

The Journal of Ron Boehme - 1997

Port Orchard, Washington

January 9, 1997 - 15,992 - 15,023

1997 has begun with some challenges. Ever since the new year clicked over, the pain in my throat has increased as I've neared the time to begin the new slate of Revive America seminars.

On Sunday I spoke at First Christian Church on *Restoring America's Conscience*. My throat hurt--and I was keeping it pretty medicated--but God gave me the liberty of sharing with heart and soul, and there was a good response. Many people were convicted in their relationship to God, the use of their finances, and many other sins. There were many confessions and times of re-dedication to God.

At the end of the second service, one man came forward for prayer and wept and wept over the sin of pornography in his life. He said he was about to lose his wife over it. We prayed with him, counseled him to get right with his wife, and hopefully he went away a changed man.

After praying with many people up front, I saw Marion Halbig, one of the distinguished elder saints waiting in line to talk to me. When her turn came, she grabbed my hands, looked into my eyes and said, "I need to go home right now and take inventory of my life."

Those words really touched my heart. That's what we all need to do--to take inventory of our lives before God and cast out the bad stuff and purchase the "goods" that make for eternal life. Praise God for what he is doing at our home church. I went home that day with a hoarse throat and a grateful heart.

On Wednesday, the clouds really descended into my soul. Instead of getting better, my throat kept worsening as my day for departure grew near for beginning the 1997 Revive America seminars. By Wednesday afternoon I was in great pain and even greater consternation. How could I travel out if I couldn't speak? How was I going to deal with this increasing pain? Was this suffering to be for the rest of my life? What was I to do--or to trust God for?

After greatly despairing for a few hours and wondering if I should throw in the towel and stay home, God brought deliverance--first of all to my flagging faith. It came in the form of these encouraging words:

"For I reckon that the suffering of this present time is not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

"Made perfect through suffering as the Elder Brother was, the sons of God are trained up to obedience and brought to glory through much tribulation."

"Pray for grace. Pray for strength. Pray for wisdom."

Another point of encouragement came from an unexpected source. **In my luggage I found a precious little note from Megan, encouraging me to trust God with the problems in my throat.** She said she was praying for me, and wrote out this Scripture:

"So. don't worry because I am with you. Don't be afraid because I am your God. I will make you strong and will help you. I will support you with my right hand that saves you" (Isaiah 41:10).

Some thereafter I cried out to God--took some medicine--and soon that cloud lifted. It had been a test of faith. God was showing me to wisely treat my infirmity, and above all, trust him for the grace and strength to be his messenger.

The next day, with a very sore throat, but sheer grace and obedience, I boarded a plane for my first Revive America stop--Fremont, Ohio.

Lord--my eyes are COMPLETELY on you.

Fremont, Ohio

January 11, 1997 - 15,994 - 15, 021

God has been faithful. After landing in Detroit and being caught in a snowstorm, I was picked up and transported to Fremont by car, arriving at two in the morning.

After a short motel night, I spoke at a noon pastor's luncheon, then began the evening services at Victory Christian Fellowship. It was a howling snowstorm, with below zero wind chill, and a small but enthusiastic crowd. God had spoken to me through the prayers of the pastors at noon to speak on the sin of disunity. **With an aching throat, totally shut down with medicine and lozenges, I was obedient. And God blessed.**

At the close of the service there were some confessions--some by pastors--and then the people broke up into small groups and prayed for unity in the churches of the area. It was a good time.

This morning I spoke again to a small group on **"The Church in the 1990's"** and my throat was improved. Praise the Lord. Everyday day I will ask for grace and strength and use wisdom in the use of medication and my schedule.

Fremont is a lovely little Midwestern town--even in the snowy wintertime. It's a town of over 25,000, not far from Lake Erie, and dotted with many majestic old churches in the historic area. Its main claim to fame is being the hometown of Rutherford B Hayes, the 19th President of the United States. Tomorrow I'm speaking at the Methodist Church which was his home church.

My hosts, Clyde and Mattie Booze, gave me a great tour of the town today including Spiegel Grove, the beautiful Hayes estate now a Presidential Library and historic site. It was fascinating to learn of this man who was a lawyer, Civil War major general, Congressman, governor, and president following Ulysses S. Grant. He appeared to be a "man of integrity and keen intellect" whose wife Lucy Ware Hayes was the "embodiment of the Golden Rule (his observation)." I learned a lot about the time period and this man's life strolling through the museum and seeing the grounds. Presidents continue to fascinate me--someday I'll know why.

When President Hayes was inaugurated, he placed his hand on Psalm 118 in the Bible--especially verses 11-14:

"They chased me until I was almost defeated. But the Lord helped me. The Lord gives me strength and makes me sing. He has saved me."

R.B. Hayes also leaned much through suffering (he was wounded four times in the Civil War--once badly). Yet the Lord delivered him.

Monday, January 13, 1997- 15, 996 - 15,019

We had a very good service yesterday morning at the First Brethren Church. God really led me to speak on the "Gift of Suffering" and blessed the message. Nearly the whole congregation stood to respond to the message.

Later we heard that God really moved in services all around the city. At Fremont Christian Center there was a powerful move of God. At the Presbyterian Church, nearly forty people committed or re-committed their lives to the Lord.

In the evening we nearly filled the auditorium for a glorious closing service. God gave me the liberty to speak on "Restoring America's Conscience." My throat hurt but my heart was full. At the end, everyone went to their knees to repent over the "spiritual power outage" in the church and ask God to cleanse their conscience from dead works. After confession one to another, we had a phenomenal time in God's presence, worshiping him, signing the Covenant to pray for revival, and having communion together. The delight and pleasure of God among us was evident.

Probably the biggest victory of this weekend has been the unifying of the churches in the area. The pastors are now really leading the way, and everybody is praying for the churches as they travel around town--applying the message of Friday night. Good things are in store for Fremont. We serve a good God.

I now see ever more clearly the role of the church in society: "It's our job to keep the lights on." Lord Jesus--fill your people with your light and your life that we might truly fulfill our purpose.

Elkhart, Indiana

January 28, 1997 - 15,111 - 15,004

This past weekend in the Elkhart, Indiana area for a Revive America Seminar was fantastic.

I flew in on Friday, once again nearly getting stranded by the volatile winter weather, but none-the-less making it into South Bend and on into Elkhart. This area called Michiana is near the Michigan border and is a series of towns that all run together. It's the home of the RV industry in America and dotted also with Midwest farms and flatland. There was a beautiful powdery snow falling in the area when I arrived at nearly 2 am in the morning.

On Saturday I began speaking at Calvary Assembly of God to good crowds with hungry hearts. The day before, Mark Anderson had shared at the pastor's luncheon. He warned the Christian leaders that there were only 2-3 years left for America to respond to the move of God or we would miss it entirely. There was much brokenness and confession that followed--due to the fact that three years previous God had moved in the area, but many had rejected that visitation. God was saying that now was the last chance. It really brought down the fear of God.

In the evening, Tim Wilson ministered, and scores came to the front for prayer and encouragement. It was a blessed time in God's presence.

In the morning I preached at Tri Lakes Community Church, associated with the Mennonite Brethren, and many stood to acknowledge their idolatry and return to Christ. Some wept and prayed with others. Dale Stoll gives good leadership to this "New Testament" fellowship near the state line.

In the evening--at the same time of the infamous Super Bowl--nearly 600 people braved the falling snow and came for the final service. I was so excited and prayed up about the evening that when I got to the church and began to take off my winter garb, I realized I'd left my suit coat at home! I'd have to preach in short sleeves. The service began, and during worship my missing coat appeared--thanks to the help of some merciful friends.

I preached my heart out on the need to *Restore America's Conscience*. At the end, the entire auditorium went to its knees to confess our blindness of heart and mind and ask God for forgiveness and power from on high. At the end, all stood and committed themselves afresh to Christ. At the close, nearly 25 pastors shared their hearts with the people, and we rejoiced in

God's presence for hours. It was quite touching. Many hundreds signed the covenant to pray for revival in America and then enjoyed communion together across the front of the 1400 seat sanctuary. God is going to do great things in Elkhart.

Monday, I caught some uneventful flights home and rejoined my family. My voice is strong, and my spirits encouraged. What a privilege it is to be a **small voice of renewal** in this needy land. May the showers of blessing flow.

Arkansas City, Kansas

February 5, 1997 - 15,119 - 14,996

I've just returned from a wonderful time of ministry in Kansas. It's becoming one of my **favorite states**.

Flew into Wichita, rented a car, and traveled to nearly the Oklahoma border to the town of Arkansas City. There I stayed at the home of Wesley and Harriet Locke, a former insurance man, small farm owner, and Amway distributor. Gracious people.

The next morning, **I spoke at a pastor's luncheon at First Baptist Church where about 30-40 leaders had gathered. As I shared my heart, some pastors rose to confess sin and pray for revival in their town. It was a moving time together.**

Dodge City, Kansas

Soon after I drove four hours across the Kansas plains to Dodge City--the **"Wildest City in the West."** Was perfect to have my weekly prayer hour while driving as it turned into almost four hours in God's wonderful company. A very refreshing time with Him.

That night I spoke in **Dodge City at a Southern Baptist Church**. Crowd was on the small side, but God moved at the end and many went onto their knees to get right with God. I then returned to the beautiful "Bed & Breakfast" where I was staying--just a stone's throw from the famous site of **"Boot Hill."** The following morning, I finished my ministry here in Dodge City by attending a morning breakfast, then speaking for a couple hours on the "Church in the 1990's." Great time of prayer and application. **This is a hard city, but God is beginning to soften and unite it.**

Before I left, I was able to spend an hour or so looking around the Boot Hill Museum and replica of old Dodge City. My mind whirred with insights about the infamous old town, **home of Wyatt Earp, Bat Masterson, and "Gunsmoke" legend.**

Dodge City was founded in the 1870's, first as a Fort Dodge to protect the trade routes of the settlers along the Santa Fe Trail, and soon thereafter as a wild west hangout for buffalo hunters and later cattlemen. Between 1872-78 it gained its reputation as a gambling, drinking, hell hole of prostitution and vice, policed by self-appointed vigilantes such as Wyatt Earp. Shootings occurred almost daily with the victims hastily buried "in their boots" on Boot Hill. The local prostitutes were young girls 16-23 and were known as the "Soiled Doves." It churned my stomach to read of the lawlessness and debauchery that took place here.

What saddened me the most was to read the story of what happened to the buffalo in this region--numbering over 30 million in the early 1870's. After unsuccessfully trying to protect the Santa Fe Trail from Indian raids, the US Government recruited thousands of hunters to go to Kansas to slaughter the buffalo and force the Indians to leave the area (the Indians lived almost exclusively off of the meat, hides, and other uses of the buffalo). In two years, there were less than 300 buffalo remaining in the plains--and the Indians were gone. **What an incredibly evil genocide. Slaughtering all these beautiful creatures just to drive out the Indians.** I pondered God's hurt over that tragedy all weekend long.

Hutchinson, Kansas

Following my enlightening visit to the museum, I once again traveled back across the state to Arkansas City. We were also holding a Revive America seminar in Hutchinson, Kansas, but I wasn't scheduled to speak there. On Sunday morning **I preached at the Nazarene Church on "What It Means to Believe."** About eighty people stood to commit themselves to be obedient believers.

In the evening, the Baptist Church was packed to hear the word of God. I shared on "Restoring America's Conscience" and the power of God really fell. Most were on their knees confessing sin, and at the end, about twenty-five pastors shared their hearts with the people. It was a touching time. We ended the evening with glorious praise and a precious time of communion all over the ornate, older sanctuary.

After two hours of sleep, I drove back to Wichita and headed home. It was a wonderful weekend, blessed by the Spirit of the Living God. My voice is okay, and my spirits are encouraged. Had a great reunion with my family and enjoyed my days at home. God is working in our kids. And yesterday, Shirley asked the kids forgiveness for her poor example in the area of seeing movies. We forgave her and were encouraged. God's moving. There's nothing more exciting than that.

Delaware County (Columbus), Ohio

February 8, 1997 - 15,122 - 14,993

It's good to be back in Ohio--this time in Delaware County near Columbus. This is the "land of my fathers" and it always makes me feel at home.

Had an uneventful trip yesterday from Seattle. A young minister named Doc Swanger picked me up from the airport and we had a good chat and ride of 45 minutes to Delaware. Doc is a good friend of Winkie Pratney and has started a church here that I'll be speaking in on Sunday. He escorted me to the home of John and Sharon Ricketts, a beautiful home in the snow-covered countryside. Sharon was with Agape Force for twelve years and John works in the investment world.

After a good night's rest, I began speaking this morning at the Delaware Christian Church. Crowds were small, and in many ways, I felt like I was preaching through mud, but at the end we had a good time of prayer. Delaware is a very divided, very prosperous college town (Ohio Wesleyan University) that really needs an awakening. That's why I'm here.

I took a drive through town after the initial meetings, praying for churches, people, the college, and for God to move. Lord--use me to open their eyes to press into you.

February 9, 1997 - 15,123 - 14,992

There were small crowds last night, but Mark Anderson really gave a powerful message on "Real Christianity" and many responded at the end. It was one of the clearest messages on denying self and following Christ contrasted with the hedonistic spirit of American culture that I've ever heard. God really used it to speak to my own heart about the cost of being a Christian.

This morning I was able to preach at River Community Church, pastored by Doc Swanger. God gave me the grace to share on "The Gift of Suffering" and many were touched by it. That's one message that Americans don't understand--but pain and suffering is a doorway to revival as we learn to crucify self and let Christ become all-in-all in us. What an important lesson.

In the afternoon I took a four-mile prayer walk and rested until the evening session. May God move in a mighty way tonight in this needy and affluent town.

February 10, 1997 - 15,124 - 14,991

I'm on my way home. God was faithful. Last evening, we filled the church with about 250 people who seemed ready to do business with God. I shared my heart in *Restoring America's Conscience* for well over an hour, walking right in front of the congregation and exposing the sins of our culture. I confessed my own sins and admonished them to see their own. At the end,

all 250 of us went on our knees to "weep before God." It was a moving time.

Afterwards a time in God's presence, the people turned and confessed their sins to each other, and then we finished the evening with a touching time of communion and song. I believe some of the hardness and disunity of Delaware has been broken. May a full-blown revival be in her immediate future.

As I'm flying back across the continent, I'm satisfied that I've been obedient to my Lord. But I want to see MORE. I picked up a NY Times bestseller book in Minneapolis called *How the Irish Saved Civilization*. It's a fascinating look at how St. Patrick and a band of Irish monks had the wisdom and character to preserve the truth of God and the developments of culture following the collapse of the Roman Empire. I'm fascinated by the story--and want to learn how I can contribute to the very same thing in my own generation.

Lord--teach me your ways. It is my great joy and privilege to serve you and learn at your feet.

Ludington, Michigan

February 24, 1997 - 15,138 - 14,977

I'm in the air again--on my way back from Ludington, Michigan. What a wonderful time in God. My heart and full and my soul thankful for the privilege of service of the King.

Getting there on Friday wasn't easy. There had been record rains and flooding in Chicago, and then snow began to fell. I was first stranded in Seattle, then in the air, then in Chicago, and missed my evening speaking engagement. By God's providence, Tim Wilson flew in ahead of time and was able to do the first session. I finally made it (thanks to the prayers of many) to Muskegon about 11 pm and came into Ludington about 1:00am.

For the weekend, Tim and I both stayed with a wonderful YWAM-friendly couple name Ken and Pat de Kok (de Cook). They are a gracious, Dutch Reformed couple who've had two daughters in YWAM, have been mission builders in Kona, and worked with Campus Crusade in Jamaica. Ken runs a lawn care company with his son-in-law and built and beautifully hospitable home on eleven acres. he also raises and hunts deer.

Saturday noon I spoke to a pastors' and Christian leaders' luncheon of about 35 people. God gave me a clear word and there as a warm, though conservative response. They seem to be a good group of pastors that God has prepared for revival. In the evening, Tim gave his testimony to a crowd of a few hundred and God moved. Many came to the front to commit themselves to fully follow God.

In the morning I spoke at Sunday and the main service at the Nazarene Church pastored by Gary Miller. It was a joyous congregation who've been being really touched by God. At the end of my second message on the "Gift of Suffering," many people prayed and testified over what God was doing in their lives. It was a very inspiring and intimate time. The after flow of testimonies and prayer went until past one o'clock.

That evening, much of the town's believers turned out for the final service. The sanctuary of Washington Ave. Baptist was packed and many of the young people had to sit in the choir loft and scores of people packed into the foyer. People were sitting on the floor in every imaginable place--even an overflow set up downstairs in the fellowship hall. After a tremendous time of worship, I came to address the people for the first (and last) time.

For the next three hours, God moved mightily among us. After I had finished the message on "Restoring America's Conscience," the entire audience went on their knees to cry out to God for forgiveness. Hours then went by in which people prayed and confessed sin, and God led us to have wave after wave of people stand to acknowledge sin in various areas.

At one point our YWAM campaigns coordinator, Clinton Hebbeman from Australia, confessed to the entire crowd that he had never led anyone to Christ and felt like a hypocrite coming into Ludington and leading an evangelism crusade. Following his confession and prayer, he sobbed like a baby for 10-15 minutes and some of the pastors ministered to him. The confessions and repentance went on and on. I sensed a continuous anointing in helping the people see their sins in God's light. Many young people also confessed their sins, and there was a moving moment when I hugged and cried with one young man while asking forgiveness of the Baby boom generation.

After hours of the dealings of God, the pastors gave leadership to a moving time of worship, sang the "Covenant" and had communion together. It was wonderful. I was exhaustively joyful at the end--and totally wiped out of books and tapes! (In fact, people signed up for scores of resources that we'll have to send back--quite an indication of the spiritual hunger in the area.)

After the meeting I shared a meal with the de Kok's and Clinton, and the ministry continued as we prayed over Clinton, shared God's Word together, and we prayed for Pat who was under conviction of sin. After midnight, I finally climbed into the sack.

Why was Ludington so ready for the word of God? I don't know all the reasons, but a lady told me that she and a friend had been walking the streets at 5 am every day praying for the churches. Quite a good start. I also believe that the unity of the pastors is quite a big factor, and the spiritual caliber of the people. It also just seems to be God's time.

I'm grateful once again to you, Lord, for the privilege of doing your kingdom work. It was a very satisfying weekend seeing you change people's lives. Thank you for your power and

love. I long to know you more and more.

Elmira, New York

March 7, 1997 - 15,149 - 14,966

I'm traveling again, and that gives me some time to catch up on my journal. On Wednesday I flew out of Seattle, and after a delay of about three hours in Philadelphia (busy airport--lots of time to pray), I made it into Elmira, New York. It was wonderful to be greeted by Bill Blatz, my former co-worker in Washington D.C. and have about an hour's drive together in which to get caught up.

Bill is now one of the YWAM leaders in the Northeast and is especially responsible for pioneering ministries in the Ukraine, Cuba, and Mexico. He's a gregarious old friend, who lost his wife Karen to breast cancer this past year. It was touching to hear him share the story of how God prepared her for her "graduation" into heaven. It wasn't easy for them the past seven years, but it WAS the best years of their lives. Shirley and I recruited Bill and Karen via their daughters into YWAM some seventeen years ago. Now she's in heaven and he's changing nations.

Roaring Branch, Pennsylvania

We drove south into northeastern Pennsylvania to a YWAM retreat center there called Roaring Branch. Thursday morning, I began speaking to the staff conference there--a good mix of old friends and new faces. It was especially good to see Roxanne Savoca, Dave and Tammy Adams, Ron and Carol Southwick, Mark and Donna Britt and others. So far, we've had good worship times, and a good response to the word of God.

I started by giving them a history of the Great Awakening in their area. It was faith-inspiring to go over that material again. Last evening, I shared on the "Gift of Suffering: God's Pathway to Revival" and there were tears, confessions, and much prayer together afterwards.

Today I'm speaking on *Restoring America's Conscience* and expecting God to work among us. It's been a good time so far.

On the plane flight here, God really challenged me to believe him for revival in America. After reading newspapers and magazines and feeling a spirit of depression over the entrenched state of sin and blindness in our land, God put faith in my heart that the awakening can come and sweep the evil away. Specifically, I saw God's desire for America:

To come alive in Him, and then tithes 30 million people to go into all the world and share

the Gospel and serve people in the nations of the earth.

This was so strong an impression, I want to record it here and leave it before the Lord. At the least, I will PRAY that God will bring it to pass in accordance with His will.

In the afternoon I took my normal prayer watch hour on a long walk in the woods, standing by a flowing creek among towering hills and listening to the voice of God. It was an exhilarating time amongst his creation. The more I "listen" the more I see of Him.

Thank you, Lord for this trip to the Northeast. May you be glorified in all I say and do-- and your precious missionaries built up and sent out to see a fourth Great Awakening come to our land. So be it.

Wheeling, West Virginia & Vicinity

March 17, 1997 - 15,159 - 14,967

Today--St. Patrick's Day--really means something to me after reading *How the Irish Saved Civilization*. Patricius was a wonderful man of God who changed a nation through his love and zest for God, truth, and people. Today I set my heart to by like him--and look forward to meeting him in heaven.

I'm on my way home from the last *Revive America* Seminar for this spring in Wheeling, West Virginia. I stayed in Pennsylvania, traveled every day through West Virginia, and preached in Ohio.

Thursday I flew into Pittsburgh--judged by Reader's Digest the 5th best city in America to raise kids (Bremerton is Number Four) and was met by June Faucette, long-time friend from the DC days who now lives with her husband Ed on a 25-acre farm in Waynesburg, PA. We drove out to their little farm in the evening and renewed friendship after about four years. They set me up in a little guest house across from their home. It was quaint and cozy and comfortable.

Friday, I drove an hour into Wheeling and spoke at a pastors' luncheon to about forty men. They seemed eager and prayerful to pursue revival, and a good time of intercession followed my remarks. I was impressed with their zeal and unity.

Wheeling is a somewhat depressed town located in the hills on the banks of the Ohio River in what is called the Upper Ohio River Valley. It's a steel and coal town that's seen a lot of downsizing and closures in the past ten years. The area is hilly, but somewhat drab--especially before the blossoming of spring.

The first night of the seminar Tim Wilson spoke on the "New Thing" God is doing in

America today and there was a good response. Good pastors' prayer meeting beforehand. The meetings were held at a large Friends Church on the Ohio side in St. Clairsville. The next day I spoke in the morning on "The Church on the 1990's" and Tim spoke in the afternoon. After commuting back to Waynesburg, I spoke in the evening on "Restoring America's Conscience." God brought much conviction, confession of sin, and people that came forward to prayer. God really moved. I and a few other pastors stayed until very late to counsel and pray with people. It was a precious time.

I wearily returned to the Faucette's late that night, then June and I came back into Wheeling in the morning where I preached boldly at First Presbyterian Church in Martin's Ferry (the first settlement in Ohio). At the close, nearly 100 people stood to commit themselves to be "Josiahs" in their generation. It was a powerful time.

On the final night, the church was full, and Tim preached with power. After a number had forward for salvation and repentance, I led the audience in a time of sharing testimonies and praying over various areas of sin. It was a powerful and spontaneous open mike time. One man named Romer that I'd prayed for the previous night, who'd wanted to be able to show love for his family and others, came forward, gave me a big hug and shared how God had really changed him. Praise the Lord.

At the close about twenty pastors from about fifteen churches came forward and led their people in communion and signing the covenant to pray. For hours we basked in the greatness and forgiveness of God. It was a powerful time in God's presence. God's visitation has begun in Wheeling, West Virginia. As always, it was my great joy and privilege to be a small part.

One thing I did struggle with on this trip with the bombardment of lustful thoughts to my mind. After sharing that openly in the meeting after praying with a young man, a woman came up to me and shared that sexual sin is a real bondage in the valley. Even after the meeting I struggled again, and asked God to free me for the next thirty years of my life. I confessed my giving in at times and asked His forgiveness. Today is a new day, and I will walk in newness of life.

Port Orchard, Washington

March 24, 1997 - 15, 166 - 14, 960

We just finished a great weekend with our annual *Renewal '97 Bob Fitts Benefit Concert*. On Friday night we packed out the Nazarene Church and had a fabulous time in the presence of God. It was precious and powerful--a wonderful time. Many people said it was the best annual meeting we've ever done.

Bob ministered all weekend--we also had a great King's Kids day where I spoke on "the fear of the Lord"--and on Sunday we took a group to Christ Memorial to be in Bob's final ministry time. It was also great to have Kathy and the kids along on this trip. They are a good family.

I also found out recently that John and Irene Dick will be leaving us soon. A job opportunity has opened for them in Canada and they will be returning to their roots. We will really miss them. John has been a friend, an excellent administrator, and a very complimentary co-worker. But I've seen enough people come and go over the years to know that "the Lord gives, and the Lord takes away."

"Blessed be the Name of the Lord."

Washington, D.C.

April 30, 1997 - 15,203 - 14,929

I've really enjoyed the week here in W-DC for the National Day of Prayer and finally have some time to sit down and write about it.

Had a good arrival on Saturday night into National airport and went by subway and cab to Ken and Pat Smith's home in Fairfax. It's newly remodeled, and still my favorite home away from home in the capital.

Sunday morning, I shared on "Restoring America's Conscience" at Christian Assembly. There was a good response to the message and many people bought books. I'm grateful to have shared a close relationship with the church for over twelve years now. God has used them in our lives.

On Monday I dropped by the Mongolian embassy to begin working on our visas for this summer. In the evening I checked into a free room at the Grand Hyatt downtown (it's amazing how God has "treated" me to these special benefits over the past two decades) and then attended a Challenge 2000 meeting in the evening. This group of fifteen youth leaders is trying to reach every kid on every campus by the year 2000. It's truly a vision that comes from the heart of God.

Our meetings continued into Tuesday and Wednesday when the Youth Ministries Executive Council (about forty leaders) began their time together. There was great fellowship, prayer, and vision shared. On Wednesday we toured the inner city to get God's heart and strategies for urban youth. We began the day at the Third Street homeless breakfast, saw two high schools, then had lunch and a briefing at the new headquarters of the Family Research Council. Great insights and sharing. God was really speaking to me about ideas to reach and make disciples in America's cities.

We concluded the evening with some hours spent with Raleigh Washington, a former Free Church pastor now working on reconciliation issues with Promisekeepers. He was very provocative. At the end of the day, I was still wrestling with the question I thought so long on during our time in DC: What's **God's perspective on the black-white struggle** in America? Is reconciliation achieved through dialogue, venting, and understanding one another, or through a passionate, color-blind commitment to Jesus that erases the distinction between "black and white, slave and free, etc."

I've concluded that much of the racial dialogue and posturing is the carnal approach to the issue. The "higher" path is submission to Christ, death to rights and past wounds, and **eyes that don't see race but evaluate all things based on character**. Lord--I'm asking you for insight and understanding.

The next day began the National Day of Prayer which launched into intercession for America at 10 am down on Capitol Hill. Nearly 1000 people squeezed into the Caucus Room (with another two hundred outside) for the five hours of encouragement, focus, and prayer. I was deeply moved by many of the speakers: Rick Warren, Janet Parshall, John Dalton, Raleigh Washington, John Maxwell, James Dobson, and others. Of great disappointment was that **for the first time in history, an America president could not find ONE person from the administration who would come and pray with us. Only Bill Clinton's White House was not represented**. Shirley Dobson was visibly upset by their refusal to participate and encouraged us to pray for our president.

The gathering ended at 3 pm and the evening celebration began on the West Capitol steps with the International churches and youth. As usual, it was a wonderful time graced by much fervent prayer, warm windy weather, and hundreds of young people that were prayed over. **I shared at the end of the program and prayed for the families of the nation. It was a special time.**

About 9 pm I walked the 10 blocks back to the Grand Hyatt, meditating on the day's events and prayers. How I pray that God will hear our requests and reach into the heart and soul of our nation and "heal our land."

On Friday and Saturday, I saw friends, finalized our visas, **spoke at King's Chapel and Immanuel's Church** to good crowds of open people, then prepared to return home. Lord--I'm always grateful for the times in W-DC. Will I ever be coming back this way? Only You know.

May 28, 1997 - 15,231 - 14,901

Well, I DID come back this way--with Shirley for a **belated celebration of our 20th Anniversary**. We just returned from Washington D.C. last night after four glorious days together in the nation's capital. Father--how grateful I am for how you provided this wonderful time for the two of us. I will remember it for a lifetime.

It certainly was one of the cheapest trips we've ever taken. Two free plane tickets, free hotel rooms via Geoff Cragg and the DC/LA committee at the Washington Sheraton, and dad's spending money that covered the rest. We needed the help this month and the Lord really came through.

We left on Friday morning May 23, and after flying through Chicago, arrived in DC around 5 pm. We took metro from National airport all the way up to the beautiful Washington Sheraton, situated in the northwest part of the city near the National Zoo. We had a free Victorian suite reserved for us in the quieter, older part of the massive hotel, and gratefully made it our home for the next four nights.

Each evening we strolled along romantic, international Connecticut Avenue and chose a different international cuisine each evening. I think the order went Vietnamese, Mexican, Thai, and Indian--and all had outdoor seating just off the street. they were all good.

During the day we acted like voracious tourists--walking all over the Mall seeing the sights and enjoying the outdoors. There was so much to look at slowly and methodically--not chasing kids and strollers. We especially enjoyed the Holocaust Museum, the new FDR Memorial on the Tidal Basin near the Jefferson Memorial, the Museum of American History, the National Art Museum, the National Archives, and all the memorials. The weather was springy—a little rain--but that didn't matter. We were together, seeing things that fascinated us and allowed us to leisurely walk, hand-in-hand for hours.

In the evenings we read books (I really enjoyed getting into Billy Graham's recently released autobiography--*Just As I Am*), took walks, and celebrated the beauty of intimate married love for over 20 years. It was a great learning-oriented vacation. I'm so glad that both Shirley and I share a love of history and learning. That's both relaxing and stimulating to us. We could have continued for days.

Here are some of the learned highlights:

1. The story of the Holocaust was really sobering. Gave me a greater understanding of WWII and what the Jews went through. Sadly, we're doing it again in greater numbers through abortion.
2. George Washington and all the founding leaders were men of such depth and character. I really want to study the Federalist papers and learn more. George Washington was a tremendous financial steward--accounting for every penny that he spent in the Revolutionary War. It was an attribute of his principled life.
3. Really enjoyed the Rembrandt paintings at the National Art Gallery, and Thomas Cole's paintings on the *Journey of Life*. They graphically portrayed the four stages of life, from childhood to death, and the sovereignty of God in guiding us toward our heavenly

home. Very thought provoking. (The stage we're in now was symbolized by testing and problems--many dark storm clouds. Amen.)

4. Reading Billy Graham's book and studying in detail the lives of great Americans in the History Museum motivated me more to press in to fulfill my destiny in life. I will seek the Lord more about this in coming days.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for these special days. Thank you for helping us with the storms of life--and providing some relief and rest during the clouds. My life is in your hands.

Port Orchard, Washington

July 12, 1997 - 15,276 - 14,856

Just finished a great bootcamp as we prepare for summer outreach. The past few weeks I preached at Harper Free Church--great response with much brokenness and prayer--and many books purchased (many more than I thought), and at First Christian on missions and evangelism. It was well received too.

I've been struggling with my voice some again. Maybe it's coincidental, or direct spiritual warfare, but at any rate I'm back to trusting God and dealing with some pain and discomfort. All for my good.

I gave a message at bootcamp on death to self--"The Secret of Happiness." God moved in many hearts "to put Jesus on the chair at the center of your life." One of those who came to the front first was Nathan. That was gratifying for a father to see. God is also doing some good things in Bethany's life right now, and that's so encouraging.

The Love Feast was unbelievably good with some incredibly anointed presentations. I'm sure God is so pleased with these expressions of creativity. Then the next day we anointed everyone with oil, had a fantastic evening commissioning service, and sent them out. Pete Battjes gave a great word on "blowing God's whistle or signal" over the nations. With my b-ball whistle in hand, I committed myself to do just that. "Lord, help us to harvest among the nations."

Beijing, China

August 7, 1997 - 15,302 - 14,030

We've just returned from one of our greatest summers ever. I'm so grateful to God for what He did through our teams and in so many lives. Below I'll give a blow-by-blow account of

the Mongolia team trip and summarize the other outreaches at the end.

July 14 - We flew into San Francisco and did **an open-air at the airport (nine songs) to hundreds of people at our gate**. Just as we finished the performance a woman supervisor came to gruffly inform me that we were improperly working in a "non-free speech zone." I politely told her that **all of God's world was a free speech zone for us**. We then boarded our plane for China and took off.

July 15-16 - Traveled 10 hours to Tokyo where we had a 2-hour mechanical delay, then flew on into **Beijing, China, my first trip ever to the Chinese mainland**. We were gratefully met at the crowded airport by some Korean Christians who escorted us to a local hotel where we hooked up with some host families. We spent the night in their homes in two's and three's. Most are businesspeople or diplomats. **I stayed in the home of Bong Joo Moon, a minister at the Korean Embassy**. His next career move will be to become an ambassador somewhere. He and I had breakfast together on Wednesday, and I found out later that he has stomach cancer. Our team really prayed for him that day.

Later in the day the team gathered in a small room at the hotel (rented by the Korean Church that meets in the same complex--they're allowed to have a church service here in China because they're foreigners. No Chinese are permitted to attend.) We had a wonderful worship time, then headed for the airport by way of downtown. Beijing is one of the largest cities in the world with over 10 million people--teeming masses on foot, bicycle, in taxis and in cars. The numbers are almost overwhelming. We prayed.

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

Had a good flight into Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia. The lush green Mongolian hills were a beautiful sight as we descended into the airport. It was a gorgeous sunny day. We were met by **Steve and Donna Watkins and friends at the airport**, and then taken to an inexpensive hotel downtown where we stayed for \$5 a person per night. That evening we gathered at the Watkins small apartment (in a former Russian intelligence officers apartment complex--a little nicer than the rest) and received a short briefing on the country. At first sight, Mongolia reminds me a lot of Albania, just cleaner. The buildings are the normal run-down communist public housing compounds. The sights and smells are Third World. We can't wait to begin to get to know the people, and that begins tomorrow.

July 17 - In the morning we did a prayer tour of downtown UB. Saw Lenin's statute in a square, and **did an open-air service at Sukhbaatar Square**, the main plaza in the city, about noon. Sukhe Baatar was the socialist leader that brought Russian communism to Mongolia in the 1920's. He died before the age of 30, but his statue remains in the public square. Apparently, the Mongolian people have not destroyed the idols of communism the way others have done in

Eastern Europe. Four-to-five hundred gathered to watch us. Great time. In the late afternoon, we packed up our things and went to the main train station where we boarded an old "milk run express" and traveled about 100 miles northeast of UB to a small town. We boarded some flat-bed army trucks there and jostled and bumped our way to the **Shankhor Camp**--an army run R&R camp--which is to be the site of this week's basketball camp. We arrived at sundown and were escorted into some cabins that will be home for over a week. One hundred kids and about ten other Christian staff are here to work with us. We've excited. **We are the guests of Coach Battulga, and the 1+11 basketball team, a professional b-ball team that has some Christians on it. Coach Battulga is the visionary behind these camps for kids.**

Shankhor, Mongolia

July 18 - Got to see the real beauty of the camp this morning. It's nestled in the gorgeous Mongolian fields and hills, with green and purple foliage delighting the eye in every direction. There are some colorful, but faded cabins, some gazebos, a dining hall, some dormitories, and other buildings situated on about 20 acres. Nearby is a fast running and very cold mountain stream. We started our daily routine this morning. Calisthenics and marching lines at 8:30. Breakfast in the dining hall with the kids (usually a watery cream of wheat with butter floating on top, and bread). Played a little basketball on a huge central concrete court (we supplied some much-needed nets and balls) and began to make friends;

From 10-12:30 most of our kids helped with some English classes run by some visiting Free Church missionaries. There was a sour yoghurt break at 10:30 (in the gazebos) and then the main meal, usually consisting of mutton, potatoes, rice, goat, and bread. In the afternoon we did basketball drills, played a lot of three on three, and eventually did some games. Afternoon tea was served at about 5 pm--milk tea and a Mongolian cookie. Supper was served at 8:30 and was usually soup or some form of meat with noodles etc. **About 9:30 the disco began in the Cultural Building. This was a new form of cultural identification for most of our kids. They fast danced, did the macarena, slow danced, and we also did short presentations each evening.** About 11-11:30 pm we'd gather in the boys' cabin to pray for the day and "pass the torch" to the other teams around the world. This pattern continued for most of the week.

July 19 - Every morning I got up early and walked out through the camp gate to a little bridge over the pounding stream. I enjoyed some wonderful quiet times here, hearing from God and praying for our kids and the Mongolians. This afternoon about fifty of us (Mongolians and Americans) hiked up a mountainside and prayed at a shamanistic shrine. There are many of these high places on the hills through Mongolia--left over from the days of Buddhist influence. We prayed that they would all be torn down, and Jesus exalted. We blessed the entire land of Mongolia from the mountaintop. I don't think some of the Mongolian kids had ever seen prayers like this.

We've getting to know the kids at the camp. One of the main goals is to find "Timothies and Tiffanies"--one or two people that we can really pray for, engage in conversation, and lead to Christ. **The language barrier is difficult and there are only three translators (one good one) in this gathering of 130.** But we are trusting God, using lots of body language, and pressing in. The Mongolians strike me as sincere, hard-working, yet shy people who are very loyal and warm once they get to know you. But that takes a little time. We're working on it and praying like mad. Two friends we're getting very close to are **Dembe and Sharva**--two of the 1+11 pro players, They're like Mutt and Jeff. Dembe is a fiery 5-foot point guard and Sharva is a seven-foot gentle giant. They also have a real heart for the kids.

Sunday July 20 - Mongolia is a land of great extremes and contrasts and that seems to be true of the Mongol soul. "Paul was persuading others to believe in Jesus (Acts 18)." That's our job here. We are continuing to get closer to the kids through playing b-ball--saxonboombook--the English classes, disco, and just hanging out. May the harvest come. Today it down-poured and turned cold, probably a 40-degree temperature swing. The girls' cabin flooded out and so they moved in with us. God used it to bring some openness and brokenness, and a good time of prayer and worship. It was our "showers of bonding and blessing" time.

July 21 - The ministry at the camp is increasing. We also played three basketball games in the afternoon with the "coaches" taking on the King's Kids boys, the girls playing each other, and the Mongol boys vs. the King's Kids boys. The girls won and the boys lost a squeaker. **I even made a few baskets in the oldies game. I know one thing--I haven't played this much basketball or had so much exercise in about 25 years.** I'm also doing a lot of refereeing. A thankless job. In the afternoon we invited some kids to learn some of our King's Kids songs. About fifty came. A small beginning of King's Kids Mongolia.

July 22 - God really spoke to me out of Acts 20:24 this morning about the importance of fulfilling my life's mission. Yes, Lord. Later in the morning we loaded up into the army trucks and traveled across the bumpy, dirty roads (even traveling through a river that was about 3 feet deep) to a country ger where we were treated to an authentic Mongolian meal. With horses, sheep, and goats, all grazing nearby, **they slaughtered a sheep and a goat, and after cutting up the meat, they placed it in a metal container with rocks that had been heated over an open fire.** They then tossed in potatoes, carrots, and other vegetables, and let it kind of pressure cook into a Mongolian delicacy.

We feasted away the afternoon, sitting under a tent, visiting the family ger (it was about 12 foot in diameter, very colorful, but simple inside with seven people living there), and the kids rode horses. This simple, difficult, almost Old Testament lifestyle (reminded me of the nomadic lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob) is in such sharp contrast to our American affluence. Many thoughts raced through my mind all day. In the evening, we again boarded into the army trucks and rumbled back to Shankhor. Just in time for disco. (Even I had to slow dance--I asked God's forgiveness later.)

Today I challenged our kids to rise to be a GREAT team, not just a good one. Greatness comes from having godly goals and aspirations and the endurance to achieve them. I believe they took the challenge to heart.

July 23-25 - The last days at camp were the best as our friendships with the Mongolian kids deepened and we put in our sickles to harvest. One evening we ministered powerfully to all the soldiers at the camp. Good response. On another occasion they showed the *Jesus* film. On Thursday we picnicked by the river all day (same place we got most of our water, took primitive showers, and washed our clothes) and continued to minister to our Timothies and Tiffanies. In the afternoon we had a final "King's Kids Mongolia" time and I clearly presented the gospel to them. At the end, about 40 of them stood to make a move toward Christ. Hallelujah.

The prayers and love had broken through. In the evening at disco, we pulled out our big guns--*I Want to See* and *Redeemer*. God really blessed. Josh Powell did the most anointed God-role I've ever seen. It received a standing ovation--quite a statement in conservative Mongolian culture. We then rejoiced with our new convert-disciples and friends into the wee hours of the morning. God had given us good fruit. All-in-all, through the English classes, the *Jesus* film, and our presentations and conversations, about 50 kids out of 100 had expressed an interest in knowing Christ.

July 26 - Early in the morning we all loaded into the army trucks and headed for the train. Had a good trip back to UB with all the new-found friends-in-Christ. Chapter Two of our Mongolia stay was about to begin.

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

We were taken to the Sports Palace in the center of Ulaanbaatar, a Chinese built, dilapidated sports complex that would be the equivalent of the Key Arena in Seattle. This was to be our home for the following week. It's only one-block off Sukhbaatar Square right in the town center. We were placed in some rooms on the fourth floor and given some time to rest and clean up. They also escorted us to the "Blue Café, a little restaurant owned by a friend of Coach Battulga. It became our private restaurant for three meals a day for the week. Great food after the country diet at camp. What a blessing.

In the evening we had a great time of worship and prayer as we prepared for our week in the capital city. Great team with a heart for God.

On Saturday we practiced at the Sports Palace from 11-12 pm. After lunch the kids shopped at the Black Market--kind of like an Arab bazaar where goods are much cheaper. Coach Battulga has arranged to have two boxers be our bodyguards while we in UB. We named them Eric and Billy (similar in sound to their Mongol names which we can't pronounce). They pushed

everybody out of the way at the Black Market. Made the kids feel important. In the evening we were led to pray for many individuals on the India team (Deidra in particular). Especially bound the spirit of sickness. **One of our converts who doesn't speak English--we call him Ike--even prayed out during the meeting.** His prayer was very genuine and heart-felt, though we didn't understand a word.

Our converts and disciples are starting to show up here in UB. We look forward to seeing many of them this week. My Mongol name is Yoondin--a famous singer. Many Mongols laugh at me when I tell them that.

July 27 - Many of us are sick, but we still enjoyed **a great service at the Free Church this morning. They meet in a Russian owned building (former communist youth theatre).** The team did a very good presentation and I shared a little. The highlight was that **15-20 of our "Timothies and Tiffanies" from camp were there. Praise God.** We lunched with Watkins afterwards, and in the evening, God led us in quite a time of confession of sin and honoring of one another. Great way to begin our final week of ministry.

July 28-31 - This week's schedule was the same for four days. From 10-12 pm each morning we had a practice with the teams that we were playing in the evening. At the end of each practice we did a presentation and shared the gospel. **Every day kids came to Christ.** After showers, lunch and rest, we played games in the evening at the Sports Palace--uniforms, good referees and all. The first night it was like taking on the Chicago Bulls--we were pitted against the number one high school age boys & girls' teams in the city. Quite a mismatch. Girls lost by 30 and the boys 69-27. But I was proud of them. Our goals were to 1) Honor Christ in our attitudes and actions, 2) Have fun 3) Do our best, and 4) Win, if possible. All of these were achieved over the week. **We called the evening games the "basketball games" and the morning practices "The Game of Life."** What happened with their souls during the morning was far more important to us.

The second day we had a good practice. **Spoke on the importance of the Bible. Some kids moved toward Christ.** In the evening we played the number two boys' and girls' teams. The Mongol teams both won by about 15 points. **That morning during practice, Eric, one of our bodyguards gave his life to Christ. He was really a changed man.** The last two nights we played kids more on our level and won all four games. On Thursday morning, we didn't give an altar call, but I shared my own testimony, broke the kids up in small groups and let our kids talk to them.

About twenty gave their lives to the Lord. We also had many of our disciples with us, at practice, up in our rooms, and even playing in the games with us. We're now a mixed American-Mongolian team. At night, **Coach Battulga really shared his heart with us and thanked us for the powerful ministry that was taking place. He was deeply moved and began to share his thoughts on our future ministry.** We are excited about that. We also had a "party" for our Timothies and

Tiffanies. It was great fun, with many exchanges of love and gifts, and many tears. Great time of prayer was had for all.

The main referee who did our games came to me today and gave me his whistle. He said he had used it to referee nine straight professional championship games. He wanted me to have it as an expression of his appreciation for our ministry. I was humbled and gave him my whistle in return. Prophetic moment--remembering the commissioning service. Truly a "whistle" for Christ had been heard during our stay in Mongolia.

August 1- on our final day in Mongolia we shopped, cleaned up and had our love feast in the evening with Steve and Donna at the posh Chinggis Khan Hotel (formerly the Holiday Inn). Afterwards at their apartment, we presented them with the globe basketball, signed by all of us. What gracious hosts they have been for our stay here.

On the way back to the Sports Palace at about 11:30 pm we stopped by Sukhbaatar Square and did an impromptu performance for about 100 people. This is where we began-- and where we wanted to end our time in Ulaanbaatar. Had a great time of praying for all our converts, disciples and friends. Went to bed with fond memories that night.

August 2 - Traveled to the airport in the morning where many friends met us to say goodbye. We sang *Jesus Is My Friend* one more time in both English and Mongolian, and the tears flowed like a river. We are really going to miss our friends here--but we're also going to be back. Our work here has just begun. Reluctantly, we walked through customs waving goodbye to our newly loved nation of Mongolia. Then flew for two hours into Beijing.

Beijing, China

We were met at the airport by our Korean friends who then spent the afternoon showing us around the Chinese capital. Had a good prayer time in Tiananmen Square and Mao's Tomb, and enjoyed looking through the main corridor of the Forbidden city. The kids did their Chinese shopping here. We then treated them to all-they-could-eat at a large Beijing McDonalds. They pigged out. Finished the evening with a tremendous prayer and worship time back at the Korean meeting place. Spent the night in our host homes. Hot showers. Washed clothes. Real beds. Air conditioning. What a treat.

August 3 - We ministered in the morning at the Korean Presbyterian Church in both the 10 and 12:00 services. In the second service I tried to encourage the Korean believers with a message on *Jesus Is Winning*, and there was a good response to it.

In the afternoon we drove to a local gymnasium and played a complete basketball game with some of their Korean high schoolers. Was a fun game. Afterwards some of the kids took us

downtown to a unique walking street with all the scrumptious smells of Chinese food. We looked around--then bowing to teenage pressures, took the kids once more to McDonalds.

Tokyo, Japan

August 4 - Our plane left at 10:30 and took four hours to get to Tokyo. Had a four-hour layover here and enjoyed good worship at our gate. I chatted with Dr. Peter Waggoner in the terminal, and we just missed our India team members by about a half hour. We then flew on to San Francisco (ten-hour flight), trying to sleep and adjust back to US time. Had a three-hour layover there and took our last plane on into Seattle. Was a joyous reunion there with family and friends. Soon after, we went to meet the India team that arrived about an hour later. So wonderful to be back together with our fellow co-laborers in Christ. Traveling back to Port Orchard, we spent the evening getting re-united with our friends.

Seattle, Washington

August 5 - Finished our King's Kids '97 year with a good day of de-briefing and sharing all the stories. Parents joined us in the evening for the final "year in review." The kids finished with the song *True for You*, a good statement of not only the summer outreaches, but of our long-term call to serve and please Christ.

It was a glorious summer in missions--and God and His great love deserve all the praise.

SUMMARY

Our emphasis this summer was on quality relational evangelism. Throughout our three-week outreach, we had the privilege of sharing the gospel clearly with some 250 kids, with nearly 100 of them turning toward Christ. We were also featured on national Mongolian television one evening, touching the entire nation. Praise the Lord. We are praying about some long-term steps to continue our work among the Mongol people.

1. Each of our team members has committed to raise \$1 per month for the coming year to send back to Mongolia (\$20 a month total). Monies will be used to support a Mongol worker that will follow-up on our converts and disciples.
2. We will open our homes in America to receive Mongol students for one month of exchange work over the coming years. This was a specific request of Coach Battulga--and will involve future national leaders of the country.
3. We will send requested supplies to the 1+1 team for working with ten street kids.

Specific needs have yet to be identified.

4. We will pray about sending both a basketball and performing arts team to Mongolia next summer.
5. We will make a leadership visit during the year to follow-up on our work.
6. Many of us are committed to going back to Mongolia, both short and long term. We will try to raise up workers over many years.
 - (1) King's Kids leader to help develop a national team.
 - (2) Worker to disciple the 1+11 players.
 - (3) Church Partners & businesspeople who will help teach business and entrepreneur skills in this developing country.
7. Try to assist Sharva in coming to the US to play for an American college team.

Lake Billy Chinook, Oregon

August 24, 1997- 15, 319 - 14, 013

We just returned from our annual family camping trip to Cove Palisades. It was a great week--without much friction and with good, **rich family times**. This year April Autry went along with us and she was a nice addition.

This summer we returned to our first "favorite site" overlooking Mount Jefferson. The weather was beautiful every day except one, and we rented a patio boat twice, a ski boat once, and a jet ski one day. The kids really liked that. The older they get, the more expensive it is to amuse them. It was great.

Every evening we would sit around the campfire just drinking in the serenity of being outside in God's creation. We also really enjoyed reading a book together instead of playing cards. Praise the Lord.

The annual camping trip is an important **memory maker for our family**. I pray it will continue for many years and become a vast store of precious family memories deposited in eight thankful minds.

Port Orchard, Washington

September 3, 1997- 15, 329 - 14, 003

After a two-week practical time around the house--and a few speaking engagements here and there--the fall schedule has begun. I've been struggling with soreness in my throat again and visiting some new doctors to try to answer the problem. In the many time, I've committed myself to contentment and perseverance. God allows all things for our good.

Because of the throat aggravation, this has been a bit of a dry time for me. My walk in Christ is steady, but my ability to dream and follow through with those dreams is affected by my physical state. Deep in my heart, I know that a good dose of slowing down and heart-felt humility is the greatest thing for me. It's just a hard lesson for a soul like mine.

Lord--continue to work your life in me. I accept your choices for my life and set my face to be "faithful unto death that I might receive a crown of life." Thank you for loving me and being patient with my weaknesses. You are my hope. You are my goal.

September 23, 1997 - 15, 349 - 13, 983

I continue to struggle with a painful throat, but God is doing good things:

1. September 15-16 I attended a meeting of Christian leaders in Tacoma--a Servant Leaders Conference--that God really used to speak to my heart. It was a powerful time of vision, unity, and strategic perspective on what God is doing in our world. God is truly uniting his church in the cities and towns of our nation to work for the revival that we all long for. It's a long-haul perspective on transforming the culture through a united, paying, evangelizing, clear-headed and hearted people of God. Exciting time. One application I want to make is to really concentrate on revival and reformation in our South Kitsap area for the next few years. It's time to build a local model. I'm intrigued and excited about this possibility.
2. Met with over 200 kids at South Kitsap High School for *See You at The Pole* on September 17. Over three million kids prayed all around the US. God is moving among our children.
3. The next day our family did its annual day of the Puyallup Fair. It was a good time of fellowship, food, fun, and enjoying one another.
4. On the 20th we had our annual *Destiny '97* gathering, and it was the best one we've ever done. There was a tremendous anointing upon all aspects of the program and great smoothness in the flow. Our King's Kids ministry is a powerful tool in God's Hand. May we always follow His leading and voice. For this coming year, I believe He is calling us into a time of incredible freedom and release. Come, Lord Jesus.

Washington, D.C.

October 6, 1997 - 15,362 - 13,970

This past weekend I had the privilege of flying back to W-DC for the **Promisekeepers "Stand in the Gap" rally held on October 4**. I stayed with the Smiths in Fairfax (my normal custom) and went down to the Mall on Saturday for the large event.

It was incredible and historic. Over one million men came from all over the United States, filling the Mall from end to end. Here's how I wrote it up in our October newsletter:

"What an awesome sight. Hundreds of thousands of men--black, white, Hispanic, and every color in between--on their knees before God crying out to Him to heal and change America. Some were openly weeping. Others showed on their faces their grave concern for their families, friends, and towns in which they lived.

Promisekeeper's October 4th "Stand in The Gap" rally in Washington D.C. was an important moment in American history. I'd traveled from Seattle to pray along with hundreds of thousands of others from every state and many foreign countries. From noon to 6 pm we prayed in small groups, listened to the impassioned words of various leaders, and as one voice, called out to God to bring revival to our land. It was a privilege to be there.

It was also eerily familiar. I'd been there before. The 1997 Promisekeeper rally was not the first national call to repentance in our generation.

In 1978, God spoke to the heart of a Hispanic pastor named John Gimenez to call the nation to prayer. Washington For Jesus, on April 29, 1980, brought hundreds of thousands of people to DC for twelve hours of prayer and heart-felt repentance. I led the YWAM Renewal Team that helped host that event and worked full-time for six months to prepare the nation's capital. My wife Shirley, Mike and Lyn Davison, and Rich and Bev Riedesel, were all a part of those days. We'll never forget the memories--and the privilege of serving.

In 1988, Washington For Jesus II again brought a massive crowd to the capital to pray. That year I led hosting 1400 international delegates from 114 nations who came to pray with us. There have been other national days of prayer, and a growing prayer movement that continues to gain momentum. "Stand in The Gap" was not the ending nor the beginning--just another wonderful step in a building stream of renewal that needs to drench the American landscape.

We can't stop praying. We can't be complacent. The revival hasn't truly hit the shores yet. But the waves are rising. Maybe the "Big One" is coming soon. Let us pray."

God is doing some special things in our nation despite great sin and moral downslide. Oh, may our lives be given for a greater outpouring of His Spirit from heaven. May the revival come.

Winthrop, Washington

October 13, 1997 - 15,369 - 13,963

Shirley and I just returned from a wonderful 21st Anniversary Getaway. What a special time with my special bride in a most special place.

This year we took a 5-hour drive over the mountains and ended up at Sun Mountain Lodge near Winthrop. It's a beautiful resort, set at about 3,000 feet on a hill, in the North Cascades. We had a gorgeous room with a 180-degree view of the mountains which were partially snow-capped. Everything was elegant from the fireplace, to the in-room jacuzzi, to the western decor. And there wasn't even a television. **Just peace and quiet and much love and memories shared between two people who are more in love today than 21 years ago.**

On Saturday we took nearly an eight-mile hike--just enjoying the beautiful trails, woods, mountains, and nearby lake. There are scores of miles of wilderness trails. Except for a few families enjoying the outdoors too, we had it all to ourselves.

On Saturday evening I really shared my heart with Shirley about my lingering throat problems. (That was the only negative about the weekend--I was still in pain.) She was such a comfort as we prayed and asked God to show us the next steps. On Sunday we had a leisurely drive home.

Married love and commitment are a staggeringly beautiful thing. It grows with the years and deepens with all the shared memories, both good and bad. **I'm so thankful to have Shirley as my wife. God gave me a very precious gift 21 years ago. And every time I "unwrap" more of that gift, the more beautiful it is to behold.**

New York, New York

November 1, 1997 - 15,388 - 13,944

Last week Jonathan Stone and I flew to New York to minister on Long Island for a week. It was a great trip.

Most of the week was spent **ministering to a small DTS of about 15 students at a beautiful 4H Camp that YWAM is renting.** Jonathan often led in worship in the mornings and then I delivered the word. A few times we ministered together at the conclusion. The students were nice, but not strong seekers of God. By the end, God was moving in their lives.

Wednesday and Friday night, God used Jonathan at two large youth groups meetings. In both, kids came forward to get right with God. **I also ministered with Nick Savoca at a Mission**

Bridge School at Smithtown Assembly. It was wonderful to see the Savocas, Adams, and Bill Blatz again. They are wonderful friends.

Saturday, we traveled an hour and a half into Manhattan to look around the city. Beginning at David Wilkerson's Times Square Church, we dodged raindrops and large crowds to visit Times Square, the Empire State Building, Central Park, and other Big Apple landmarks. A highlight was taking the subway down to the lower Manhattan and praying in front of the American and New York Stock Exchanges. (On Thursday and Friday, financial markets in Hong Kong and other parts of Asia had fallen dramatically, and our markets followed suit with over a 500-point free fall.)

We prayed for revival, for God's judgment on our greed and materialism, and millions of people to turn to the Lord. Then after praying at St. Paul's and Trinity Churches (early American congregations that had great impact in the city), we stumbled onto Fulton Street where the 1857 revival began with Jeremiah Lanphier. What a discovery. Had a great prayer time there asking God to do it again.

In the afternoon we walked through Greenwich Village with our friends (quite a horrible place of debauchery and liberal ideology) and had Chinese food. We returned to Long Island late that night.

On Sunday I preached in two services at Full Gospel Christian Center in Port Jefferson (a large Pentecostal church pastored by David and Diane Knapp), and God really moved. As I left to catch our plane, scores of people were at the altar seeking God for personal and national revival. My *Restoring America's Conscience* books went like hotcakes. It was a good ending to a profitable week.

On the way home, Jonathan and I ran into a winter storm and had to bypass our plans to fly into Colorado (for a North American leaders' meeting) and fly back to Seattle. God guided us safely home all the way.

Before I left for New York, I asked God to use this trip to show me what to do about my throat. Should I take some time off to see some more doctors, and pray, and try to get well? Or should I just accept this season of suffering from Him and persevere on? Yesterday (October 30), I went to Dr. Rice again, and after a change in medication and with his belief that I truly do have an acid reflux problem, I'm feeling a little better and moving ahead. Maybe with a rigid regimen of laying off fruits, juices, and other acidic things, coupled with elevating our bed, and taking these new pills, the healing has begun. I'm praying--and moving ahead.

Atlanta, Georgia

December 8, 1997 - 15,425 - 13, 907

I've just returned from a good trip to Atlanta, Georgia where I was speaking for YWAM for a week. Though my voice got sore by the end of the time, I was grateful to not be on medication, and thanked God for helping me.

For most of the week I spoke at a small DTS with good response. They were quality students who wanted to grow in God. For a couple nights I also spoke at the Vineyard Church to a Mission Bridge School who are preparing for ministry in Perm, Russia. This remote and polluted city near the Arctic Circle is in desperate spiritual need, and both the YWAM base and the Atlanta Vineyard are targeting it. Praise the Lord.

Also had some good fellowship with Greg and Ramona Musch and their family. They're dear friends in Christ who've been faithful in building the ministry in this great southern city. It's not been easy, but they pressed on and endeavored to be obedient. I'm grateful for their friendship, and incitation to come to their city.

Port Orchard, Washington

Now I'm home for a few weeks and looking forward to celebrating the Christmas season with my family. We've got our Christmas lights up, the house all decorated, and even have a new woodstove to keep us cozy. God is good.

Which brings me to another interesting story. It was ten years ago that God really spoke to my heart about getting out of debt personally and setting some realistic goals to achieve it. In my heart, the promise I made to God was to be debt-free by my 45th birthday. Over the years now, we've worked hard toward that goal, and about a year ago I realized that it was possible--in the spring of 1998--just a few months AFTER my 45th birthday. At the time I rationalized that this was "close enough."

Well, a couple of days ago, out of the blue, my dad approached me about needing a larger tax refund for 1997 and about the possibility of advancing \$13,000 to us allowing us to pay off the house by December 30th. That's 72 days BEFORE my 45th birthday. When it all sunk in that God remembered the exact promise, and wanted to meet it exactly, my heart welled up with faith and thanks to the One Who providentially guides our lives. He's not "close" with His promises. He's PERFECT and ON TIME. Oh, why do we doubt and rationalize?

"Now unto Him eternal, immortal, invisible, the Only Wise God be honor and glory for ever and ever, Amen."

December 31, 1997 - 15,448 - 13,884

It's been a good Christmas season with unusually warm weather--they tell us, thanks to an El Nino in the Pacific. At any rate, we had some wonderful gatherings at our home (YWAM Christmas Party, open-house for the Hunter family, and many other spontaneous gatherings), some great services of praise and adoration(Christmas Eve, Scott Fairclough's concert, Sunday mornings), and good family time around the home.

Christmas morning was another exciting affair for the little guys, with both of our parents sharing the joy, along with others. We opened our presents one by one (our standing custom), had a fabulous Christmas dinner, and thanked God for his goodness to us. Every evening I've enjoyed lighting up the house both inside and out. Christmas is a beautiful time of the year.

Yesterday I sent in the check to pay off our house. What a wonderful feeling. It took us eight years and four months, and with God's supernatural provision. Now for the first time in many years we can say that we "owe no man anything." We are DEBT-FREE. I have learned so many good and valuable lessons through this area of faith.

I also went yesterday to the University of Washington Medical Clinic to see Dr. Alan Hillel--a specialist in throat conditions. He is the ninth (and last) doctor I have seen about my "thorn in the flesh." He was nice and professional, and encouraged me to consider increased medication, an operation on my stomach valve, and speech therapy. I was encouraged but pensive about it all. At this point in my life I'm fairly resigned to my limitations--and that's not a bad character trait. We'll will pray and ask God how to proceed from here.

And now 1997 comes to an end. How do I characterize this year? It was fruitful from a standpoint of ministry. It was painful from the view of my physical condition. It was a year of waiting, perseverance, and trying to be faithful.

Thank you, Father, for the privilege of living in 1997. I greatly look forward to 1998--the 30th anniversary of my conversion to Christ. May it be a fruitful, healing year. May I become wiser and more content in my life's circumstances. And, as always, may you be glorified in and through my life.