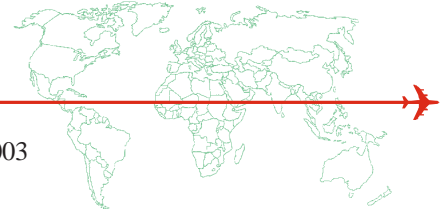




Celebrating 40 years married!

Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie



April 29, 2003

Dear friends,

Jackie and I greet you again in the wonderful name of Jesus! And we thank you right away for the privilege of writing to you.

In case you wondered if you missed our letter last month, no you didn't lose track of it. We missed a month -- the first time we've missed sending a monthly prayer letter in about ten years!

It wasn't that we didn't need prayer. Actually, we did. What happened was that during March I had some episodes of irregular heart beat, and some peculiar sensations of weakness and near fainting. I also began to lose sleep, waking suddenly and startled many times a night. After about three weeks of this, I found myself physically and emotionally exhausted. It was tiring for Jackie as well to support me through this trial.

These symptoms began right after we sent out our last letter at the end of February -- in which I wrote a great article titled "Fear not!". I soon found that I was disobeying His Word. Not knowing what was happening to me, my anxiety level went quite high for a while. In the middle of the struggle, God just preached back to me His Word that I had preached to others:

"...and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Phil. 4:7

I was having a problem in my physical heart and mind. I took the promise for myself...again!

Since the doctors found it difficult to determine exactly what I was experiencing, they ordered a full physical exam -- with various lab tests, and a heart stress test. A few minutes into the stress test, I experienced a sudden rapid heart beat, a rise in blood pressure, and slight chest pain. (I never had chest pain before, or since.) The test was stopped at that point, of course. I recuperated right away, and the cardiologist watched my heart in action on the video of the echocardiogram taken during and after the test.

The cardiologist determined that my experience during the stress test was not a medical emergency, so he recommended consultation with our family doctor as the next step. That consultation resulted in medication for irregular heart beat, temporary medication for loss of sleep, and daily monitoring of my blood pressure.

The sleep medication was only needed for ten days. The episodes of irregular heart beat faded. Blood pressure has been OK, and no chest pain. I have had no more episodes of weakness since the heart medication was reduced, and since I was prayed for at our Monday night prayer meeting on April 7. Actually I have been feeling quite good and sleeping well since

then. I have follow-up appointments with our family doctor and with the cardiologist during May to further understand the cause and treatment for all this. So far, the medical understanding is that I will be fine with a balanced life, exercise, good diet, and a small amount of medication for irregular heartbeat. Beyond that is the faithfulness of Jehovah Raphah -- the Lord my Healer. Thanks for agreeing with us in faith for my health, and wisdom and discipline for balanced living.

This all resulted in postponing travel to Ukraine which was scheduled for April, as well as cancelling our teaching time in Holland. The leadership conference scheduled in Ukraine for the first week of May was also postponed, since we could not be there. It has been rescheduled for the first week of June.

Basically, I took some time off for rest, and for taking steps to restore the "balanced life" that I have neglected.

Two recent letters from our friends in Ukraine...

Greetings to you John and Jackie,

"I want to tell you what is happening in the prison ministry. We have churches in five men's prisons and in one prison for women in the Dnepropetrovsk district. I want to tell you that there is a revival in the women's prison! During three meetings, 290 women came to Christ! We thank you, John and Jackie for your help and for your love. In a men's prison God healed one blind man. Some of the brothers who have

come out of prison are now coming to the main church and they have begun a new life in Christ. May God keep you safe.

*...from Sasha, prison ministry director
(20 years in prison himself)*

Dear John and Jackie,

"This Tuesday and Wednesday we had a pastors' meeting and God blessed us with amazing reports. Churches are growing in many places. In many of the new churches we now have local ministers, but in many places we still need laborers.

"Pastor Galina (not Gregory's wife) is working now in a new region of the city called Vinnitsa, near Moldova. She is planning to start ministry there. She talked to many shoppers on the street and they are very open people. She thinks that this Moldovian nation is greatly open for God. After Easter she will go there to begin. (Note: Galina has worked in the villages and opened many churches. We told you her story in past letters. She is one of our heroes!)

"At this pastors' meeting we were talking about people to send to work on the border that Ukraine has with Russia.

"Dima probably will go to Tajikistan. But this needs more discussion. This will be the eighth country we are involved in.

"At this time, we have 270 churches.

"Some believers are getting out of prison already equipped

to be ministers and able to do church planting. Yesterday six brothers from prison were at the pastors meeting. A summary of the years spent in prison by them is 80. But now they are able ministers. These ministers from prison are very enduring people. They are well prepared to plant churches in the villages.

...from Gregory

Leaders in Ukraine often thank us for our help, but we always tell them that most of the help comes through others who love them. We are just the "errand runners" that pass the help on to them. We pass on their thanks to you who pray and give and go.

Traveling again, leaving May 28:

The Churches of Praise will soon be a legal national union of churches -- meaning they will have the legal right to plant churches anywhere in the nation, and these churches will all have legal recognition without needing to register individually with the government. This is a huge breakthrough for them!

We are planning to travel to be part of the leaders' conference in Krivoy Rog during the first week of June, an official gathering of the new union of Churches of Praise. Probably 400 pastors and leaders will be there, plus some government officials. Actually it will be the first international gathering of the Churches of Praise. Hopefully, the leaders of the church planting in central Asia will be at the conference, as well as the church planters from Armenia. Church planters preparing to start work in other countries will also be there.

In addition to the conference, there will be a Bible College graduation celebration. We will also meet with many of the church planters individually, and help Gregory to lay plans for the months ahead. Jay will be recording as much as possible on video, towards our goal of producing a video story of the Churches of Praise.

Steve and Marilyn Hill from Holland will be with us at the conference, and hopefully a team led by pastor Jeff Orluck from Minneapolis.

Please pray for the visa process. This winter and spring has been more difficult in getting the necessary letters of invitation, and in working with the Ukrainian embassy. The embassy now requires much more time, or the already steep visa fee is doubled. This extra time is frequently a problem.

We are trusting the Lord, not only for our own travel funds, but funds to bring the church planters from other countries as well as helping with the expenses of holding the conference.

Our planned travel schedule:

May 28: John and Jay leave Minneapolis for Ukraine

June 1: Jackie leaves Minneapolis to join us.

June 6: Jay flies home

Mid June: Jackie and I arrive home

Plenty of room for God's supernatural provision:

On the international level, you can probably realize that the financial needs continue to be great and greater. For every new church, (now 270 churches) every new door into a prison, (6 prisons in Ukraine, plus prisons in Kyrgyzstan) there is a financial need.

Our first concern continues to be the support of the new village churches. \$360, (\$30 for twelve months), will establish at least one new village church. (Actually the church planters are doing more than that with this small amount of money.) A large number of the new churches have not been covered financially, so please pray that God will raise up many new supporters for the village churches.

As you see from Sasha's prison report, the prison ministry is growing. Funding for humanitarian aid is essential in planting prison churches. Food and medicine is needed to gain entrance to the prisons, and to help keep prisoners from dying.

Activity on the home front:

Our main goal at home recently has been to upgrade our administration, communication, and publishing capacities. This has meant expanding our office spaces, adding computer and printing equipment, upgrading our record keeping, developing our website, and now to proceed with backlogged writing and publishing projects. Though everything seems to take longer than anticipated, we are making progress.

We hope that soon we will be able to say our offices and our website are up and running correctly. You can visit **ScarletThread.net**, a work in process.

Pray also for our summer months, when we hope to get much writing and publishing in motion: small books and other publications for use in the USA and other nations.

We are trusting the Lord to help people catch the vision for supporting this important "behind the scenes" work -- prayer, administration, communication and publication -- as well the more obvious ministries of "going and doing".

Concerning all these things, including our personal support, there are many "empty vessels" waiting to be filled! Remember the account of the widow's jar of oil? The oil kept flowing as long as there was another empty vessel. (2 Kings 4:1-7) Jehovah Jireh! We believe the Lord will provide. (Genesis 22:14)

Thanks!!

No one person can carry the load, and our first reason for writing to you about it is for faith agreement. Thank you for agreeing in prayer and faith with us that God will lead and enable many people to become financial partners in some way, and that they will be obedient to His direction.

A big thanks for praying for us and for this expanding work. When you are able to help financially, it is received with deep appreciation, and received as given to the Lord Himself.

May the Lord bless you and your family in every way. These are the days to put more faith in Jesus and in the blood covenant Word of the Father. Expect God to fulfill His Word in your life, and don't shrink back into the fear that is in the world around you. Push through anxiety into the peace of Jesus that passes your understanding. God is peace Himself, and He imparts that supernatural peace to us through Christ, through His Word, and through His Holy Spirit.

With love,

John and Jackie

p.s.: summer children's camps: needs include sports equipment, tents, and financial help for needy children

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

63 105th Lane N.W., Coon Rapids, MN 55448 Tel: 612-755-6612 Fax: 612-755-2045 E-mail: ScarletThreadInc@cs.com