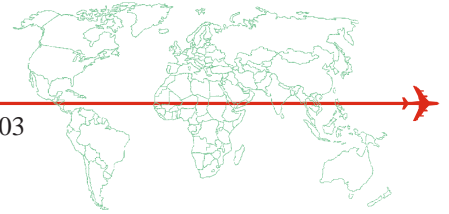


Celebrating 40 years married!

## Lifeline

January 30, 2003



Dear friends,

I greet you from the beautiful country of Ukraine, and from the beautiful people of the Churches of Praise! Jackie greets you from beautiful Minnesota!

I arrived in Krivoy Rog to a lot of snow and ice and bitter cold. It made me feel right at home, even though our Minnesota has had an unusually mild winter so far.

### **Loved, fed, and warmed by God's presence...**

I am not suffering here in the least. In our warm little cottage behind Gregory and Galina's house, I am perfectly comfortable. The main church and Bible College are well heated as well.

The Ukrainian hospitality makes me feel loved, and my belly is stuffed with food. Beyond this, the fire and life of God is in the churches, in the college, and in the pastors. This all makes me feel quite wonderful. (Though I miss you, Jackie.) I wish each one of you were here to enjoy this with me!

My first priority has been to teach in the Bible college. Two weeks, two hours each morning, twenty hours of teaching on God's favorite subject (and I do believe that statement with all my heart!): "*The blood covenant foundation of our salvation through Jesus Christ*". It's all going on two kinds of videotape, for which I am grateful. Perhaps God will use these tapes in places I cannot go.

I feel like I'm in my own personal revival when I hear myself teach the good news about Jesus! What a privilege, to be an ambassador of the greatest news in the world! What an honor to pour this treasure of the Word of God into hungry and thirsty people – people who run with it and spread it all over the cities and villages of this country!

The rest of my hours fill up instantly with too much to do! I had to skip teaching in the evening college tonight to write this letter.

### **Church Planting fire...**

Following our two day pastors' meeting, I sat with Gregory in his office. One after another of the Churches of Praise pastors brought to his desk their reports of new churches being opened in their region.

A written report is filed on each new church: where it meets, when it began, when the regular meetings are, how many are in the church, who opened it, who is leading it, who is being trained to be its new pastor. Pictures of the new converts accompany each report.

Some pastors brought quite a stack of these reports. Several pastors who were leading one or two churches six months ago now are overseeing the establishing of ten or twenty new churches.

During the pastors' meeting, several young men and women who I had never even seen before reported about opening new churches. Some of them, known only in their villages a few months ago, have opened several churches during the last month.

I arrived here believing that there were about 100 Churches of Praise. Following the two day pastors' meeting, Gregory had no idea how many churches there were. As I preached in the main church Sunday morning concerning the church planting anointing, I asked Gregory if he now knew how many churches there were. He still had no idea. Luba, the administrator, came across the room to inform him that there were now more than 170 Churches of Praise.

You no doubt could understand that many of these are churches in the tiniest form: one is 3 new believers in a small village. Others are 8, 10 or 20 strong. Each one a new harvest. One new church is 34 Gypsies who came to Christ at one time during a village outreach.

In the middle of these encouraging reports were some upsetting incidents: last week, near Cupiansk in northeast Ukraine, one woman who has opened six churches was beaten badly by bandits as she walked from village to village. Now hospitalized, please pray for her recovery. Two days ago in a village near Krivoy Rog, new believers were meeting in one of their homes. A drunk farmer came in and beat up the man hosting the meeting in front of the others, screaming that he'd come back with farm tools and break their bodies if they ever met again!

This new church is an outreach of Bible College students. a team has gone to minister to the wounded man, and to the shocked little group of new Christians.

*By this morning, the count of 170 churches was no longer correct.* Pasha, church planter in Dnepropetrovsk, called Gregory this morning. He had said that they had intended to open six new churches in Dnepropetrovsk in the next month. He said that something happened to him in the pastors' meeting after we prayed over the church planting pastors for a release of new leaders for new churches. He said that in the last four days since returning to Dnepropetrovsk, they had opened seven new churches.

If your head is spinning from this report, it should. These leaders have caught a vision and a fire, and are not waiting for anything. They have seen that a church can be in the simplest form – new believers meeting anywhere, being taught and cared for by the church planters. These church planting pastors from day one are raising up new pastors from within the new churches. They are also training the new believers from day one to go out and evangelize their neighbors. And they go...

You should have heard the roar, the thunder of prayer in the pastors' meeting, as they grabbed more of God's fire to open

**Scarlet Thread  
Prayer Meeting  
Monday, Feb. 3  
Matthew's house  
763-755-6612**

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more churches. This is God at work. It's supernatural, and it's the real thing.

Each story of a church opening is a simple story: people going to dark places, giving hopeless people the good news, praying for their sick, leading them to Christ, and asking them for a place for a new church to meet.

***February 24-28: Gregory and Galina in Minnesota, we hope!***

As you will notice in the brochure sent with this letter, you are invited to come and hear Gregory and Galina in our home town! (We know some of you are too far away.) It is their first time in the USA. They have been invited to the USA by the Book of Hope Mission in Florida, and by us. Monday night the 24th will be a meeting for youth who want to go to Ukraine this summer. Tuesday evening the 25th is for everyone: bring your friends and meet our wonderful friends from Ukraine! Wednesday morning the 26th is for ministers and leaders. Spread the word! Call us with any questions.

Will you pray for an important thing? *Gregory and Galina's visas to get into the USA.* The American embassy in Kiev is a very difficult place. Their interview with the officials is not until February 10, just six days before they are scheduled to leave for the USA. Please agree with us in faith that they will have favor with the embassy officials.

We believe God will use their short time in Minnesota to help build the base of friendship and support for this greatest work on the earth — the salvation of the lost and the planting of the church.

***Very soon, we go back to Ukraine, to Armenia, and to Central Asia...***

We are planning a return in March to Ukraine and Central Asia, and to go to Armenia. I had hoped to get to Armenia now, but it has proved too difficult to get a visa quickly enough. The new Church of Praise there has outgrown its house meetings, and is now using a rented hall.

We also want to accompany Gregory and Steve Hill, by God's grace, to Central Asia in late March and early April for a leadership and teaching conference with the church planting team there.

Jen and Scott also plan to go to Krivoy Rog in March, for the purpose of holding a youth conference, and preparing Ukrainian youth to work with the American youth during the summer outreaches. Please pray for them. For Scott to take time away from work, believing for the travel funds, plus expecting to be in Ukraine for six weeks this summer -- these are all big steps of faith for them.

***We want to make a video story of the Churches of Praise...***

Another purpose for the March/April trip is to work on producing a video story of the Churches of Praise. We would like to provide such a video for pastors, business people, and others who are interested in this work. As you know, we have written a lot of words about what is happening. If only you saw and heard some of what we see and hear! So, that is the plan. We want to produce a high quality video story in at least two forms: a shorter one for inquiring pastors and businessmen, and a longer one for prayer warriors and friends of the ministry. My oldest son Jay has agreed to help us produce this

video. By God's grace, he will accompany us for this purpose to Ukraine, and hopefully to Armenia and Central Asia.

This video project needs a special release of resources for the extra travel, the purchase of video and editing equipment, and the reproduction of the story on tape and DVD. I believe God wants it to be done. It is time to lift the vision higher and make it clear for all to see — not only in writing, but with picture and sound. Your faith and prayer and agreement with us in this can be a supernatural force!

***For our family and home base...***

Jackie is at home as I am writing from Krivoy Rog. She tells me she is at peace and is doing what God wants her to do. Thanks for praying for her. Pray Jen and for Scott as they are recruiting youth for summer missions, and doing a lot of work at our home base, and preparing to travel to Ukraine in March. Pray for our son Jay, that God will make a way for him to also take a leave from his job to travel with us in March. Pray for our second son Jeff and his friend Chris as they are preparing our new website. You can see the first phase of it now at [ScarletThread.net](http://ScarletThread.net).

We hoped to be much more ready for the multiplication that is happening. The work here in Ukraine and beyond has outstripped our strength at the home base. Please pray for an increase in the circle of friendships needed, for the structure of our organization, for the financial stewardship, and for our offices and equipment. We want to publish widely the teaching of the Word, send more teams to more places, help more church planters, provide more for prison outreaches and hospital outreaches, and so on and on...

***We always remember you...***

Jackie and I never forget you. We never forget how much our lives have been touched by your prayer and your love. We never forget that God uses many of you to provide for us and for the ministry. We never forget that this ministry is a partnership among friends, even if we don't get to see you face to face.

Thanks for giving us the privilege and honor of communicating with you. Thanks for remembering us, and for praying. Thanks to each one of you that is able to support the work of Scarlet Thread Ministries — and through us to support the expansion of the Churches of Praise.

May you know and experience the presence of the Lord in your daily life, your home, your work, and your ministry. We stand with you on the foundation of the blood and the name of Jesus Christ, the most solid rock foundation in the universe! As Jackie's missionary mom used to say to her, while shaking a finger in her little girl face: "You remember this: there is nothing more powerful than the blood and name of Jesus Christ!"

And so we shake our little finger of a letter in your face and say the same thing to you: "Remember this! Nothing, nothing, is more powerful than the blood and name of Jesus!!!"

With love,  
***John and Jackie***