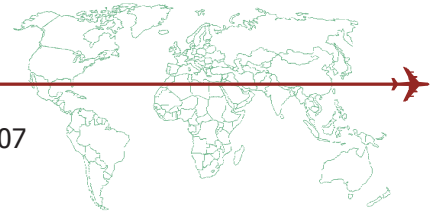




Lifeline

...a prayer letter from John and Jackie



March 30, 2007

Dear friends,

We greet you again in the wonderful name of Jesus! Thank you again for allowing us to keep in touch with you, and thank you for your prayer and support.

I (John) arrived home a few days ago from central Asia, with joy and some weariness from travel. Coming straight home from the capital of our destination took about 35 hours (including three hours of sleep in a hotel at Borispol airport in Kiev).

I boarded airplanes ten times after I left home in February. Complaining about it is silly, when I remember what it took to travel to such places before the age of passenger jets! Anyway, all went well.

For security reasons, our letter is not as detailed as we would like, and somewhat "cryptic" in language. Hopefully you will get the picture. Many people have shown special interest in the fact that Gregory, Anya and I planned to travel to this Asian country. The prayer support in Ukraine was strong before we left; many of the Ukrainians came to me and said, "You know we are going with you!" I of course knew they meant they were going with us in faithful prayer!

Carefully weighing the information available to us before leaving was a lesson in following our hearts rather than our heads. When I finished reading information available for travellers to this country, the logical conclusion was not to go there. Warning! Warning! Warning! It all made sense, of course; and our purpose was not to be foolish. But our purpose WAS to follow God's direction!

The peace in our hearts just got stronger and deeper as we laid the plans for travel.

It was a wonderful trip, and an adventure with God! Yes, it was somewhat cold, and I wore two sets of long underwear and two sweaters and a jacket most of the time. (There is almost no natural gas or central heating in the country.) But that was merely an inconvenience. Sleeping and sitting on the floor most of the time was....a little tiring, for sure. Gregory is unable to sit cross legged on the floor, so he sometimes thinks he is not called to go to the nations. Actually, he is very good at crossing cultures -- he pushes through language and culture barriers with love and courage wherever he goes. Plus, he seems to have a face for all nations. To the Iranians he looks Iranian; the Azerbaijanis were sure he was one of them; the people of the country we were in thought he was one of them.

Anyway, how do I tell this story? Our route from Kiev took us through Moscow then to Baku and on to the

country of our destination. The Russian and Azerbaijani airlines were excellent; the food was better than most western airlines. We landed at our destination on an Azerbaijani airplane that was entirely first class - big lounging leather seats for everyone! So, we felt like VIP's when we got off the plane. That feeling was quickly tarnished by the disorderly rush through immigration in the dark and damaged terminal, but everything went very well. Sloshing through the mud to meet our host in what was supposed to be a parking lot did nothing to dampen our enthusiasm for being there. Passing by the shell damaged structures near the airport helped us to know that we were in the right place!

The capital is like a wild west frontier town. Though badly damaged by decades of war, there's a lot of construction and business going on. The place seemed bustling and boisterous. Heavily armed police at most intersections gave one a feeling of...safety, I guess.

Oxcarts were loaded with everything from rice to televisions. Men and boys carried impossibly large loads on their backs. They scurried among shiny buses and roaring truck traffic. Yellow taxis buzzed everywhere like a swarm of bees.

When we walked through the common market places, the feeling changed to something close to shock, as we pushed through fast moving crowds of mostly men, almost all with dark piercing eyes. It felt like swimming upstream through an oncoming swarm of sharks. Actually, we didn't really feel afraid. There was a kind of peace in the atmosphere; at least around and in us there was peace...

Our hosts, partners and leaders in this country are R and his wife A. They have four children, and are from another central Asian country. Saved fifteen years ago when Jesus appeared to him, R is a medical doctor who has been in this country for five years doing humanitarian aid. Several months ago R & A resigned from this organization to pursue their main calling of preaching the gospel.

A mutual friend visiting the country put R in contact with Gregory; consequently R visited Krivoy Rog last fall. Our present trip to the capital of his adopted country was now the second step in partnering with R and A to launch a new ministry there.

Our experience was beyond our expectations. On the first morning, the sitting room filled up with neighborhood children...little children. They come every week to R and Ann's home to learn the Word of God. They are

children from unbelieving religious parents who send them faithfully, knowing they are being taught the Word of God!

The following day the room filled with head - covered women from the neighborhood. It was international womens' day, and A and R decided to use the day to honor these women. I was told to speak our message clearly to them, which I did. After I did, Anya was asked to speak also, and she did so boldly. After that, she and A prayed carefully and powerfully over every woman (some had brought babies as well). More than one told of being healed during the prayer.

After this, the bulk of our days were spent with men in R and A's home. Though restricted by his former organization from evangelism, R had nevertheless led several men to the Father in the past few years. These believers came to be with us, perhaps six of them, from a northern province. First, three arrived. Later more came. Some had a relative or friend in the capital, who they brought to the house. It resulted in a steady stream of men repenting through the days -- one or two at a time.

Those who came as believers did not know about the baptism of the H. S.; we taught the three who arrived first. They received and spoke in their heavenly languages. This teaching was repeated as others repented.

One was the son of a landowner. Another was the farmer who worked the land for that landowner. A third was a chef specializing in serving large numbers of people - even thousands. Before salvation, he was a religious teacher -- an imam. A fourth was a truck driver. This truck driver had been a nationally known criminal: he owned an army tank, and knew how to terrorize a whole city -- for profit. Another was a young relative in the capital working as a security guard for a fruit market. He gave his heart to the Father while with us. So did a man from across the street, and his brother...and their friend..

We spent several days with what became a group of about fourteen men. As I said, half of them had repented before we came, and the other half came to God in front of our eyes...one or two at a time, as they were brought by one of the other guys. We baptized several of them in water, in the bathtub of the house. Others would be baptized after we left, since we ran out of time waiting for the water to be turned back on. (Most of the time we had no running water or electricity.)

One afternoon, we were taken across the street to meet the family who lived in the bombed out basement that they called home. They had two grown sons. That evening, one of the sons came to our house. By the next morning he repented. Later that day, he brought his big brother (adult men) and he also repented. By the next day they brought their good friend.

The truck driver brought his helper, who didn't know where they were going. He had been told, just sit for ten minutes. Well, by that time, we were not the ones

doing the preaching. R and other men helped lead him to the Father. When he was asked, do you want to give your life to the Father? He shrugged his shoulders and nodded nonchalantly, as if to say, "Well, I guess I've got nothing else to do..." He looked very depressed, and later spoke of that. After prayer he still looked depressed. But it was time to tell him about the H.S. He seemed passively OK with that also. As he was prayed over, he began to speak in his heavenly language. Suddenly, he began to laugh. More and more, until it was the kind of laugh that included crying! His boss the truck driver, though a believer, did not know what was happening. So, he hit him on the head a few times and told him to stop that! That only made it all seem more humorous, and soon more than one of us was doubled over with joyful laughter!

That man changed before our eyes, as he testified that a deep depression had left him! He didn't even look like the same person after he was filled with the H.S. and with the joy of the Father! Seeing such things happen before our eyes to men who had never known the gospel, who live in a repressively religious land...well, it was wonderful. Thanks for praying.

We encouraged them to be leaders, and that they can all pastor God's people. We had several days with them in the Word. They learned how to love each other, and to become friends. It was like being in the upper room with Jesus' disciples, as we sat on mats on the floor surrounding the room. Looking at these guys in their non-western attire and central Asian faces, I thought, wow, the twelve disciples could have looked just like them!

There are no visible churches in this country. There are a small number of believers in the country, and there are some invisible churches.

There are now four more invisible churches that have begun! R has informed us since I came home that with these men three fellowships have begun in the north and one in the capital. He reported that the new guys from across the street have brought in two more men during the few days since I arrived home.

It is one thing to begin something; it is another thing to see it become firmly established. The work in this country has begun...

Thank you for praying for these wonderful people, and the precious fruit of the gospel in that country!

Thanks!!!

We want to again thank you from the depths of our hearts for your love and prayer and support of our lives and the ministry to which he has called us. Your prayer and support is essential. Our experience in central Asia was a breakthrough that was accomplished by the prayers and giving of the saints....like you! Thanks!!!

With love,

John and Jackie