



Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie

March 26, 2002



Dear friends,

We greet you again in the wonderful name of Jesus!

Back to Ukraine April 11...

The plan is to leave for Krivoy Rog on April 11, just fifteen days from now, accompanied by pastor Gordy Steck, and evangelist Mark Johnson. These long time friends of ours have both ministered in Ukraine before, and we are trusting the Lord for a fruitful time as a teaching/training/ministry team.

One part of our time in Ukraine will consist of a week-long pastor's school and leader's conference. We will teach the pastors of the Churches of Praise together with the Bible College students in the mornings, and have separate classes for the pastors and students in the afternoons. In the evenings, it will be a leadership conference open to all, but still focusing on the pastors. Evangelism will also take place during this week, led by Mark, involving the Bible College students and pastors, out into streets and neighborhoods as the Lord leads.

In addition to this intensive week, we will minister in as many daughter churches as possible, continue to teach as much as we can in the Bible College, help with evangelism and church planting, and help with plans for other teams coming.

Jackie will come to Ukraine a few days after we go (due to her prior commitments). She and I will return to the USA on May 9, by the grace of God! *Yes...we still need all the provision to go. God is faithful!*

The need for Bible College in the Prison...

Wisdom is needed for the burgeoning church in the prison. The present question is how can we do a Bible College among the 350 men in the prison church? Many of these new converts want to be trained in the Word and in ministry. They live in a captive mission field of thousands of men! These are men from all over Ukraine. It is not just a concern for their lives in prison — remember, most of them will eventually get out of prison and go...somewhere.

The goal is that they go home as trained ministers of the gospel! Prison-trained pastors become some of the best ministers in the country! God redeems their broken lives, their time behind bars, and uses it all to build His kingdom and give the devil a black eye!! So, please pray for the development of Bible College in this prison church.

Vision for the "Shining Glory" Rehab Center...

On the last trip, we met with the men of the rehab center in the main church. There are about twenty of them now, living and working in the church. Each of them is a miracle in the making, a life being restored from destruction. All have had problems with drugs and alcohol, and most of them were involved in crime. The majority of them have been in prison.

We (and pastor Gregori) had the privilege of sitting with them and listening to their stories of life in prison. The purpose was to learn how to work in the prison, and how to help men (and women) once they are released.

The rehab center is one place for prisoners to come when

they leave prison. Many people have no place to go when they are released from prison — no home, and no family who wants them. Their future is many times determined by the person who meets them first when they are released. Too often that is the wrong person.

Most of them have lost their documents, making it impossible for them to get a job. To get their documents replaced they must have a home. The church address is not permitted for that purpose. So, the vision is to buy up a few houses for these men -- not very good ones -- ones that can be purchased for a few hundred dollars. The rehab men will rebuild and restore the houses, and live there. In the process, their documents can be replaced and they can begin to look for paying jobs. This is the practical work of restoring lives. *We are believing for funds to be given to purchase these houses.*

Please pray with us for the growth of this rehab center vision. It is ready to expand, to be able to take in more men, and is especially needed now as the prison ministry expands.

A simple way to show them love...

We sat with men young and old, on their beds in the rehab center. Your hearts would melt like ours do, if you would sit with them. Hearing their stories, seeing their scars and tatoos, and seeing the light in their eyes from knowing that someone loves them, and from their newly found faith in Jesus....Wow!

We caught a vision for doing something special for these men, as we noticed their beds without linens. They come with nothing, and have lost everything. We would like to provide each of them a new set of bedding — sheets and a warm blanket — when they come into the rehab center. As a reward for finishing the program, this set of sheets and warm blanket will be presented to them as a gift. (We'd like to find red blankets, to speak of the blood of Jesus.) As they launch out on their own, sleeping under that blanket would remind them that they are loved, that they are important, and that they are cleansed, protected and set free by the blood of Jesus. *Perhaps \$25.00 per man will provide for this need.*

A grandson has arrived!

We have received the gift of a new grandson! Born at 9:27 p.m. on March 19th, he was 7.7 lbs, and cute as they come! He is the first child for our oldest son, Jay, and his wife Lana. His name is Jonathan Hilman Matthews. All are doing well. "Hilman" was the middle name of Jackie's missionary dad.

We thank you...and thank you...!

As always, we can only go if we are sent! That means we are sent on the wings of prayer, and on the support of friends.

Thank you for praying for us, and being our friends — and friends of Scarlet Thread Ministries. Thanks to all who support us and the work in Ukraine. May the blessing of the Lord return to you many times over!

With love,

John and Jackie