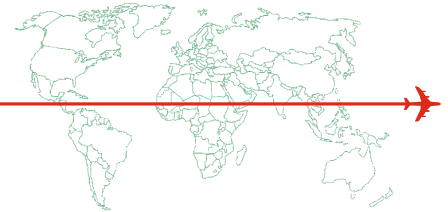




Lifeline
...a prayer letter from John and Jackie



September 7, 2003

Celebrating 40 years married!
Dear friends,

Greetings from Ukraine! I (John) arrived here with pastor Bob Pullar and pastor Louie Valliancourt last Tuesday, September 23. Jackie has remained at home, for now.

Our first two days here...

After 24 hours of travel from Minneapolis, we hit the bed in Krivoy Rog at midnight. The following morning, we were in the opening celebration for the Bible College. Everybody preached some — Gregory, Galina, myself, Louie, and Bob. Then I led in praying for impartation of anointing for this year in the college. First we laid hands on the 3rd year class, then the 2nd year class, then the 1st. Then we did the Ukrainian teaching staff. Pastors who were in attendance joined the three of us in praying.

Bob and Louie rested a little that afternoon, while Gregory and I met with the college teachers. In the evening, Bob and Louie ministered together in pastor Uri's church, while I stayed back and talked with Gregory about some problem areas. That was day one. Day two put Bob and Louie in the classroom all morning. I stayed back and unpacked and organized my stuff: hung my clothes and sorted my electronic stuff — laptop computer, digital and video cameras, cords, transformers, cell phones, etc. In the afternoon, Bob and I met with a group of village pastors, while Louie ministered at the TB hospital. That evening Bob and Louie ministered in two different churches, while I took some time to try and write this letter. Actually, I sat down at the keyboard and fell asleep. So, that's how days go here. Do as much as we can, and take a little rest when we can.

Pastors' conference...

Yesterday and today was the Churches of Praise pastors' conference. Lots of new faces and young leaders were among the many pastors who have become our dear friends. So many of the older pastors are now overseeing many new village churches of 6- 20 new converts each. They are busy and mostly happy in this harvest.

Bob spoke for part of the day under a strong anointing. He spoke on prayer, a very clear and compelling teaching. The pastors responded with wild enthusiasm, which turned into a prolonged "Holy Ghost" clapping, foot stomping, praising, and prayer experience that I find hard to describe. I've never seen a group receive a teaching so dramatically.

Louis ministered to the rehab people in the evening; they loved him and didn't want him to go. This morning he spoke to the pastors, and it seemed that every sentence came like a heavy

impartation into the hearts. At one point he spoke about lifting our hands to God as a sign of complete surrender. He remarked how he tried to illustrate this to the men in the rehab center the night before. He asked them if they had ever been held at gunpoint and robbed — like, "get your hands up or I'll shoot!" (A sign of surrender to the weapon) Well, none of them said they had ever been robbed. Then he realized the fact that these were the guys who held the guns and robbed others! Indeed, it was so: many of them had held others at gunpoint.

Anyway, Louis had us shoot up our hands to God in complete surrender. The Holy Spirit came on many of the pastors as they did this, with laughter and joy that rolled through the room. It was a long time before Louis could continue. At the end of his message, spontaneous singing in the Spirit broke out all over the room. Such unusual presence of the Lord is better "felt than telt"! I wish you were here to experience it with us!

We prayed over all the pastors for a release of the "bishops" anointing. A bishop is an overseer of a group of churches. Many in the room already carry such responsibility, and probably everyone in the room will do so eventually as the multiplication of churches continues.

We know that God must supernaturally equip these leaders to serve the supernatural expansion of the churches.

Tonight was the opening celebration of the evening Bible College. Perhaps two hundred people are evening students. We ministered to them in a similar way as at the opening of the daytime college Tomorrow, Sunday, we will minister in various Churches of Praise. It will be the annual harvest time celebration, when people fill the church platforms with the best and most beautiful of the fruits and vegetables from their gardens.

Endangered legal status of new churches in Ukraine...

...Maybe you should get a cup of coffee and read this part slowly...

A law is on the table in the parliament of Ukraine like a law passed in Russia some time ago — a law that removed the legal standing of churches and religious organizations that have existed less than 15 years. President Kutchma of Ukraine has been a friend to the churches until now, and has resisted passing such a law in Ukraine. However, he may now bow to pressure due to forming a political alliance with Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Russia — all of which have stronger commu-

**Join us for Prayer
at the Matthews' house
Monday, Oct. 6
7 p.m.**

Prayer for Churches of Praise,
and Jackie's travel.

Call 763-755-6612
for directions and to leave
prayer requests

nist leaning leadership which is unfriendly to the church. The Orthodox Church is pushing for this law, working behind the scenes with the political powers. The Orthodox Church sees all new churches and mission organizations as being cults, and warns the government that they are destructive to the culture, and are bringing in dangerous foreign influences.

This law almost passed a few days ago in Ukraine's national parliament, but was tabled till November 17. Gregory expects that it will pass. If it does, hundreds and hundreds of churches in Ukraine that have opened since the fall of communism will have to scramble to come under the authority of approved church unions, or they will be shut down.

Meanwhile, the Churches of Praise have had unusual favor with the government. The national union of the Churches of Praise is now officially recognized by the national government. This is a major breakthrough.

What is not finalized is the documentation meticulously put together by the church, which proves the historical connection of the Churches of Praise through Gregory and Galena back to the beginnings of the Pentecostal outpouring in Ukraine in the early 1900's. The church history of both of their families goes back to those early days, and to the first Congress of the Pentecostal churches in 1926. This is significant in regards to the impending passage of the law intended to eliminate new churches.

I will try to say it simply...

In June we held the Congress of the Churches of Praise, at which all the Churches of Praise approved the bylaws of this union. It was deliberately called the second Congress, not the first – the first being the one in 1926. This was done to acknowledge the Churches of Praise as having a history (through Gregory and Galina), thus declaring that the Churches of Praise is not a new movement.

The national government officials have given Gregory a verbal agreement that they will approve this history back to 1926. The officials will meet on October 17 for a final decision on this, hopefully recognizing the first congress of the Churches of Praise to be in 1926. In other words, the Churches of Praise would be recognized as a continuation of the historical Pentecostal movement in Ukraine.

Assuming the Churches of Praise receive the approval as an historical union of churches on October 17, and assuming the repressive law is passed on November 17, Gregory may have many pastors at his door wanting legal covering. If the union of the Churches of Praise is not recognized as having a long history on October 17, and this new law is passed on November 17, then the Churches of Praise will lose their legal right to exist along with so many others, and the newly approved national union of Churches of Praise will be legally eliminated.

October 17 and November 17 are big dates for prayer! Please pray for favor on October 17 for the Churches of Praise in the national government, and pray that the Parliament of Ukraine will have their eyes opened and refuse to pass this repressive law against new churches on November 17.

Update on Roma...

The twelve-year-old son of Lena, the associate Dean of the Bible College, Roma was severely injured by contact with a 6000-volt cable some days ago. You who are on our email list got notice of this for prayer. He and another boy were playing in a construction zone, not knowing the danger. Roma accidentally touched this high voltage cable with his neck, and the power went through his body like lightning, coming out the knee, burning muscles, joints, nerves, and skin. His clothing was on fire as well, burning some areas to the bone.

His playmate fled terrified, not understanding what had happened. Roma was thrown down an embankment into a pit, where he lay for three hours. His playmate told no one about it. Workmen for some reason came to the area after dark, when work hours were over. It was a miracle that they saw Roma in the pit and got him to the hospital.

God is answering prayer. At first the doctors did not know if Roma would live. Then doctors started believing he would live. Then they believed he would not walk, but now they say he will walk. The doctors have seen new skin growing very quickly under the artificial skin placed on burn areas. His face has no scars, though they expected scars. God is at work. Keep praying! We are believing for 100% restoration for Roma.

Plans for Jackie's coming, and a longer stay in Ukraine...

As of now, I am scheduled to return home on October 14. I think, however, that I am to stay longer, especially if Jackie can come to join me. We would then be in Ukraine till the end of October. It seems important for Jackie to come, and us to be here longer than usual. So many things are happening, and the foundations need to be strong. October 26 will be the ten-year celebration of the birth of the Churches of Praise. Jackie and I were at the birth of that first church, and because we are looked on as spiritual parents, it would be good to be here at that time.

If you'd like to help finance Jackie's travel, indicate that on the response form with your gift. She needs all her travel funds, as of the writing of this letter.

Thank you for your faithfulness in reading our letters, praying for us, and giving financially as the Lord directs you. You are a great blessing! May the blessing and peace of Christ be on your family and work for the Lord.

With love,

John and Jackie

Prayer needs:

1. *October 17 meeting of Ukraine government officials to approve the history of the Churches of Praise*
2. *November 17 vote on repressive law against new churches*
3. *Roma's complete restoration*
4. *Wisdom and finances for Jackie's travel to Ukraine*
5. *Strong establishment of the many new churches*
6. *Open doors to churches in the USA*
7. *Writing projects*
8. *Increased giving for church planting and prisons*
9. *Financial support of our home base*
10. *Rapid spiritual growth of many new church leaders*