



Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie

October 18, 2002



Dear friends,

As always, we consider it a privilege to write to you, and an honor to have you in the circle of friends and partners in this ministry.

You may read this letter out of interest in what "we" are doing, but we know that this ministry consists of what "we and you" are doing together. Whether you simply read our letter and remember to pray for us, or you support us financially, or you are at times part of the team who goes -- we are all in this together.

Did you know that an army is much more than the soldiers who serve on the front lines? It has been said that for every front line soldier, there are nine other soldiers who are working to keep that soldier in the battle. In other words, ninety percent of the army is not on the front lines, but is providing all that is necessary for the battle. They are all soldiers, and they are all fighting the same battle.

Do you know what it takes to keep a helicopter flying? For every hour in the air, there are five hours of maintenance. When that helicopter is flying, the pilot is no more important than the mechanic.

Actually, Scarlet Thread is really a support ministry to other ministries. We are called to help God's soldiers get to the front lines, and help them stay there. We are called to serve them in any way we can -- to cheer them on, to build them up in the faith, to provide counsel, to bring healing to their wounds, to be a channel of resources, and to go with them to the battle when the Commander-in-Chief says to go.

We (you and us) are God's supply line for a growing army of troops who are advancing on a growing number of front lines in a growing number of nations. What was a ministry in Ukraine is now overflowing to several other countries.

Recent e-mails...

We want to share with you two e-mails from Ukraine, one from pastor Gregory, the leader of the Churches of Praise. The other is from Sasha, the director of the outreach to the prisons.

The last time there was an estimate of how many Churches of Praise there are was last spring -- about 35 churches. At that time we prayed over hundreds of present ministry leaders in the churches for a release of apostolic anointing. (In practical terms, that meant an anointing for planting new churches.) Since that time, so much has happened it has been hard for Gregory himself to keep informed. Daughter churches are having daughter churches. People are spontaneously reaching out to towns and villages.

When we were in Krivoy Rog in September, it was still not known how many new Churches of Praise had sprung up over the summer. It took Gregory a couple of weeks of persistent effort after we left Krivoy Rog to find out how many

churches now exist, and where they are. It was clear to us while there, from our meetings with the pastors and with the Bible College, that a new fire for evangelism and church planting was raging in the hearts of many. You should have heard the deafening roaring fire of prayer among the students and later with the pastors, when we prayed together for village church planting!

A letter from Gregory...

"Dear John and Jackie,

"We have now planted 76 churches.

"We used our own money put aside for the construction in the main church for opening recent new churches. But we believe that God is going to supply.

"Now it is a great time and opportunity to start the ministry in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, and maybe in Turkey.

"I started to pray about these places. A couple days ago Ed came with two Canadian brothers to work in the orphanages (not a ministry of Churches of Praise), and when I told them about planting churches in Armenia, they gave \$450 for starting in Armenia.

"Three of our young ministers are ready to go to Armenia. They will be at the next Sunday meeting in the main church and we will pray for them and release them to go. At the end of October I will go into Armenia, perhaps with Galina, to meet some Armenian brothers and to talk with them about starting our ministry there.

"About the vision for churches in the villages: In Ukraine there are 23,000 populated locations with no protestant church. (Some have Orthodox churches; but in many there are no churches at all.) Sometimes people from such places are born there, live their life and die and never have an opportunity to be in the city to hear the Gospel. These people have only one direction to go after they die.

"In many villages there is no electricity, no water and no buses going there. They live in a totally different world. The Devil says, "Let the pastors proclaim salvation to other nations, but these 23,000 towns are mine."

"It is impossible to have a large church in the villages, and this is the reason why churches were started there by others and left to die. This is hard work. But God has shown us to send there church planters, not pastors. We will send planters who know how to establish contacts and gather people. In many villages there are a few believers already, but there are no churches. The planters will train them to live there in the hardship, but within the blessing of being a local church. The church planters will oversee the churches they plant.

"I believe this is the KEY to reach those 23,000 places. I think this year we became one of the fastest church planting groups in Ukraine, but how big is that compared with the needs of 23,000 places? If we will not speed ourselves up, it will take 57.5 years to cover 23,000 places! I am 45, and I'm not going to make it. When I think that this present generation is doomed to death and hell, I am terrified. I repented over and over that we are doing not much. It is written that people believe when they hear someone preach, but how can they preach if we will not send anyone?"

"John, you were asking about needs for prayer, and I will say it this way. We have enough laborers: you know that many people from the Bible college are able to do the program of planting 3 churches in 1 year for a \$100 per month. This includes organizing the churches, and raising up the local pastors in the villages to whom to delegate the churches. The local pastors will not be salaried, but will live as they were living, serving as volunteer pastors.

"Today we have 50 people able to do this village church planting. But they need to be provided for, to be able to move among villages and to take some ministers and speakers with them sometimes. If these people would be released in this church planting, we could have 150 new churches at the end of a year.

"One nonbeliever businessmen heard that Pasha is planting churches and wants to help with the finances for him to plant three churches. I am sure that there are believers who understand salvation and almost every believing family in the USA or Canada would be glad to open the churches with their finances.

"And one more thing. John and Jackie. We have to take care about the education for these village ministers. There is a big difference between village people and city people. It is like the difference between the USA and Ukraine. We have to open a mission school for these village ministers."

With love, Gregory

Comment: this "mission school" is the sixth kind of Bible College that we are now dealing with.

So: here is the practical need: 50 church planters are at the gate, ready to take up the challenge of planting three new village churches per year. We were there: we saw the new generation of laborers in the Bible colleges, and in the pastors meetings. Serious, committed people, ready to go, already in motion. It's not that they are just sitting there waiting for financial support. They are moving ahead, trusting God to supply. They are doing all they can do, but we know that help must come for the work to get done.

The practical need is \$100 a month for each of them. Will you pray with us that these funds will be released for all these new church planters?

Perhaps you agree with Gregory that "almost every believing family in the USA or Canada would be glad to open the churches with their finances..." I hope it is true. \$100 a month is a large commitment for many families. Not as large

as the commitment of these church planters, however. It may be a small commitment, however, for many churches or groups of believers. Thanks for praying with us for the release of these funds. What better investment could be made than \$100 a month for three new churches a year? Perhaps your family or church or business will join a new supporting army that is needed to keep these church planters on the front lines.

And now a note from Sasha, prison outreach...

"Peace to you, brother and sister in Christ!!!"

"Right now we have opened the church in prison #45. This is the prison for the invalids, so for many of those who are there, it is the place where they will die. As Christ said that He came to the sick, we came to that prison to bring them salvation, because we want them to come to the knowledge of God and become happy. Many of them are coming and asking if they can hear the Word of God.

"When we were giving them some cookies and candies, we could see light in their eyes. They were thanking us, and we could see that life came back to them. Thirty people received Christ as their Savior, and I know that this is just a beginning.

"I want to write to you about prison # 21. (Comment: this is the prison where there is now a Church of Praise of 300 men.) One brother was praying for his sentence to become shorter. He was supposed to be there for ten years. God took away four years, and in thirty days this man will be free!

"Many brothers in that prison have testified that they were healed after the anointing with oil.

"They are very thankful for your financial help. Many of them need some winter boots. They are asking us for this. They say that they do not have any relatives who can buy these things for them. What shall we say in this case?"

Comment: present finances to help this prison work will run out in two months. Please agree with us for a new release of funds.

Thank you!

You are a blessing, and thanks for your friendship. This whole ministry basically runs on friendship. We highly value old friends (even if we haven't seen you for a long time!) And we know God will give us new friends for the days ahead!

Join us on November 4 in prayer if you can!

We'd love to see you at the next Scarlet Thread Prayer Meeting, if you are in town. (Monday, Nov. 4, 7 p.m., Triumphant Faith Christian Center. Call Jen at 763-856-3468 if you need more directions. If you can't come, would you pray for Scarlet Thread that evening wherever you may be?

With love,

John and Jackie

p.s. Pray for wisdom for travel plans before Christmas to Central Asia, and Armenia/Georgia. This may involve John, Gregory, Steve Hill, and/or Jeff Orluck. Jeff will be in Ukraine the last half of November. Also we and others need wisdom in planning winter and spring travel to Ukraine and other places.