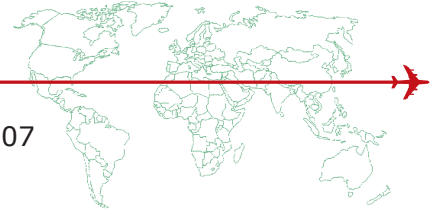


Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie



June 27, 2007

Dear friends,
We greet you again in Jesus' wonderful name!
We are, as always, grateful to be able to write to you, and even more grateful for your prayer and support.

To Ukraine, July 19-31

Jackie and I will go to Krivoy Rog to help conduct the annual Church of Pravo Congress, with close to a thousand in attendance. All the leaders will gather from Ukraine and other countries where there are Churches of Praise. You would suppose we would have everything we need, after doing this for so many years, but...no, it is like so many times before. We have air reservations, and are still trusting God for the money to pay for them! Thanks for trusting God on our behalf.

Following are a few stories to help you connect with the people who do the daily work of building Churches of Praise.

Church planting on an old bicycle

One faithful church planter in pastor Clava's district oversees the planting of ten village churches. His only transportation is an old bicycle he raised from the dead, on which he travels long distances every day to care for his village churches. He has the reputation for putting 100,000 kilometers a year on that old bike. And...he is partially crippled, with one leg that doesn't work right, making it more difficult to ride a bike.

Pastor Dennis

Dennis shared with us about the time when the financial support ran out for the group of village churches he was planting. It was a great test for him to be able to continue. He was married, had one little baby and another one on the way. They lost their apartment, and there was no place in the villages for his wife and baby to be, so he sent them home to her mother. The village work was a long way away, and for an extended period of time, he could only see his young family once a month. Beyond that, he was suffering from asthma, and on many days would have difficulty breathing. No money, no home, no transportation, and sick.

He and his wife agreed that they should persevere in God's call, and they did. Now they have an apartment of their own, and even a car. Dennis oversees one of the strongest teams of church planters, all determined to work hard regardless of the difficulties that face them!

Pastor Kolya

Pastor Kolya was formerly the bandit who broke into Gregory and Galina's house with guns and knives, attempting to rob them. Later he and his partner in crime Peter gave their lives to Jesus at the main church. Peter is now studying to become a medical doctor, and Kolya is a pastor and church planter, with a wife and two little babies.

He expressed his grief at having to close a whole group of village churches when his main assistant just gave up and left the ministry. Kolya himself was struggling as well, as the financial support ended for those churches, and he did not know how to finance on his own a continuing ministry in any of them. His heart grieves for the young believers in those villages, and hopes to restore the ministry in each place. Meanwhile he had to find work to support his family; he now has a plumbing business, pastors his base church of 30 people and cares for two other small churches.

Needing to find a place for his family to live, he was able to buy a small plot of land in Krivoy Rog. He was told of an old house for sale on the north side of the city: not land, but just the house. So, he bought it, dismantled it, and piece by piece hauled it all in a truck to his new land. Now he has all the pieces he needs for his new little house, including what is needed for heat and electricity, and is slowly constructing the little house in his spare time between a busy plumbing business and pastoring his churches. He expressed a feeling of guilt, like he had failed God and retreated from his ministry, though he had not done that in his heart. He just can't do any more right now, he said.

I told him not to feel guilty, that God wanted to provide for his family as well as for the ministry, and encouraged him to take the time to build a house for his family. Somehow those village churches will be restored...

Pastor Misha

Pastor Misha was a criminal, saved in prison, where he became a minister. His wife stood by him through the terrible life of crime, and when he was saved, she watched his life change and finally repented herself. In fact, she got baptized in the prison while visiting Misha, who was by that time the pastor in the prison.

After release from prison, they both wanted to

serve God. After hearing about the Churches of Praise, they appeared at Gregory's office door, and he took them under his wing. After a few months, they were assigned to one of the churches that had completely collapsed -- after its pastor, Lorisa, died of cancer. All that was left of the church was the small house that had been purchased for meetings.

Misha and his wife began to work hard, visiting people all through that neighborhood and region, and many were healed and many repented; but at first, none of them came to the church. It took a long time of patiently serving the community, coming continually to visit the people, until some saw that their presence was real and permanent. Now a new church has come together in the little house, perhaps fifteen people, and God is healing and touching lives each week.

Misha's in-laws wanted nothing to do with him after his release from prison. Misha had been a very bad man. However, Misha felt that God wanted him to go to them and be reconciled. None of them were believers, and his wife refused to go with him. He went alone to their city, some distance away, and stayed several days with the family, praying for them, testifying about Jesus, and apologizing for his previous behavior. This entire family gave their hearts to Jesus! Now Misha and his wife are going there and planting a new church, with her family as the core of the new church!

Pastor Vadim

Pastor Vadim has a very strong work in his district, overseeing 48 village churches, with a base church of perhaps 150 people. Out of new believers have risen pastors, strong musicians, children's workers, and church planters. The base church has now saved \$20,000 towards the purchase of land on which to build a sanctuary and training center. It may become the first Church of Praise away from Krivoy Rog to have its own Bible college and rehab center!

Pastor Tolya

Pastor Tolya is a great Bible teacher, and students in the colleges love his teaching. His district is several hours drive south from Krivoy Rog, near the Black Sea. He serves a base church of 50 people who also work in twenty-one villages. The base church saved money for a long time until they had \$5000 towards a building. During that time, property values had tripled and quadrupled, so the hope of finding anything they could afford, even in a village area, became quite dim.

Tolya was told of a property in his town for sale, and went to see it. A long and narrow lot, all he could see was a half broken little shack and a thick stand of trees. They wanted \$16,000 for the property. Later, he was told to walk toward

the back of the property, and as he did, a very large nearly finished house came into view! Though excited to see it, the price was still triple what they had. Somehow favor came, and the owners sold it to the church for \$4500! They just celebrated their first meeting in that new building!

Pastor Ury

Ury's church of 135 people in Krivoy Rog have constructed a building that can seat 500 people, the largest Church of Praise building other than the two main churches. Businessmen within the church, as well as the gifts of the congregation, have paid for the whole project, without outside help. This is an amazing breakthrough in a city formerly steeped in poverty. Furthermore, pastor Ury himself has not done any of the work. The people insisted that he should just pastor the church, while they do the construction.

The story of this church (and the other churches) illustrates how obedience to the Word of God lifts people out of poverty. People who a few years ago were in great poverty gave themselves to the Lord, and He is blessing them with jobs and helping them create businesses with a vision to support the work of the Gospel. *Glory to God!*

Rustam

Crimea is a peninsula on the Black Sea, the home of the Muslim Tartar people, and a sprinkling of other Muslim nationalities. Our missionaries have worked there for some time now; and, hallelujah, Muslims there are turning to Christ!

One such person is Rustam. He has been the head of our rehab center this year, until he just now got married. Rustam was born in the country of Azerbaijan, and raised Muslim. While in the army, he got involved in drugs, became a source of trouble to his family, and ended up in Crimea, far from his home country. Two years ago, Church of Praise evangelists witnessed to him on the streets in Crimea. He gave his life to Christ on that street and for a while was in a church in Crimea. However, he soon slid back into drugs and ended up worse than before. Months later, as he sat on a park bench, his heart stopped beating from a drug overdose and he fell over dying on the sidewalk. Would you believe that he fell right at the feet of Church of Praise evangelists who happened to be walking by? They rushed him to the hospital, and the doctors were able to revive him. From there he came to Krivoy Rog into our rehab center and is finally living for Jesus!

Thank you!!!

Thank you for remembering us, praying for us, and supporting us as God leads you. We trust God for His blessing and protection in your life and family, according to Psalms 91!

With love,
John and Jackie