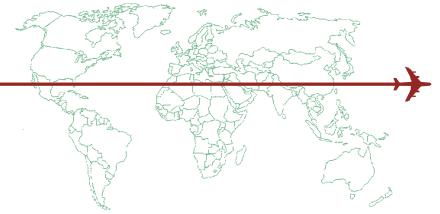




Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie

July 31, 2006



Dear friends,
 We greet you in the name of Jesus from Krivoy Rog, Ukraine! We arrived on July 21st, shortly before the annual Congress of Churches of Praise began. It is beautiful summer weather here in a city that has changed significantly since we first came in 1993. Traffic was sparse then, with crowds of people waiting for tired old buses to take them where they needed to go, or they just walked. Now traffic is thick, with many new buses, heavy truck traffic, and surprisingly large numbers of European cars. In 1993, stores were unmarked and indistinguishable from their



surroundings. Everything was drab shades of gray and brown. When we were taken into a dimly lit shop, we saw little more than dust on the shelves. Now colorful marquees distinguish one store from the next. Krivoy Rog is a bustling busy metropolis, with many new businesses. Yet, when we arrive at the main church where a thousand people are gathered, we find less than a dozen cars. In the midst of increasing prosperity, many still struggle to survive.



The villages and small towns are very different. There it seems change is slow. You enter a different world when you drive an hour away from the big city.

Unemployment is high, and people live much as they have for generations.

More than 20,000 towns in Ukraine have no church at all. In those thousands of small towns and villages the harvest is most ripe, and the people are hungriest for God. The villages are the mission field of the Churches of Praise.

Congress of Churches of Praise...

The Congress brought pastors and church planters from fifteen of the twenty four oblasts (provinces) of Ukraine, plus missionaries from Kyrgyzstan and Armenia. It was a joy to hear the reports from the various church planting teams during every meeting, and to realize that the work of God is going on strong in so many places. Exuberant praise and worship, testimonies, skits, dramas, and special musical presentations were all interlaced with the preaching of the Word and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.



A notable hour for us was the time of ordination of pastors and missionaries (church planters). Each senior leader of an oblast presented their men and women ready for this ordination. There were perhaps one hundred and fifty of them. These were people already serving as local pastors and church planters (called missionaries), who had proven themselves ready to be recognized and set in their ministries with prayer and the laying on of hands. Gregory and Galina, Ken and Carrie, and Jackie and I stood facing each other, three on each side on the platform, along with some of the senior ministers. The candidates for ordination passed between us in a line, and we all laid hands on them one by one and prayed for each one as they passed through. The presence of God was very strong, and it was difficult for many of them to keep standing and walking as they were prayed over. For us it was such a dramatic illustration of the future of the Churches of Praise, as we blessed so many strong people completely dedicated to the work of bringing the gospel to those who have never heard, and establishing the church where there was no church.

They are the heroes of the faith. Please pray for these many ministers working in places of

spiritual darkness, stretching extremely small resources to do the great work of the gospel with all their hearts.

The Congress of the one thousand ministers at the main church was climaxed by two evenings of praise and evangelism in a local soccer stadium, where perhaps twenty-five hundred gathered.



During the two afternoons before the stadium meetings, the ministers went to the streets of the city inviting people and evangelizing.

At the stadium altar calls, dozens and dozens of people came for salvation. Hundreds came for healing, lining up for prayer on the running track which surrounded the soccer field. At the end of the last meeting, a beautiful display of fireworks was fired off into the darkened sky during a final time of praising the Lord.

All in all, it was a great family gathering!

During this next week, Jackie and I will spend the majority of our time with pastors. We had hoped to teach in the mission college, but have been redirected by the Lord to have personal time with as many pastors as we can, hearing what is on their hearts, encouraging them and praying for them.

We will be back home on August 5.

Grandbabies...

As you may remember, our daughter Jen and her husband Scott took Jackie to China in June, to receive their newly adopted daughter, Anna. She is a healthy, vibrant one year old, born in Shangsha, China on the fourth of July.



Since that is also my (John's) birthday, she and I celebrated our birthdays together. Though she got more gifts than I did (Hmmm...) it was a great time for our family. All the babies were present, now five grandchildren.

School of Prayer...

Scarlet Thread is presenting a School of Prayer August 23-26. Gregory and Galina are coming from Ukraine to help us teach this school. It will be held in the chapel at the Arden Hills campus of North Heights Church on the north side of Minneapolis. The invitation has gone out to churches all over the city.



Our vision and expectation for this event is that God's Word will put firm foundations in His people, and that His presence will reignite them with the fresh fire of the Spirit and renew in them the passion of Jesus. Thank you for praying with us for this event, and we hope you can be there!! We'd love to see you, and we know God will do something powerful in your life if you attend!!

A big thanks!!

Thank you for continuing to stand with us in prayer, and with your giving. The financial needs have increased. By God's grace and the help of friends, our financial support will also increase. It is with your partnership in prayer and giving that we move ahead in the will of God.

We pray for you, and we pray for the requests that you send to us. We will continue to stand with you in faith as you make us aware of your needs.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." 2 Thess. 3:18

With love,
John and Jackie