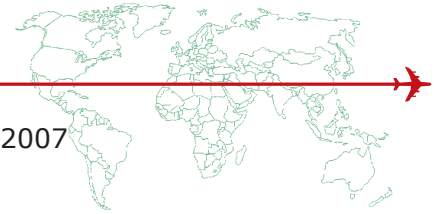


## Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie



August 29, 2007

Dear friends,

We greet you once again in the Wonderful Name of Jesus! Thank you for reading our letters, for supporting us with your prayer, and for your giving as the Lord enables you!

If you think you missed our July letter, it's because we didn't send one! So, let's get caught up...

Mid July found both of us in Krivoy Rog, where we had our annual Congress of Churches of Praise. This event draws together the ministers and church planters from around Ukraine. Our leaders in Armenia were also in attendance. The 300+ Churches of Praise are located in about half of the provinces (oblasts) of Ukraine; the majority of them outside Krivoy Rog are small groups of believers brought to Christ by Churches of Praise workers in villages where there had been no church at all. Most of this has happened in the last five years, so we have many spiritually young Christians and leaders.

The Congress is like a family reunion, which greatly helps developing leaders from villages scattered far and wide to feel that they are part of a large and strong spiritual family. What a joy it was to be in the middle of this thousand strong army of laborers praising God! Exuberant and enthusiastic praise and worship came in waves, with spontaneous dancing breaking out frequently. Many became drenched in perspiration as if they'd just played a basketball game. So many of them have been saved out of such deep corruption of sin that they can do no less than worship the Lord with passion and total joyful abandonment!

We were privileged to have two guest speakers during the Congress. It was the first time pastors of other large ministries from within Ukraine were in our circle of speakers. (Up to this time it has been foreign ministers.) One speaker was pastor Henry from Kiev, who pastors what is probably the largest church in Ukraine, with thousands of members. Henry is a black Nigerian who came from Africa to Ukraine twenty years ago to study engineering. After graduation, the Lord told him to stay in Ukraine and establish a church, which he has pastored since that time. He has been a friend of Gregory for some time now. Henry is well known around the world, and ministers in many countries, including within his native Africa.

Here is one of Henry's testimonies: Recently he preached in Africa for an African evangelist who holds crusades which draw hundreds of thousands of people, yet the man is completely unknown to the rest of the world. In fact, Henry didn't

even remember his name. (Lesson: God is doing astounding things in the world through people unknown to the rest of us!)

As Henry preached in an open air crusade, he noticed that seven sick people had been laid on the platform. At some point in his preaching, he went over to pray for these seven. As he was praying, all seven of them stood up off their stretchers and ran off the platform. At that moment, the first ten rows of people jumped up from their seats and ran out of the meeting, yelling and screaming!

It was then that Henry discovered the seven people had not only been sick...they had been dead. It seemed that only Henry did not know this. God brought them back to life, through Henry's prayer for healing! He testified that sometimes it's better not to know everything that is going on! The unknown evangelist running the crusade reported to Henry: "This is our practice. We tell people to bring the dead to the meetings, and put them right up in front. And God raises them up!"

We were thrilled not only with such testimonies, but for this man of God (whose home is now Ukraine) to be ministering to all our young leaders about the lessons of spiritual leadership he has learned in the last twenty years!

The second guest was pastor Vova, who pastors a church in Dnepropetrovsk, which is a two hour drive from Krivoy Rog. Like Gregory and Galina, Vova's wife also pastors a second church in the same city. Vova, perhaps in his late 30's, looks to Gregory as his spiritual father, and frequently comes to him for counsel, though he is not within the Churches of Praise organizational network.

After ten years of ministry, Vova and his wife are in the middle of a move of God that is bringing thousands of people to their meetings. Just before the Congress, they had a meeting of five thousand people, and two thousand of them came to repent and give their lives to Christ. It is all accompanied by many healings and miracles.

As Vova described his years of ministry which led up to this breakthrough, it brought great encouragement to us all. He told of the death of his first little church. The more he worked, the smaller it got. His congregation had finally dwindled down to a small group, when he invited an evangelist to come, hoping the special meetings would bring in more people. By the time the meetings were done, the rest of his church had deserted him, and no one was left!

Vova then hid himself away with God for a long time...until God met him and told him to go to Dnepropetrovsk and open a new church. Now that church is exploding, as well as the second church pastored by his wife. They are the first native Ukrainians to experience such a local church explosion of growth. We were thrilled to listen to this Ukrainian pastor teaching our young leaders clearly what God had taught him.

There were three main lessons for spiritual leadership which came through these speakers:

- 1) *Take extensive time to be alone with God.*
- 2) *Seek to meet the felt needs of people.*
- 3) *Yield to the Holy Spirit continuously.*

There were also some outstanding testimonies from others attending the Congress. One testimony came from a newly engaged couple, graduates of our rehab center, who are now beginning to serve in ministry. The man was formerly a drug addict, dying of AIDS. His body was literally rotting away with open sores, and doctors told him to go home and die. Somehow he found his way to the rehab center instead, and gave his life to Jesus. Yet, his body was still dying. The smell of his rotting flesh was so bad that none of the men wanted him to sleep in their rooms. Rustam, the rehab director, took him into his own room.

Sometime later, the man stood in the shower in pain and desperation, and cried to God to heal him or else let him die and go to heaven. In a few days, all the sores were gone, and his body healed. If you had seen him giving his testimony, you would have seen a very muscular, glowing, totally healthy young man.

His fiancée had been a prominent businesswoman who fell into a life of drugs and lost everything. She tried unsuccessfully to take her own life several times, including jumping out of a sixth floor window. Though severely injured, she did not die. Now she is almost completely healed from these injuries, free from drugs, and they are both on fire for Jesus!

The last meeting of the Congress was a glorious celebration in a soccer stadium, attended by perhaps 2500 people. About 50 people came for salvation and many were healed. Amazing fireworks were set off during triumphant praise music.

One notable incident concerns a woman with visibly large tumors on her head and neck. She came to Galina for prayer. Galina reported that as she laid her hand on the large tumors, they just melted away under her hand. Galina was shocked, and the lady was shocked. Strangely, when Galina turned her head to tell Gregory what had happened, the unknown lady slipped into the mingling crowd and disappeared.

#### ***A note of sadness in Kyrgyzstan...***

Shortly after the Congress, we got word that our friend Uri who heads the work in Kyrgyzstan began to have severe headaches. A few days later doctors discovered he had six inoperable brain

tumors, and told him he would die soon. He did indeed go to heaven this past week in Kyrgyzstan, just two weeks after the diagnosis.

Uri's wife Olga had left him some time ago, and she went back to a world of rebellion and drugs. Their daughter, Nastia, thirteen years old, is now living in Krivoy Rog with Uri's father and mother (who are part of the main church).

Uri's death is of course a great shock. The main church in Krivoy Rog had a memorial time for Uri this past Sunday, though his body is buried 2000 miles east of Ukraine in Kyrgyzstan. Uri had been saved out of a life of drugs and crime. He had been a dangerous criminal and drug dealer. Thank God that he was able to give his life to Jesus and serve Him with all his heart for several years in Kyrgyzstan before he died. Gregory told the congregation, "We can thank God that Uri died as a missionary, rather than as a drug addict and criminal!"

Pray for Uri's brother Jhenya and his wife Anya who have served with Uri these years in Kyrgyzstan. They had a new baby born (their second child) just three days before Uri's death. The future of the work in Kyrgyzstan is now on their shoulders, and they don't yet know if they will be able to remain there and carry on this ministry.

#### ***Back to Ukraine and beyond...***

I (John) plan to return to Ukraine on September 28. The monthly pastors' conference and Bible colleges will take up the first two weeks of my time. From there, I plan to go to Armenia (southeast of Ukraine right above Iran, and on the eastern border of Turkey). Churches of Praise are opening a new Bible college there, and I will have the privilege of teaching the Blood Covenant Foundations in Christ to a group of young believers hungry for God. (To me, the best place in the world is teaching hungry new believers the Word of God.)

Following Armenia I intend to return to Afghanistan, though that is not yet confirmed. Please pray for R and A who lead the ministry there. They presently are having difficulty renewing their visas, which expire in October. Though Afghanistan is a nation in very much turmoil, God working there, and we want to be part of what He is doing. I am hoping to teach a one week Bible School to the young leaders and believers.

From Afghanistan, I plan to return to Ukraine for a short time (I'm not sure yet how long), and be back home early or mid-November.

This plan needs strong faith and prayer agreement, and some financial miracles!

#### ***Thank you...***

We are grateful for your love and concern and partnership with us in this ministry. Thank you for praying, and thank you for giving. There is a huge space available for both kinds of partnership!!

With love,  
**John and Jackie**