

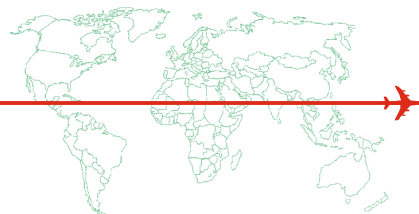


Celebrating 40 years married!

## Lifeline

... a prayer letter from John and Jackie

February 28, 2003



Dear friends,

Jackie and I say hello again in the wonderful name of Jesus! We also say thanks right away for being able to write and communicate with you!

### **Fear not!**

Terrorism is now becoming a household word in America. Who would have thought that such a word would become commonplace? It seems only natural to be frightened by the possibility of more terrorism in our country. Yet, Psalms 91:5 says, "*You will not be afraid of the terror...*"

Dozens of times in the Bible, we can read the words "*Do not be afraid, do not be anxious, do not fear...*" It is actually one of the most clear commands in the Word.

Throughout my life, one Scripture I have had to practice as much as any other instruction in the Bible is Philippians 4:6-7:

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

I suspect the general anxiety level of many people is significantly higher these days. I myself have known times when I couldn't think of anything I was NOT anxious about! But God is never anxious, and He tells us not to worry. He tells us not to be anxious, and not to be afraid. Ever...about anything.

On days when I was having a panic reaction to life, the thing I needed to do was to humble myself. I needed to simply admit to God and myself (and sometimes my wife or a friend) that I had become anxious about many things. I then needed to confess this anxiety to Him as *sin*, because I was disobeying His command to not be anxious. After asking Him to forgive me and cleanse me from fear through the blood of Jesus, I would then renounce the anxious spirit, and "break my covenant with fear". I would then choose to agree with God — to "be anxious for nothing...", and ask Him to fill me up with His Holy Spirit.

I would then thank the Lord for my life *as it is*, and present my requests to God about everything I had been worried about. Simply and supernaturally, peace would then begin to replace the anxiety. It was the peace of God that was higher than my understanding.

Mostly this required humility, not great faith. When I humbled my mind so that I could admit that I was having an anxiety reaction (or panic attack), I could confess it to God and receive a cleansing from Him. I found then that I actually did have a little bit of faith — maybe just a tiny amount like a "mustard seed". With that tiny amount of faith I found that I

could put my trust in the Father and His Word once again. I would then simply rest my mind and heart on one of His great promises, and my peace would return.

I knew the Word of God well enough to realize that my experience of anxiety was not just an emotional problem. It was sin. If God says "fear not!", and we instead keep on fearing, that is sin. I also had learned that my outward circumstances were not the true cause of my fear. It was *my response to these circumstances* that caused the anxiety. For the most part, the problem was responding to life from my proud mind that was trying to figure things out. The solution was to humble my mind and trust God and His Word. That is called repentance.

Psalms 131 has helped me find peace in fearful times:

*"Lord, my heart is not proud, nor my eyes haughty;  
Nor do I involve myself in great matters,  
Or in things too difficult for me.  
Surely I have composed and quieted my soul;  
Like a weaned child rests against his mother,  
My soul is like a weaned child within me.  
Oh Israel, hope in the Lord  
From this time forth and forever."*

If we will humble our heart, our eyes, and our mind under the truth from God, if we will admit that the problem is inside of us, instead of blaming it on outward circumstances, then God can help us.

On the other hand, if we insist that our anxiety is caused by the national economic crisis, the loss of our job, or the threat of terrorism, we are actually giving away to these outside circumstances our own authority over our inward life. When we in humility admit we have a problem on the inside, and take charge of the problem according to God's Word, we can once again come to peace.

*"...and the peace of God shall guard your heart and your mind in Christ Jesus."*

In addition to finding peace of mind, God's word promises physical protection for His people in times of trouble. Psalms 91 is His covenant promise to keep safe every person who "*dwells in the secret place of the Most High*". (v. 1)

These are the days to meditate on and declare God's covenant promises, and to learn to live in that secret place with God, where our protection is promised.

These are the days to learn what it is to make "*the Lord Himself our refuge, the Most High our dwelling place*". (v. 9)

If we do that, the promise is this: "*no evil shall befall you, nor any plague or calamity come near your dwelling*." (v. 10).

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### ***You can establish a new village church for \$360!***

There is a great need for many people to give \$360 to establish a church in a village or town where there has been no church. This can be given as a single gift, or over a period of 12 months. As we write, at least one new church is being started each day by the Churches of Praise! Each new church needs a year of this modest financial support to get established. This money goes a long way. It is used for the practical expenses of planting the church, such as transportation of the church planting teams, humanitarian help for needy people in the village, and the miscellaneous expenses of establishing regular meetings.

Through the Ukrainians, and the gifts of our friends, about 66 of these new village churches are now being supported. (nearly \$2000 a month is now coming in) We are believing God for much more, enough for each church that is opened.

At the present rate of church planting, 500 churches will open by the end of this year. This should not be stopped for lack of finances. Each church is planted in a village or town where there is absolutely no church and no gospel witness!

Do the math: \$30 a month for 12 months for each of 500 churches means \$15,000 a month during the next year. With \$2000 a month presently coming in, it means 13.3% of the expected need has been met.

This seems a large thing, but it is a small thing for God. Will you believe God with us for this supernatural release?

The Ukrainian Churches of Praise themselves are giving sacrificially to this vision. Some business owners in the church have adopted one or two or three churches each. The city churches are pouring everything they have into the village church planting fire. Frankly, it is emptying out the coffers and stopping other ministries right now. The need for funds is immediate. We are believing that somehow God will provide for every church. Will you agree with us in faith?

### ***No visas granted to Gregory and Galina...***

Gregory and Galina did NOT get their visas into the USA. The American officials in Kiev told them that Gregory had too many relatives in the USA, and they were afraid they wouldn't return to Ukraine. Many of his family have indeed immigrated to Massachusetts, and Gregory could have done the same thing a long time ago. But his response is always: "We have too much to do here in Ukraine. Who will take care of all these people?" He has no desire to come to the USA. He related to me that in the Ukrainian church in Massachusetts, thirty former pastors sit in the pews, waiting for the present pastor to die so they can get a chance to preach. How unfortunate that they all left Ukraine when such a great harvest was beginning.

### ***Jen and Scott to Ukraine on March 25:***

While in Krivoy Rog, Jen and Scott will be holding a youth conference, ministering in villages, and preparing for several summer youth outreaches, including two summer teams of American youth who will work side by side with Ukrainian youth. They will do evangelism and church planting in the unreached villages and towns.

*As of this date (March 18), Jen and Scott still need ALL*

*their travel funds for the March trip, so thanks for standing with them and us in faith for this important outreach.*

### ***And us...***

Jackie and I plan to leave again April 12. We are scheduled to be in Holland to teach in a YWAM discipleship training school led by our friend Marcia LaRock. Then, by God's grace our son Jay will join me for a trip into Ukraine. We are also hoping to go to Armenia at that time, and are praying about including a trip to Central Asia. Teaching and preaching, leaders' training, and a video production of the story of the Churches of Praise are included in the purposes for this trip.

As always, we are trusting God for His provision for our home as well as for the increasing mission responsibilities. What needs to be done in the next few months, requires much more! We know that many are experiencing financial stress. So have we. But we believe that God's kingdom is not going broke. We are trusting God to release resources. His Word says: *"Give, and it shall be given to you..."*

Please remember this: the first reason we send this letter to you is so that you can pray with us about these things. We know that many, though unable to give financially at this time, pray for us regularly. It is a joy for us to send this letter to all who want to receive it, and who will pray for us. The large responsibility of the ministry in Ukraine and now other nations requires that many carry the vision in prayer. This united prayer, we believe, is necessary to see spiritual and financial breakthrough, so that the unreached cities and villages can be evangelized, and the churches planted. Your partnership in prayer is important to us!

### ***And you...***

May you know the peace of God that passes your understanding. May God enable you to respond in the "opposite spirit" to the anxiety in the world and the pressure from the kingdom of darkness. May your home be filled with the Spirit of God, who is the Comforter. May He pour out in your heart the comfort of the Father's love, and the comfort of knowing your place of security in Christ. May you experience God's *"perfect love that casts out fear"*. May you live in *"the secret place of the Most High"*.

With love,

***John and Jackie***

### ***Prayer needs:***

- 1. Travel funds for Jen and Scott's March 25 trip.*
- 2. Wisdom and provision for April/May travel plans for John, Jackie and Jay to Holland, Ukraine, and Armenia, and possibly Central Asia.*
- 3. Finances for church planting in Ukraine, Armenia and Central Asia.*
- 4. Finishing of the ScarletThread.net website*
- 5. Writing of the blood covenant foundations for English and Russian languages*
- 6. For our strength and energy to keep up with the vision.*
- 7. For our children and their families: Jay, Lana and 1 yr. old grandson Jonathan: Jeff, Jermaine and 12 yr. old John; and Scott and Jennifer.*

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

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