

The Journal of Ron Boehme - 2002

Port Orchard, Washington

January 1, 2002 - 17,413 - 13,302

This morning, God really came into my morning quiet time with encouragement and wisdom. Some things jumped out at me:

1. I need more of God's Word in my daily life. I will begin reading a book of the Bible each evening to absorb more of God's truth into my heart and soul. This new year I've decided to go back to my "original" Bible—my old New American Standard. It's going to be a treat to study from this wonderful book that helped form the early years of my life. It was enriching this morning to be back within its hallowed pages.
2. I spent some time re-reading my set of Life Principles and renewing my commitment to fulfill them. Precious time of reminder. This little study then led me to re-do my "life Path" sheet in the back of my notebook. After years of waiting and pain, I'm beginning to dream again about the future—and fulfilling God's plan for my life.
3. I had just finished praying for my home, city, state and nation, when I found an old card from Bev Riedesel in the Bible, and it was a prophetic list of promises that had to do with all of the places I had just read about. Quite a powerful confirmation that I was moving in the flow of the Spirit.
4. God spoke to me out of Acts 1:15 a missing key toward solving our YWAM financial shortfall right now—we need 120 committed "Brethren" that will give to our work. No matter how long it takes, I want to give my life and time this year to raise up that 120. This revelation really lifted the pressure off my back that I'd been struggling with for weeks. Lord—I now ask that You fulfill this word by giving us favor in the strategy. Prepare the hearts of people to become members of the "Brethren."
5. It was a joy to begin the monthly Prayer Watch both for the King's Kids ministry and for Discovery Bay. May our prayers advance your work.

January 27, 2002 - 17,439 - 13,274

This month has flown by with many developments. In fact, some of the pressures have been so great that's it's kept me away from my journal. I'll record the highlights here and leave my concerns in the trustworthy hands of God.

On January 11, at our monthly Community Night, I shared the full story of the healing of my throat. It is not 100% percent yet (and may never be—I may need the “limp”), but I felt it was time to share with our friends the good news of what God has done for me. It was a very moving time as I tried to glorify God with each entry from my journal over seven years.

I ended my giving flowers to my mom and dad for standing with me through these hard years and taking me to every doctor imaginable; to Julie Allen for giving the “tip” that led to my having the cyst removed from my jaw; and to my dear wife, Shirley, for being my human strength and comforter during these difficult years. I cried a bit as I re-told the tale, and at the end, there was a time of prayer for different people in the audience.

Thank you again, Living God, for your grace in my life—and the goodness of your ways. I'm still not out of the woods completely, but that may never be a reality until I see you face to Face. Still, we will praise you for your victories that take place in this fallen world. They are symbols of things to come.

At a YWAM Board meeting on January 14, our current financial cash flow problems were discussed in-depth. The Board encourages us to take strong steps to raise up a better support base of people—or even consider selling the property. This was hard for me to even think about, and led to many days of prayer, thought, and seeking God.

After a lunch with Ray Jennings, God encouraged me to arise in faith and not think about selling the property. Ray's wisdom had been: “You don't sell dirt to do maintenance.” I certainly agreed with him, and that's all I needed to strike out on the pathway of finding another solution. I have been busy at work ever since.

God has led me to do a detailed analysis of our ministry and its future, and to lay out a five-year plan to implement. It requires a lot of sacrifice and faith, but in the end, it will put YWAM Port Orchard in a healthy position long-term. That's a good goal. Now I need the help of God to bring it to pass—raising the monies for the ministry—and possibly raising more funds for our family if we are removed from YWAM support this year. I put our futures in the Lord's capable hands.

It's really been a joy to fast and pray for both the re-birth of our King's Kids ministry and of Discovery Bay over this entire month. Though our final group meetings were canceled this weekend due to snow, I'm excited about the revelation that God is giving for both ministries. May God's plans prevail.

Marysville, Washington

The other highlight this month was seeing a ghost out of my past: **On January 23, I had dinner with Steff Steinhorst—the man who led me to Christ 34 years ago—and who I hadn't seen in probably thirty years.** My last real memory of him was flying home from New Zealand in the summer of 1970 and hearing him say that he was living in adultery and leaving his wife. Three years later he left his second wife and married for the third time. In so many ways, his family fell apart, and we lost contact for many years.

I have kept in contact with his first wife, Carol, over the past ten years or so. She was the one that encouraged me to call Steff—and I did. We met at a restaurant in Marysville and had three delightful and interesting hours together.

I'm not sure where Steff stands today. He talks all the talk, looks good for his 63 years, but there is something in his tone and in the analysis of his journey that doesn't seem to square with the ways of God. He calls himself a believer and excuses his two divorces (and the lust that triggered them) on not marrying the right woman the first time. In it, however, I don't sense a voice of repentance and understanding of what it means to be right with God.

I hope that he is—but I am not sure. I shared many things with him—first thanking him for helping me find the pearl of great price thirty years ago. I admonished him about his sin and encouraged him to once again become the man who passionately shared Christ with others three decades ago. I believe he heard much of what I said. We will continue the relationship—restored after a thirty-year break.

This encounter with Steff really made me understand that only “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” Thirty years ago, I was lost in sin. Steff was serving God. I then came into His marvelous light, and Steff detoured into darkness. Today, I and my family are serving the King of kings.

Steff's family includes two broken women, and three daughters who have seen the “sins of the fathers” visited on them. (Steff's oldest daughter Shelley has been a lesbian for twenty years and is now living with a man. Second-born, Marnie, has been divorced twice, and Steff's daughter, Bree, by his third wife, is a freshman at college and already living with a guy.) In this

history where the roles have mightily reversed, the only constant is that *Jesus hasn't moved. He doesn't change.*

I'm glad that I learned thirty-two year ago that *even if men sin and fail us—God never does. That truth has been an anchor in my life, and one of the great reasons why I love and worship my Savior.* Thank you, Jesus, for your unchanging Character and Love. You are the stability of my days. I pray, that once again, you will become the foundation stone of my long-lost spiritual father. Do it, for your glory.

Port Orchard, Washington

February 28, 2002 - 17,471 - 13,242

The past few weeks have been some of the hardest of my life. I would summarize much of it by the phrases: *Trust in God and grit your teeth.* Our YWAM financial situation continues to be a burden—though people are responding as I talk to them. Makes you realize how vulnerable we are. *One day a ministry can seem as sound as gold—the next week you can be wondering whether it will even survive.* I guess all of us are prone to the “Enron” syndrome. The Lord gives and the Lord take away. Sometimes human beings do the giving and taking.

Washington, D.C.

I did enjoy a good trip to Washington, D.C. during the latter part of January. I was struggling with my throat after a bad cold, but it got progressively better during the trip. I rendezvoused with Paul Fleischmann and Doug Tegner to work on setting up a national youth office in DC to interface with the Federal Government on issues of concern. We interviewed some of the good guys who may help man the office. Ironically, most of our meetings were held at the National Prayer Center located at 137 C. St SE.

This is a building for which we prayed for years has now been given to the Kingdom of God. In fact, 139 C ST. is now in Christian hands also (Lou Sheldon's ministry). And all three of these buildings (including 133 C Street) are now doing the breadth of ministry that we envisioned some twenty years ago. *133 is used for fellowship and discipleship; 137 is used for prayer; 139 is used for political action. Amazing.* We thought ONE building and organization would do, God simply multiplied into three. He answered our prayers, but not in the ways we imagined. What an amazing and sovereign God.

Port Orchard, Washington

Since my return home I've been struggling: With a sore throat (still), the financial pressures of rescuing YWAM Port Orchard, the responsibilities of birthing and renovating Discovery Bay (praise God for the \$50,000 gift from the Solheim Foundation), and many other pressures. **It is the best of times and worst of times.** How I need you, Lord Jesus, to lead me and strengthen me. I'm at the end of myself. I still have some chronic pain, and the pressures are almost up over my head.

This week I attended a few days of our **annual Kitsap Prayer Summit**. It was a very powerful and intimate time. On Wednesday I shared my heart about my pressures, struggles, and sins right now. The guys gathered around me and really encouraged me to deal with the roots of pride that go back generationally in my family. Their words were powerfully and their prayers affirming. As I drove home, I felt the Lord really lay some things upon my heart that are, in some ways, hard to accept.

The damage to my vocal cords is likely permanent and will not go away. I have wrestled with God and prevailed, but **I have been left with a limp**. I'm like Moses who disobeyed and didn't enter the Promised Land—and especially like Jacob—who spent the last part of his life in obscurity. **I will resign myself to the fact that I will never be whole again. This is the result of the pride in my life that God needed to tame via my affliction.** It is hard to accept that the speaking-teaching portion of my life may be over, but I understand that I am not worthy of it—and God's ways are right and just. My heart is heavy over this realization, but I cannot argue with it.

I am asking God what that means for the future. I know I need to persevere for a few years to establish Discovery Bay and bring YWAM Port Orchard into a state of health. But after that, what do I do? How do I support my family? These are huge questions for me that I have never asked before.

I will seek the *God of my life for answers that He has always graciously supplied*. And during this time of grieving and uncertainty, I turn my eyes heavenward to the One that I love and am absolutely committed to.

March 20, 2002 – 17,491 -13,222

It's been hard to get back to my journal due to many pressures in my life. The past few weeks I've been very up and down emotionally—quite unusual for me. Most of it has related to my health (still hanging on) Which now includes **a sore back and ringing in my ears**. I've begun another round of doctor's visits and am waiting on God.

Here are the noteworthy highlights of some tough weeks:

Santa Fe, New Mexico

Had a good weekend of ministry in Santa Fe, New Mexico with Ron Sebesta and Capitol Christian Church. I spoke at a men's fellowship on Saturday on the "Secret of Happiness" (many men responded by coming and kneeling before the chair), and on Sunday I spoke on "Freedom" at the church to a good response. On Monday, they took me to a Christian TV studio where they did three interviews which showed on NM television. Great people and a good trip. I thank God for sustaining my voice.

Federal Way, Washington

The week of March 11-16 I spoke to the students at the Tacoma DTS which is in Federal Way. It was a good week with some serious kids. I gave my series on Character out of 2 Peter 1 and prayed that God would work it into their lives.

There have been a few times this month when I've really felt under Satanic attack. There's been a real heavy spirit—difficulty having faith—and just hard going. Thanks to Shirley's prayers and God's grace, I've emerged out of them all. Praise His Name.

God continues to work with our YWAM funding problems. People are responding, but we're not out of the woods yet. We are really trusting God for at least 70 Friends of YWAM—what a difference that would make. Father--continue to draw them into the missions community. Help me to be faithful to do the work.

Discovery Bay continues to advance slowly. We really need God's miracles for this ministry to be born.

Gradually, my faith is being built up that we will make it through this time and God's work will go forth with power. I sure feel weak, but my Lord is strong. God, strengthen my hands as you did Nehemiah. Help me to be faithful every day.

May 7, 2002 – 17,539 -13,174

These have been pressured months—but the light is beginning to shine. The throat is getting progressively better each month as God apparently heals the damaged tissue in my mouth and throat daily. I am so grateful and encouraged.

The financial pressures in our ministry and personal life have also been great, but God has honored our prayers and hard work, and that is beginning to change. At this point, we've doubled the number of monthly donors to YWAM, and yesterday we received a surprise gift.

A few weeks ago, the YWAM board authorized me to write to the Solheim Foundation and ask if we could use the \$2500 in excess funds from their \$50,000 grant to help with some of our YWAM Port Orchard needs. Well, the bad news is that they turned us down. The good news is that instead they sent us a check for \$25,000. God is truly the Author of the ten-fold increase. Thank you, Lord, for your generosity and love through your people. This lifts an incredible weight and motivates us to be even better stewards and hard workers for your Kingdom.

On April 26-28 we gave re-birth to our King's Kids ministry and it was a great start-up. Eighty-six kids and twenty adults showed up for a packed weekend of ministry. On Saturday morning we did our annual Youth Serve in Port Orchard (which was greatly appreciated by the leaders of the town), Saturday night Jonathan spoke to the group, and on Sunday we ministered at four churches in the morning (quite a caravan) and worshiped and did spiritual warfare on the waterfront in the afternoon.

It was a great start of King's Kids II—the Next Generation. It's a new wineskin of ministry and a new group of kids. May they follow in the worthy footsteps of those who've gone before.

Washington, D.C.

I also just returned from my annual trek to Washington DC for the National Day of Prayer. When I walked off the plane at Dulles Airport, I saw my US Congressman, Norm Dicks and his wife getting off the same plane. We chatted all the way into the terminal. Interesting encounter.

Our YMEC meetings were great, and the NDP was very powerful in the Cannon Building. Karen Pudwill attended with me and afterwards we also went to the evening outdoor service with Corinthia Boone. The day was stormy and rainy, but at the end of the outdoor praise and prayer time, God miraculously brought sunshine on the Washington Monument and the Capitol Building simultaneously and put a full rainbow over the top of the Capitol Building. It was awesome.

God spoke these things into my heart during the week:

1. How important it is to bring TRUTH back into the American nation. Josh McDowell gave a stirring and sobering message on this subject. I need to continue to pray about writing the

“Truth” and ‘Lies” books that God has nudged me on in the past.

2. We need to really pray through a Prayer Strategy for South Kitsap, the state of Washington, and the nation. In PO and Discovery Bay we need to begin prayer watches or hours of prayer like the “Prayer Cross” they’ve formed in W-DC.
3. **I must be true to my calling as a revivalist.** The last day in DC I spent at the meeting for “An Urgent Appeal,” a revival coalition. I want to be faithful to do my part.
4. I need to be a good steward of my body and lose 10-15 lbs. (winter weight).

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for allowing me these times with fellow men and women of God each year in our nation’s capital. Hear our prayers. Act. Bring your showers of blessing to our parched and needy land.

Discovery Bay, Washington

September 4, 2002 – 17,658 - 13,055

Looks like I’ve been away from my journal for months. Sorry. It’s a been an incredibly busy season of working at the new property at Discovery Bay (it’s being transformed) and carrying on the ministry here in Port Orchard. I guess I’ve been so busy that I didn’t take time to write. Well, below will make up for it. I’ve just returned from a wonderful **three-week mission trip to Mongolia with Steve and Donna Watkins and Laura Lease.** The full report is below.

Seoul, Korea

We had an uneventful two- hour flight to SF after hooking up with Steve and Donna. In SF we were able to check our luggage all the way to Mongolia--praise the Lord. I grabbed by toilet kit out of my bag as the only thing I would use in Seoul. Then we flew for 12 uneventful hours across the Pacific. When we finally made it through customs it was about 6 pm on Wednesday (one day vanished.)

We decided in Seoul to stay at a small hotel near the airport--the Hub Herb Hotel. It was only about a ten-minute drive from Incheon airport. Korea was balmy and nice. After settling into our comfortable rooms (Steve talked us into getting separate rooms for Laura and me), we went across the street to a little Korean restaurant and had a fabulous meal with many condiments, rice, vegetables, etc. and great taste. After that we went back to the hotel and crashed. I slept on and off.

The hotel gave us a wake-up call at 5:30 am and we showered and dressed and headed back to the airport. Our flight left at 7:40 am and was again uneventful. Korean Airlines is a great airline with good food, nice people, and other amenities. About noon we landed in UB and many of our old friends were there to greet us. **The band guys were there to get the equipment and they were thrilled.** It was worth it.

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

It's hot here in UB--in the 80's and real smoky because some fires are burning nearby. They've had a real dry summer and are praying for rain. Pastor Bold was there, and I hopped in his car. It's a sixteen-hour time difference here. Laura went with friends to Steve and Donna's old apartment and I went with Bold to his apartment which will be my new home away from home. We will hook up later--and now the adventure begins.

It's much hotter here than I imagined. My bed is kind of like concrete, and with the heat and city noises, I pretty much tossed and turned all night--but I think I'm starting to adapt to the new time. I got up early this morning and walked over to **Battulga's old apartment** which is about a mile away. I had my quiet there in the plaza where our team used to have so much time. It's on a modern street, but still dirty and being developed. Mongolia is like Albania in that way. After having a good quiet time, **I went up into the building to the 8th floor and said hello to Battulga's widow--Zaya.** She was glad to see me, but doesn't speak any English, so there wasn't much to say. We'll talk later when there's a translator.

It's now about 11 am and I'm not sure what today holds. Tomorrow about 4 pm I'm **speaking at an evangelistic service for teenagers**, and then we're leaving for Darhan--about a three-hour drive. Sunday morning, I will speak at Bat Ultze's Church in Darhan (he's the band leader). Lord - please give me divine appointments here will set up day by day. I really want to use my time for Christ. Mongolia continues to become more Western--and much of that is bad. There's English advertising everywhere and all the seductive advertising images. It's sad to see. May God's Kingdom overcome the darkness here. There's even a McDonalds here. They call it "MonDonalds." Kind of makes me sad.

Yesterday, we traveled about quite a bit with Steve and Donna. Visited a missionary named **Kathy Ribbs**, probably in her fifties who is a Russian-Chinese American who's worked here since '93. **She feeds about 400 hungry people every day in a ger (tent) district to the east of the city (a ger district is a Mongol ghetto on the outskirts of UB where the poorest of the poor live).** There's little running water, squalor and dirt everywhere, and little ger tents and shacks where the people live. She's built a beautiful church building there complete with a balcony and beautifully colored walls. Did it all for about \$20,000 (in the US it would have cost \$500,000). She ministers to a lot of children and believes they are the key to Mongolia's future.

She took us to another part of the ger district where she is building a second church. It's nearly done, and many Mongols were busily working there to finish it. I guess you'd call her a unique church planter. She builds the buildings and then the people flock to it and become disciples. She took us to a third site where she wants to do another one. God really spoke to me there that we need to help her. I'd like us to really pray about this.

After that we went to visit another Pastor Bat Jargal who has started Mongolia's first Christian radio station. It's called WIND 104.5 FM. They're a part of the Far East Broadcasting system and are just getting going. Great vision and wonderful people. Bat speaks the best English I've ever heard from a Mongol. He helped start the largest church in UB which is called Hope Church--an Assembly of God church here in the capital. May God use this station to bring the message of Christ to Mongolia. There are only about thirteen radio stations in the entire nation, so their contribution is significant.

We prayed with both Kathy and Bat at their places, and then spent most of the evening with Zaya, Battulga's widow. It was a good visit. She cried at times as she spoke about Battulga and we looked at many photo albums--with our pictures in some of them. On the mantel was his picture with a special light in front of it which is a custom here. It's kind of a small version of an "eternal light" which honors the deceased. Quite touching.

A childhood friend of Battulga's was there to translate for us, and he was nice, but not a good translator. That made the evening a little difficult. I had a lot of fun frolicking with her kids Itgil and Ivil who are five and three. They really need a daddy. We had a good Mongol meal together and Zaya gave Steve and Donna and Laura a ride home, and I walked a mile to Bold's apartment.

We're eating well here. Every year there are more fruits and vegetables in the Mongol diet as their free enterprise system grows. This morning for example, I had fried eggs, bread, meat, cucumbers, tomatoes and watermelon. Quite an expanded diet from our first summer here. Today I am preaching at two evangelistic services--one in a prison and another a kind of youth rally for unsaved kids. Please pray for me today.

Darhan, Mongolia

Tonight, we will travel north three hours to Darhan, Mongolia's second largest city. I will preach there Sunday morning in the church which has the Mongol band. We will probably come back to UB on Monday and Laura will head into the country to see her friends for a few days. She's doing fine.

It's been a whirlwind couple of days, but it was wonderful to get back to UB. On Saturday we hooked up with Zaya (Battulga's widow) at a children's prison where we also

ministered with the team in 2000. It's a squalid place outside the city with a dirt basketball court where we did dramas and preached two years ago. The kids here are probably 12-18 and are here for years on various crimes.

When we arrived, they were finishing a b-ball game, and then they came over and sat as a group (probably about 100) under a few trees where prizes and program followed. I helped to give out prizes as a visiting "dignitary." Then there was a performance by three Mongolian jugglers (very good) and three tiny kids who sang two Mongol songs. The teenagers seemed to appreciate the younger ones as there seems to be a greater love and respect of family members here. There also aren't the age divisions. It's common to see brothers and sisters of all ages and parents holding hands and walking down the streets. Very refreshing.

I then preached to the group and scores raised their hands to learn about Jesus. The only follow-up here is prayer and the Holy Spirit (along with some workers from the Children's Basketball Association). Our time at the prison was later shown twice on Mongolian television.

They then whisked me to the Bubbly Springs building in downtown UB off Peace Avenue (the main drag) where I spoke to about 100 kids from a camp. They are not Christians yet, but are being won through friendship discipleship by the youth group. Again, I was able to give an evangelistic message through translation to a good response. This group will be intensively followed up on by the young people in the "Crown of Love" Church (Bold's church's official name).

We had a good Mongol meal after that, picked up Laura at Steve and Donna's apartment, and then found a taxi to travel up to Darhan. It's a three hour drive due north of UB, and the taxi cost the four of us \$20 (\$5 each). What a ride. They told me later that they have six accidents on this road every week. I can see why. It's very bad in stretches and you must watch for animals crossing the road (herds of cows and sheep), kind of hard to see at night when you're hurtling along at 100 miles per hour. And in places the road just ends, and we must go onto dirt pathways to get back to where the road picks up again.

However, all in all, I see progress being made in the Mongol road system. They are improving it year by year. We arrived in Darhan (city of about 80,000) about 11 pm and set up shop at a primitive "motel" owned by Bold's parents. This is Bold's hometown where he was once a railroad gangster (rode the railroad cars and robbed people). Then God gloriously saved him and turned his life around. His parents are not believers yet, but very grateful for how Jesus changed his life.

Laura and I were given two adjoining rooms with a shared bath/toilet area. Bed was very hard (most Mongol beds double as sitting areas, so they tend to be a wooden platform with a cloth cover). I settled in for what I hoped would be a much-needed rest. That was not to be. It was very hot that evening, and extremely noisy in the motel (with paper thin walls)-- worst of all was the constant dive-bombing of zillions of mosquitoes which kept me awake all night (I forgot

to bring repellent as they don't have mosquitoes in UB).

Darhan has these little creatures because they have more trees and water. On top of that I developed a queasy stomach during the night and diarrhea. Running into the bathroom around three am, I emptied myself only to find out there was no toilet paper. I tried to wash myself out in the tub but that was difficult with no light in the bathroom. I eventually worked it out and stumbled back to bed only to face again the **insect kamakazis**. I don't believe I honestly slept more than one hour all night and woke up feeling sick from no sleep, sore from the hard bed as well as sick. **It was one of the most horrendous nights I've ever spent**. I took a Lomotil and desperately prayed for God to help me.

It took all the courage I've learned over the past few years to preach that morning. The service started at the "Darhan Christian Fellowship" (Mongolia's third oldest church going back to 1991) at 11 am with wonderful worship led by **the band, Hargui**, which means "The Path." When I got up to preach, I felt terrible but asked God for grace. **I encouraged the Christians that "Jesus is winning" the battle for the world and that they can have a part. The Holy Spirit graciously anointed me in my weakened state. There was an exuberant response at the end.**

After the service, I felt a little better and went out for lunch with a group of the leaders. I ate only a "salad" (potato salad, coleslaw, tomatoes and cucumbers) to be easy on my stomach. Then they took me back to the motel where I crashed on my bed. Slept a little, but still had to battle the invaders. I got up about 5 pm and prepared to speak again at a 6 pm service. It was also overflowing but extremely hot in the small building (probably 90-100 degrees). I felt a little fever but took some tylenol. My stomach was a little better. Again, with God's **grace I preached on "The World's Greatest Army on the World's Greatest Mission."** **There was a great response at the end to go forth and plant more churches--even specifically in the town where Laura will be this week. There is no church there.**

After the service, Bold decided he wanted to return to UB that night and I didn't argue with him (so I could get away from **the insect demons**). We bounced and gyrated our way back to UB, amazingly avoiding accidents along the way, and arrived just before midnight. I fell into bed and slept a pretty good night. This morning I'm feeling better (though not 100%) and took a little walk for my quiet time.

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

My one-time sickness seems to be abating. It always accompanies every trip you just don't know when or how bad it will be. Today I am meeting with Zaya again and seeing some officials about the Children's Basketball League. The meetings may include some government officials. Laura stayed overnight in Darhan last night and went by train to Zunkhara this morning for three days. That's where her friends are and where she wants to pray for a church to be

planted. Please pray for her there.

Today we met Zaya and spent some time with a Mongol Parliament member who started a university here in UB. We talked about the government helping us get a camp for the children's basketball league. I told her we would use it to share Jesus and she said that was okay. She is a Buddhist but respected my beliefs. I was able to boldly share my testimony with her. It was a great time. Later we met with about twenty of the church kids who had done an afternoon of evangelism on a university campus. They let me in on their debriefing time. Some of them are friends from years back. They had me pose in all their pictures.

Then this evening I met Zaya again and watched the practice of a junior national basketball team (fifteen-year-olds) who are going on a trip to Taiwan tomorrow. Zaya is going too, so this was my last time to see her. We again talked about the possibilities of a camp. She really wants our help and seems to be quite tied into the powers-that-be here. However, she doesn't seem to have a strong faith herself, so this is a question mark.

I just finished breakfast with Bold and Poppy (meat soup and khuushur (pronounced horshure) and bread), and I used Shirley as an example to talk to Poppy. Bold told me that she almost had an abortion with their third child because her unsaved friends kept talking to her about children taking away her freedom etc. and destroying your life. She got to the door of the abortion clinic and God changed her heart. They now have three beautiful children (two boys and one girl), but she says she has trouble staying at home and being patient with them.

Isn't it amazing how the spirit of the age, the devil's lie about women leaving the home, and being "free" from the responsibilities of family have even invaded a country like Mongolia (which has a great heritage of strong families)? Anyway, I shared how you have learned to serve your husband and wife, even teach the children at home, and not desire to be free and out working. I talked about how family is a great school of learning, of God producing character and selflessness in us. Shirley's testimony was a great encouragement to her. She said she wanted to learn from her.

I have had a good time discipling Bold-- this young man of God. He is a part of a group of young pastors, all about 27 years old, who are the key to Mongolia's future. Great men of God. The meetings went well today. I spent an hour or two with the head of the Mongolian Evangelical Alliance, a tremendous Mongol who heads up a ministry called Every Home for Christ. He gave me a tremendous perspective on the nation, what God is doing here, and what the needs are. It was an extremely insightful time. Good time of prayer together. I then met with Tom Suchy, the Evang. Free Church leader in the country.

We spent about two hours together and I enjoyed hearing from him. There's quite a contrast between the Mongol view and the Western view. I've noticed that the Western missionaries appear to be more cynical about the Mongols and their character. They love them,

but they don't trust them easily. This has caused some hedges that are hurtful. I am trying to stay above this debate and reach out to both sides. I believe I accomplished that today. I'm now home for the evening and will again spend time with my hosts. I believe I will have an on-going discipleship arrangement with Bold that will be good for both of us.

I did have a good night's sleep--probably the best I've had here. My stomach is improving little by little every day. The foam mattress they gave me last night helped. I'm just not used to sleeping in a loud, noisy, city where you can hear everything from the 4th floor. Last night somebody started doing some auto mechanics late at night, and then the dogs really went it for a few hours! I'm sure you get used to it after a while. If you don't, you live like a zombie. **We Americans have it so easy.** As I look across the street at some of the poorer homes, and the gers here and there where there is no running water, where homes are tiny and shared by many people--and I think about the weather going to 40 degrees below zero in the winter--and how these hearty people make it--my hat goes off to them.

We have much to learn in the West about perseverance, contentment, strength, and uncomplaining suffering from those in these lands. We truly live better than kings compared to them. I took my normal prayer walk this morning, but the temperature had dropped about 20-30 degrees during the night and it was cool. First time I'd worn my fleece. As I got near my prayer site (by Battulga's apartment), I prayed about whether I should continue or turn back and I sensed the Lord saying to go back home.

As I arrived back at the apartment it started to rain. I'm glad I didn't get caught in it. The rain is a great blessing as they've had drought and the fires that I mentioned. **The rain is answer to prayer.** (This little experience reminded me how it's easier to hear God in places like this when you really need Him in your daily life. Our luxuries so insulate us in the West from needing to hear from God about anything.)

Today is kind of a day off for me. Bold is going to the country to be with his family (wife, kids, and in-laws who have a "home" (probably a humble A-frame or primitive cabin) that is outside the city and nestled in the hills. Most Mongols "go to the country" as much as they can during the summer as they are really be cooped up in their apartments and homes in the city during 2/3 of the year because of the cold. I also think it brings them back to their nomadic roots a little bit.

I've gone to their "country homes" in past years and it's a pleasant change from city life. All the camps we've done in the past are out in the country and you see people's summer "homes" sprinkled around. There's nothing fancy about these abodes, just green hills all around you, he stars to look at, and peace and quiet. There's usually no running water or things like that, but Mongols don't care. Life for them is camping.

Today was a good restful-prayer walk-good deed-somewhat nostalgic day (I'll explain). I

decided to go see Steve and Donna across town, but the weather was poor, so I flagged down a "city cab." Tell Megan that all the cabs here are Hyundai Accents (there are hundreds of them), and so her car must be a good one. I told the lady driver to take me to the "Chinggis Khan" Hotel and she understood that well enough to get me across town to the big landmark (when words fail you use hand motions). After four trips here, I know the downtown area well. I paid my \$1 fee and walked a couple of blocks to Steve and Donna's flat.

They live in a typical Mongol apartment complex, just a little nicer than most. Their own apartment is obviously owned by a wealthy Mongol family and is much better than Bold's. They're on the 1st floor so it's easy to find, though the corridors are dark, just like in Albania. They were glad to see me and welcomed me in. They'd just finished teaching English classes that are an outreach of the church. On Friday I will get to preach to the group--great evangelism outreach.

We had a good visit catching up--they're enjoying their time here. They did tell me one disturbing thought: They were told by a reputable person here that a study has been done by a Japanese firm that indicates that **all the water tables under the ground in Mongolia will be empty within twenty years and Mongolia will become a "dead nation" where no one can live.** They said the Mongol leaders are aware of this but are afraid to tell the people. If that's true, it's pretty sobering--and important to share the Gospel in this nation right now.

I noticed on my way out that a large river near their apartment is now completely dry. I'll share more on this when I get home. After a great chat, I set out to walk home and decided to go by several old haunts used by our past teams. First stop was the **Sports Palace** where we played our main games with Battulga. It's Mongolia's largest gym, and they've improved it somewhat. I bounded up the concrete stairs to the fourth floor where we used to live. It was very rustic then but developed now into offices for the "National Sports Ministry." Looked nice.

It was here five years ago that Gabe led "Eric" our bodyguard to Christ. It's also where I had the kids on the second team sunbathe on the balcony because we hadn't been outside much--and got roundly criticized by KK leadership back home. Oh well. Can't make everybody happy. I then continued my journey down Peace Avenue, past Sukhbaatar Square and down into the center of town. The roads are improving in Mongolia, and there are definite signs of progress everywhere.

But there are also signs of the goddess of materialism that trouble me. Advertisements are everywhere, and the beauty and simplicity of Mongol life seems to be vanishing. **Progress can be so empty if righteous living is not its fountain.** I continued my contemplative prayer walk.

After changing \$50 (for \$55,000 tugrits), I ducked into the city's main department store which is called the "State Store"--used to be the Communist Party shopping place. In '97 this store was average, but today it's well stocked with goods of all types and really resembles a modern mall. Plenty of wealthy Mongols were consuming inside. I went up to the fourth floor (a

new section for the very wealthy) and purchased an American basketball (\$15) that we will use in the dedication of an outdoor court that the church has built near Steve and Donna's place for evangelism purposes. I will give it to some officials in a ceremony on Sunday after church and I preach.

I then went down to the first floor and looked for a large cooking pot for Poppy. (When we returned home from Darhan, a friend of Bold's had burned one of her main cooking bowls and she was very upset. It was understandable as they have so little. In their whole kitchen they probably have 4 soup bowls, 3-4 teacups, a small batch of old cutlery, and only 3-4 cooking pots. That's it. Bold told me that **for two years they didn't even have a refrigerator.**)

I decided my good deed for the week was to buy Poppy a new pot--and I got a good one. It was expensive (\$24), but that's why they can't normally buy them for themselves. \$24 is equivalent to us paying \$300 for your spaghetti pot. Amazing. So, happily I did my good deed and then walked the rest of the way home.

It was starting to rain when I reached the apartment, but PTL I didn't get too wet. I came upstairs, unloaded my presents on the living room table, and set to make myself some dinner. I cooked one egg, some rice (already made up), and sausage in a frying pan, and then also had a banana and nectarine-with tea. There's a lot more fruit here now (from China), but many people can't afford it. Bold stocked up their tiny frig because I gave him money. Otherwise, it would be all Mongol food.

Had a good dinner watching BBC news on the new TV YWAM bought for them. That was rather insightful: I found the British Broadcasting System to be very anti-American in many parts. If our closest ally is talking us down around the world (this is a global broadcast, and the only English station here), then you can imagine what the Muslims and others are doing. No wonder the world is becoming anti-American. **The airwaves are filled with lies from the "father of lies."** Made me realize how much untruth is around us all the time that we can become numb to--and what a battle is going on for the hearts and minds of people. May we bring God's clear truth and perspective into this dark world. My eyes are again opened by being in another culture.

I've been away for an hour now having "brunch" (eggs, sausage, bread, fruit and tea) with Bold and Chinzo. Afterwards, **I gave them a lesson in good hygiene** (washing dishes) because I noticed when I arrived here that they used cold water to wash their dishes, no soap, and then wiped off with a dirty rag. On BBC last night there was a report that said that 2 million children die every year in the developing world due to bad water and poor hygiene--so this motivated me to disciple them this morning.

I showed them how to boil water in their teapot (which is a great invention--it boils over a half gallon of water in about 120 seconds), and then divided the water into a wash bowl and a rinse bowl. I also bought them some dish soap. I walked through every step of making the dishes

clean and putting away all food and garbage--so they don't attract insects. They were very good students and thanked me in the end. Now Chinzo is ironing behind me here in the living room, and Bold went to the church. In a couple of hours, I will leave for the seminar.

I just returned from the seminar--it went well with about 75-100 leaders in attendance. Mongols are a little quiet to speak so you don't feel such a rapport with the audience as in some places, but it went well. Bold is a decent translator but not the best, so it slows things down a little. But they are a hungry group and I am feeding them God's concepts of servant leadership. First session was on setting an example through Christ-like character. We had some worship before and after which was encouraging, and prayer and questions throughout. I believe this will be a significant time. I woke up with a scratchy throat this morning and tonight I am a little hoarse (not bad), and it always gives me visions of panic. I think I must be content to live with a bit of a "limp" in my speaking ability. Not a bad thing for me.

Good seminar this afternoon. Bold was a little tired, but I felt very good and they drank up every word. It is so good to speak to hungry souls. This morning went over to meet with "YWAM Mongolia" which is a Korean team that has been here since about 1993. They have a flat over on the east side of town. There are about 10 of them in total and they do conferences, evangelism, and are starting their first Mongol DTS this September. The leader is a guy named Daniel who spoke very decent English. We had a nice chat over tea.

He's going to try and arrange for someone from YWAM Korea to pick us up at the airport Monday, put us up, and then show us a little of the city before we fly out on Tuesday. It would be nice if that happens (and cheaper). After we finished chatting, they showed me that they had Korean copies of my Leadership book and asked me to sign some of them. That was fun.

I was going to then find a taxi to go to Bubbly Springs, but it was a nice afternoon, so I decided to walk. Arrived there about 2pm, had a lunch with Bold, and then the seminar began at 3pm. I taught my heart out and then Chinzo and I came back here. It's now about 7:30pm. Laura was supposed to arrive back in UB today by train about 5, so I hope she made it. We'll see her tomorrow. We go to a picnic with the English class in the morning (and they want me to preach to them), and after that the final seminar. I'm also supposed to speak to an afternoon church service, but I don't think that is possible. We'll see.

Yesterday was a good day, but a busy one. The picnic was good, as Steve and Donna said. Kids will follow Christ from that group. We went to a remote place along the river and played games, had lunch, and shared the Gospel under the trees. Precious time. Steve and Donna were powerful too. We then boarded the bus and headed into the city.

After getting over the main overpass into the downtown area we ran into a traffic jam (not uncommon), so Bold and I leaped out of the bus and grabbed a taxi so that I could get to Hargui's UB church on time. Arrived right at three, and after a good time of worship, I was on

(they shortened the worship so I could speak and still get to the other seminar). I spoke my heart out for forty minutes on King Josiah--eight principles for changing a nation--and encouraged them to apply them to Mongolia. Great response.

The other church had then sent a driver for me, and they took me straight to Crown of Love (Bold's church) where they were waiting for me to finish the seminar. I walked to the front and was time to go on. I then spoke for two more hours on being young leaders with God's vision in their hearts. They were very responsive, and we had a good time at the end.

Then we had to leave immediately again because the government officials wanted to show us another camp. We met them at the Wrestling Palace in downtown and got into their SUV. This was another experience with the unsaved. They drove us 80 kilometers outside the city on unbelievably bumpy and windy roads. At the top of a canyon, they stopped the vehicle and got out and picked up some rocks to put on the Buddhist shrine. Then they came back to the SUV and had a drink of alcohol. Some worship.

All the way we talked about Buddhism and Christianity. Their hearts are polite but hardened to the truth. Finally, we arrived at the camp they wanted us to see, nestled in the hills of a pretty, but rugged mountainside. By the time we arrived, it was probably 8 pm and very cold and rainy. We walked up to the center of the camp to look it over being pelted by sleet and freezing to death. After a quick look we headed to the car. They then showed us another camp from a distance and a private property for sale. We talked about terms and the like, and then headed back for UB. These are bureaucratic business types who certainly have different motives than us.

When we got back to UB, I was finally convinced that I don't want to go the direction of having the government involved in a camp. Too many bad motives, red tape, and religious mixtures. I believe the way to go is to help the church build a camp and have complete authority over it. It's tempting to go the other way, because in the next year or two they will privatize all the land in Mongolia--so now is the time to get in. But I'm convinced that we don't want to get in bed with the government--too dangerous. This perspective is an answer to prayer.

My throat is a little better today and I really do believe it is a chest virus, like a deep, deep cold but without some of the systems. Last night some of the young leaders came back to Bold's apartment after the basketball tournament, and they brought much food and we had a late-night party and time of saying goodbye. The central part of the meal was "boots" and it was a great time in their small living room. They are great guys with a real heart for God. Was a privilege to encourage them, even with my raspy voice.

I got up this morning and took my normal and final walk over to Battulga's. That was kind of a sacred place for me on this trip--thinking about my friend and committing myself to continue his vision. After a good time in the word over there, I sensed I would never come back

here (to this quiet time place). It was now time to move on with the vision--not through Zaya or other associations but through the church. I believe Battulga would agree.

Seoul, Korea

We boarded our plan about noon after saying goodbye to our precious friends. What a wonderful time in Mongolia. I hope we truly brought the blessing of Christ to this nation. We flew three hours to Korea and were picked up by a spry, 62-year old pastor who works with YWAM and a young girl from the Frontier Missions Department. They drove us through **Seoul--a 15-million-person metropolis, blanketed by smog and teeming with cars and people.** We stayed a small hotel in the center of the city, and before going in for the night, took a walk to drink in the nightlife of this vibrant city. Incredible.

The next day our guides picked us up and took us to the YWAM base where we greeted the staff, were given a brief tour, and sipped green tea (and signed a few more books). Then we went to **Dr. Cho's church--Yoido Full Gospel--in the center of the city and marveled over the largest church in the world with 723,000 members.** They have seven services on Sunday with 12,000 in attendance at each one. Praise God for the explosion of the Gospel in Korea in the past fifty years. **We then stopped by the National Parliament building and prayed for godly leaders and righteousness in the nation.** Then our gracious hosts took us to the airport where we shared a final Korean meal, and then we got on our plane and headed eleven hours east to San Francisco, and three north to Seattle. Wonderful to be home.

I learned many things on this trip, and there are plenty of things to pray about for the future. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for this linkage with your work in the nation of Mongolia. Continue to pour out your Spirit and bring great encouragement from on high. Thank you for the staggering privilege of sharing your words with the Mongolian people.

Port Orchard, Washington

September 30, 2002 - 17,684 - 13,029

It's been a busy September as we've raced ahead on **completing the Discovery Bay** campus. I've spent much time there, and soon it will be finished.

We also had a wonderful reunion with **Steve and Anita Herzig** and their children. We picked right up where we left off ten years ago. They're doing well, and God is using them in many parts of the world, especially southern Africa, Germany, and England. Steve is a wise, godly man, and it was refreshing to be in his presence again. **On the anniversary of the 9-11 attack we both helped lead a special prayer service at CLC. What a privilege to be teamed in**

ministry again.

My dad has had some health problems this fall, but so far, he is keeping on. We've been to the hospital twice for various things (where I've spent the day at mom's side), and he's not out of the woods yet. I'm trying to enjoy every day with him. What a blessing he's been to my life and that of many others.

The greatest burden I'm again facing this fall is a sore voice that won't seem to heal since I lost it in Mongolia. Being in this situation again has really tested my faith once again as I was sure that this particular "thorn in the flesh" of the 1990's was behind me. Apparently not—at least in some form. I'm crying out to God once again for deliverance—and grace to make decisions regarding speaking engagements etc. during this period.

This morning some encouragement came from Isaiah 41:9,10. I'm hanging on these verses:

"You are my servant. I have chosen you and rejected you. Do not fear for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you."

Father, you see the discouragement and anxiety of my soul. The scourge has returned, and I have little faith to fight. Help me again to TRUST IN YOU and not LEAN on myself. I am your servant. Do what You know is best in your sight.

Discovery Bay, Washington

October 6, 2002 - 17,690 - 13,023

We've been racing to finish the phase I upgrade on the Discovery Bay campus and I'm exhausted, yet excited about the transformation. God has been bringing just the needed volunteers and workers, and even sent a fisherman to the property three days ago who dropped off a load of salmon.

Just as we were putting on the final touches of paint and running around making things presentable, YWAMers began to gather from the four bases in Washington for the first real "YWAM time" on the property. In total, about fifty came for the 24 hours together, representing Port Orchard/Discovery Bay, Seattle, Puyallup, and Monroe. It was a phenomenal time in God together.

The opening night began with worship—the first session every in the newly renovated Tabernacle led by Aaron Davison, Aaron Graham and our David. Gordy McDonald, our Northwest director then shared a great word on “Loving one another” as the basic bedrock fundamental of our faith. A great prayer followed where we confessed sin, prayed for the property, saw the need for different generations and colors in our mission, and just had an intimate time in God’s presence. It went until late.

We then bedded down in the facilities for our first “cold weather” overnight. Gave me a lot of insight as to how we need to winterize the place. But it was good. I got up early in the morning and took a shower in the boy’s dorm, and then **took a lengthy prayer walk all around the property.** I even walked to the back woods and claimed the field behind the grounds for future staff housing. It was a precious time with Jesus. He gave me much revelation about the past, the future, and how to pray and proceed. **I ended my wonderful walk with God down on the beach—a place I always receive revelation from the Holy One.**

After a good breakfast, we again worshiped and heard from Gordy our of 1 Timothy. We then allowed the staff three hours of relaxation and fellowship, and I went again with Shirley, Jason, and Ryan (and many others) down to the beach. In the afternoon session, Peter Iliyn and his family arrived, and he shared vision of what God is saying to YWAM right now and gave a great message on the importance of integrity out of the book of Daniel.

Toward the end of our time, we prayed over every base—sensing that this was a special moment **to UNITE in WA for God’s purposes, and a special time for us to be birthing Discovery Bay.** We also went in teams out to the four corners of the property and applied the blood of Christ to the “gates” of the land and prayed down God’s blessing. **It was a historic moment and time. I believe God is going to use it to really release His blessing in WA state and YWAM here.**

Lord—help us to build on this wonderful time with you. Unite YWAM here in the Northwest, bring people of color to minister with us, bond the generations together, and bring revival to our region. I believe we have entered new day of God’s blessing in YWAM Washington. Let it rain.

October 13, 2002 - 17,697 - 13,016

God gave us an utterly wonderful day yesterday for the **dedication of our new Discovery Bay Camp and Missions Center.** It was fabulous weather, over one hundred in attendance, a great spirit and sense of joy, and two great services committing the property—its past present and future—to God. I believe the Lord of Universe was pleased.

It's been an exhausting six months of flat out work and faith. I am so grateful for God's grace and abundant provision of finances and laborers. Below is the photo story of our very important day. Praise be to God most high.

Juncos, Puerto Rico

November 12, 2002 - 17,727 - 12,986

I've just returned from another wonderful trip to Puerto Rico—one I take each fall. They are a wonderful YWAM base. I was hoping to take both Nathan and David with me this year, but Route 7's selection for the Teen People What's Next Contest altered those plans. More on that later.

I arrived late Friday night and began speaking the next morning at a Caribbean regional Full Gospel Businessmen's Convention at a San Juan Hotel. Preceding me were some testimonies (the trademark of the FGBMFI) including that of baseball players Felix Millan and Carlos Baerga. I then spoke on prophetically on the state of the world and the need for a revival of conscience, and there was much conviction and good response. A delegation from Martinique were greatly disappointed that my books were not in French. Maybe someday.

Sunday morning, I spoke at a large PMI (Pentecostal) Church and God really moved in conviction and application. The service went for nearly three hours before I came to the podium, and I didn't finish speaking until about 2:30pm. After a short rest, I spoke in the evening at the large Sendero de la Cruz Church, now occupying a brand new four-million-dollar sanctuary. Was a wonderful service and hundreds prayed on their knees for God to bring revival to their hearts and island nation. My voice was very strong in this service as I spoke on "Change" and God really ministered to me that he was healing me of the recurrent throat pain that had persisted since my time in Mongolia. It was an encouraging evening.

Then for the week I spoke to the DTS and interacted with the students and staff. Some pastors attended the evening sessions and God's presence was very evident in powerful ways in the meetings. I struggled a bit with my voice off and on, but that kept me humble and prayerful. Tylenol and prayer seemed to carry me through.

On Monday and Tuesday, I got the school to be praying for Nathan and Route 7 who'd flown to New York for the contest. On Tuesday night they competed for the award against a band from New York and one from Oregon. At the close, they won! When I

told the Puerto Ricans, they whooped and hollered for the guys. They are already the PR base's favorite music group.

It was a great week, and I returned home grateful and blessed that God continues to use me. It is a privilege to serve You, my Lord and Savior. May I be faithful for a lifetime to declare your love and power to this generation.

Port Orchard, Washington

December 24, 2002 - 17,769 - 12,944

I've been away from my journal too long, and now it's Christmas Eve 2002, and there are many things to report. **It's been a rather eclectic time in my life—with many highs and lows, concerns and joys.** That seems to be typical of my life in the past few years—a lot of trusting in God through varied and sometimes confusing circumstances. I feel weaker than almost at any time in my life (other than when the throat burned and my faith was tested), yet the blessing of God continues to be evident. Here are some highlights of the past six weeks:

My throat continues to gradually improve—some antibiotics seeming to help after my time in Puerto Rico. It is never 100% but is back to being tolerable without pain medication. I don't want to be greedy. Yes, Lord, I am grateful to you for helping me with my infirmities.

My dad's health has been poor the past couple of months. He's greatly struggled with asthma symptoms and lately some heart problems. Twice he was in the hospital, and I brought down a bed from Discovery Bay to help with his coughing at night. After one stay in the hospital, I wondered if it was the beginning of the end. Then he bounced back. **He's a courageous fighter who's approaching 83—and I'm grateful for every day that I get to see his precious face. What a blessing he's been to my life.**

We've been making some big decisions as a ministry regarding Discovery Bay and the programs God wants us to begin there. We have finally decided to use 2003 to grow a staff, introduce the property to churches and leaders, make more improvements, and then launch training programs in 2004 with the DTS taking place in the fall. We will attempt to take a large group to Athens for the Olympics in the summer of '04 and then begin another DTS after that. We're now praying for the people—and we need to be as aggressive with that as we were with the upgrade.

Thank you, Lord, for Discovery Bay. Help us to be faithful stewards. We had a great work party up on the land November 23 and winterized things, emptied the barn, raked leaves, and had a great bon-fire at the end. **I am growing to love that place.**

Since early October I've been involved in the Allen-O'Neill marriage controversy—one of the most difficult and bizarre counseling experiences of my life. As I write these words, the end is still not quite in sight. John and Karen O'Neill have greatly hurt their daughter Megan over the past two years. She now wants to marry Dan Allen, and I've been counseling them and attempting to promote reconciliation between them and the parents. Early on I encouraged reconciliation, then went to a pastoral group for counsel, and eventually brought in the Western Center for Conflict Resolution to try mend things. It has been vicious and ugly at times and very confusing.

Two weeks prior to their scheduled marriage on December 28, the O'Neills finally expressed a willingness to reconcile. Because of the late date, Dan and Megan are reluctant to join them. After much tension, hours of counseling, innuendo flying all over the country, and much searching of heart, I finally decided to encourage Dan and Megan to join the reconciliation process and postpone their wedding date. This is the united counsel of my pastoral friends. I have encouraged them to take the high road to humility, self-denial, forgiveness, and trusting in pastoral counsel. It appears that they will reject this and go their own way.

I am grieved, burdened—and yet have a clear conscience that I have done the right thing in this complex and distressing situation. I am still praying for Dan and Megan—that they will make the right choice. Out of this ordeal, I've been reminded of the importance of guiding biblical principles when pressure and confusion come.

- When in doubt, know there is victory in an abundance of counselors. Don't go against God's authorities in your life—you may miss Him in the process.
- Always take the high ground by walking in humility.
- Always choose the route of self-denial and sacrifice.

When you default to these principles under pressure, God will support your agonizing decisions. I am trying to teach this young couple the protection that comes from these truths.

The other tension point of the fall has been our deteriorating relationship with First Christian Church due to the move to become a "Purpose Driven Church" under Kevin's leadership. Though I'm supportive of Kevin stepping out to lead the church forward, I believe he's taken the congregation onto a more conservative course—attempting to change us to a "seeker-oriented Bible Church"—something I have nothing to contribute to. Revival, repentance, holiness, and renewal have been lopped off.

That's why I stepped off the active eldership board in the summer and have been sitting on the sidelines. It's been like going through a slow divorce, thinking of even leaving the church and attaching ourselves elsewhere. In the past few weeks, things have taken a turn for the better. We've had some good elder meetings which I've joined, and there seems to be a softening in my relationship with Kevin. I'm not sure what will happen this year, but I am in prayer and am committed to be a humble, unifying force—not a point of division. We don't want to leave our home church, but we'll do whatever we have to do to be obedient to God.

It's now the Christmas season, and Shirley and I have enjoyed, as usual, the decorating of the house and all the touches of the season. On December 8 we hosted the annual Christmas party at our home—a wonderful affair of fellowship, food, worship, and prayer. There have been many other events as well. I love this time of year. The beauty and emphasis on giving is just a reflection of Jesus' coming to earth and how that event began a transformation of this planet. May His work grow.

December 13-15 Shirley and I and Ryan and Jason enjoyed a weekend trip to Leavenworth with our friends Tim and Julie Allen. We stayed at The Enzian, owned and operated by the Johnson family whose daughter I had taught in Puerto Rico. It was nice to meet them on Saturday morning and have a nice visit. The father and son built the hotel twenty years ago and really run it as a ministry. During the weekend we enjoyed the "Lighting of Leavenworth," a wonderful ceremony in the town square shared by thousands of people.

The event was very family-oriented and Christ-centered. I even thanked the mayor for keeping Jesus as the focus of the event. He appreciated the encouragement. We enjoyed The Enzian and the town, ate German food at every meal, played in the snow (what little there was), and really enjoyed rich fellowship with our friends. Thank you, Jesus, for this little "oasis" time.

Discovery Bay, Washington

December 19-21, I took Nathan and David away for a few days of father-son fellowship. We stayed in a cabin at D-Bay, watched Lord of the Rings movies, talked a lot, ate a lot, and generally enjoyed each other's company. I'm going to miss them. They leave next month for California to pursue their life dreams—Nathan in film making and David in music. This is a big change for our household—the beginning of the emptying of the nest.

Shirley and I are becoming very nostalgic. For twenty years now we've had the big boys at home—for the last eight years we've enjoyed being a family of eight—and now that will begin to change. Change is a necessary part of life in a fallen world, but it is not always easy.

Lord—give us the grace to handle this time of change. May your blessing be upon the

boys. May they follow You with all their hearts.

I also completed a project this month that God has been nudging me to do for some time. With Nathan's help, I filmed my own "funeral video" that I want shown at my memorial service. It's only about ten minutes in length, but it allows me to share my heart, say goodbyes, preach my last sermon, and call my family and friends to join me in heaven. I've never heard of this being done before. May God use it to glorify his name, even when I have departed this planet for my eternal heavenly home.

Tomorrow we once again remember the birth of Jesus Christ into this world. Jesus—I want to continue glorifying you with my heart, soul, mind, and strength. I feel very weak. I am nothing without you. Be born once again in my soul. I love you. Christ is all.

Port Orchard, Washington

December 31, 2002 - 17, 776 - 12, 937

This coming year I will pass the half century mark. Lord, how I thank you for fifty years of life, love, and your salvation. I love you with all my heart and want to serve you more fervently in my next fifty years. May the coming year be one of JUBILEE for my body and soul. I pray for freedom from pain and disease and a new liberty and renewal in my soul.

I am your love slave. Use me in your kingdom work and wonders.