapsing within me. Later, I realized that what was collapsing inside was any confidence I had put in natural things. That confidence has to be totally transferred to the Lord and to His Word.

We are in a blood covenant with God. This means all we have belongs to Him, and all He has belongs to us! All His promises are blood covenant promises. That covenant is the security of the believer. *Actually, it has always and only been that way. This has not changed.*

Concerning His plan, it is found in Matthew 24:14: *"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world as a witness to every nation, and then the end shall come."* *This too has not changed.* God's plan is in progress and in high gear! Only the Father knows when its goal has been achieved. Perhaps that time is very soon. We know, however, that many millions have not yet heard the message of Jesus and salvation.

Sometimes trouble in the world simply furthers God's plan, though Satan is trying to thwart the plan. What Satan does with evil intent God frequently turns for His own purpose. (Especially with the prayers of the church.) We need to look "behind the news" and find out what God is doing in the midst of trouble in the nations.

I recall the falling of the iron curtain, when Americans thought that now the Soviet Union will have democracy! I asked the Lord at that time what He was doing in the Soviet Union, and the world that came to me was "access". God wanted *access* to the people. Good government may or may not come, but He would get *access* to the people and *access* for the preaching of the gospel.

Not enough missionaries were ready when that access

came. Too many pornographers and drug dealers were ready.

Some years ago a volcano blew up in the Philippines. Many people had to be evacuated from the region, including an ethnic group that lived in very inaccessible areas of the mountains. They were an "unreached people group", never having heard the gospel.

Many thousands of this people group were placed in a refugee camp. Campus Crusade for Christ was ready. They recognized what God had done in the middle of a crisis. *Access* to this people had been made possible. Campus Crusade missionaries showed the Jesus film in the refugee camp and 10,000 people from that ethnic group accepted Christ in one night!

Now Islam is in the news, and war is in Afghanistan. Will any kind of new *access* come within Islam or to that broken nation? Is anyone watching for the signs of *access*? Is anyone ready to take the love of Christ to people and areas previously thought inaccessible?

At the end of World War II, General MacArthur called for 10,000 missionaries to come to Japan. Few responded. What would Japan be like today if 10,000 had responded to the *access* that had come through the war? Perhaps too many Americans were lost in hatred of the Japanese to respond to God and carry the love of Jesus to that nation.

Will we get lost so lost in hatred or fear of those who are our political enemies that we cannot love them or bring them the gospel?

Thank God for the example of the Christian aid workers who were detained in Afghanistan. After hearing a live interview with the two Americans on CNN while they were still in Pakistan, Jackie and I were greatly encouraged. Full of God, these young ladies were also full of love for the Afghan people and were thankful that their plight had produced so much prayer for that nation. They were committed to keep serving the Afghans and to return as soon as possible!

"Lord, help us who are your children to be ready and available to carry the love and light of Christ through the access to people that may be created in the midst of the turmoil in the world -- whether across the ocean or across my street. Here am I, Lord...send me."

Ukraine medical need...

As we wrote last month, I (John) had the privilege of visiting a new "Church of Praise" in a Ukrainian prison. 176 men are part of that new church! Here is a report from Jackie concerning the medical plight of these men in the prisons:

"While talking with Sasha about plans for John's proposed visit to the prison, Sasha asked if there were antibiotics in the medicines I brought. My heart sank as I realized I hadn't brought any. He said 'brothers are dying with fevers.' I felt terrible, but decided to perhaps get some from the church

dispensary. I was shocked to find the dispensary shelves covered with many dust particles and alarmingly few medicines. (People from Canada established the dispensary but have not sent anything to maintain it!)

Winter is almost here, when illnesses increase many times over. The need is very great. The dispensary serves the homeless, the rehab center, the prisoners, and others in great need. No one else is helping this need. Can you? We hope to establish a monthly supply of antibiotics and other basic medicines, so that no one who has been reached through the evangelism of the Ukrainian churches need die for lack of simple medicines." *Please pray with us for a substantial flow of funds for this medical need.*

Our next outreach to Ukraine...

Please pray with us for the wisdom of the Lord, as we finalize plans to return soon -- after the beginning of the new year. *We will probably leave by mid January.*

Our time there will be another busy mix of teaching in the Bible College and in the churches and encouraging the pastors and leaders. We will continue helping to open more new churches in Krivoy Rog and help with plans to open churches soon in other major cities of Ukraine.

Remember -- our part is in simple service and support to the Ukrainians in these pioneer ventures. *They* are the heroes, and the credit goes to the Lord. We are just glad to help, and are grateful to all our friends who help us to help them!

Winter is also the time for establishing vision for spring and summer. Our own hearts are always enlarged by the Ukrainians, and we also seek to help them keep stretching their vision to the "regions beyond", looking to new places for the spreading of the gospel.

Some people ask us when the Ukrainians will be able to go ahead on their own, without us. The answer is that they could have done that from the beginning -- though they tell us they could have only done a fraction of what has been done without our help and the help of our friends. The other answer is that the vision is to keep expanding, and our task is to help them stay "on the frontlines", so that they can more quickly invade new territory and more easily do the pioneering work that lies ahead. So, our part does not end, it adjusts to serve the expanding mission. When we see the churches fully stand up in their calling to be a missionary sending force to the nations, that will be a beginning sign of "mission accomplished"!

Is it time to take the Ukrainians east?

We are asking God if this summer is the time to take a team of Ukrainians with us into central Asia -- southern Siberia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan. Ukrainians can go to many of these places without visas, they speak the common language, and are well received. Who knows where the "Churches of Praise" will take root in the future (if Jesus tarries) Going east from Ukraine, you eventually end up in China or Mongolia! We try to help them "lift up their eyes and look on the fields..."

Can we encourage you to do the same thing?

Let your light shine!

These are days for letting your light shine, not "hiding it under a bushel". Yes, the darkness is getting darker, but the Bible says that it would happen. It also says the glory of the Lord will rise on God's people!

*"Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.
See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the LORD rises upon you
and his glory appears over you.
Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.*

Isaiah 60

It is likely that we will continue to see this contrast of darkness and light, so it is important for you to keep your focus on the light and carrying the light.

Remember, even a little candle can be seen in the deepest darkness!

Wisdom for some practical areas...

Many of you remark to us that you have been encouraged by the testimonies of our coming and going in missions and of the Lord's provision. We hope so. Yet, we do have setbacks, too. In our testimonies, we are concerned that we not give you the impression that we win every battle. Not so. There are some victories we are still waiting for, especially on the home front. We carry some debt from past years. Some of it is from medical care for Jackie in the years of many surgeries, some from expenses of developing the home base of our ministry and office. (This last part is due, I feel, to my own lack of wisdom.) Also, we are facing issues of getting older, and though we want to preach till we die and retire in heaven, we are noticing our lack of old age resources that sometimes come with salaried careers. We also have certain other issues, such as insurance coverage.

We don't want to give you the impression that everything is perfect with us (it isn't), and we do feel the need for wisdom in these areas. Thank you for praying with us about them.

Thanks!!!!

In the missionary task, there are the go-ers, and the senders. We have been called to be go-ers, and plan to keep going. Many of you are called to be the senders -- with your love, your prayer and your giving, as the Lord leads. We know that the senders are as important as the go-ers! We all share in the harvest equally, for God is the one who gives the increase!

Thanks for helping to send us. We are humbled and highly grateful to each one of you that thinks of us, that continues to be our friend, that reads our letters, that prays for us, and that gives financially as God leads.

The Lord will richly bless you in every way as you trust Him with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding, acknowledge Him in all your ways. *He will direct your path.*

With love,

John and Jackie