

The Journal of Ron Boehme – 2017

Port Orchard, Washington

January 12, 2017 - 24,005 - 7,496

The new year began quietly for Shirley and me at home, but we were grateful to be together for the past 40 years and moving on with God into the adventure of 2017.

Last year was truly a year of *transition* for me from Youth With A Mission as my full-time work for over four decades to God now opening a new chapter where it appears that Faith International University (Faith Seminary) will be the new central focus.

It will be FIU fulltime and YWAM part-time.

I'm amazed at this transition that has really taken place smoothly. I truly now feel at home at Faith and am enjoying teaching, developing classes, and mentoring students toward their destiny in God. Interestingly, I am currently working with about 100 students per year, and this is about the same amount that I used to teach in YWAM schools.

The venue has changed by not the calling. Nor my motivation: *to do all to the glory of God.*

The same day that my YWAM support dropped off \$100 a month was the same day that FIU decided to put me on salary for \$1000 a month. Amazing! "Man plans his way but God directs his steps."

There are a few other transitions taking place right now:

- We just transitioned Shirley from Medicaid to Medicare. I did a lot of research on the subject and we ended up choosing A & B from the government and getting a supplemental plan with a \$2000 deductible from Globe Life. If we live similarly to Shirley parents, that policy will save us \$100,000 over what they have been paying. Good stewardship.
- I am also wearing prescription glasses for the first time in my life--after having a wonderful experience with contact lens for some 55 years. Lord – I am so grateful for that provision. If I had been born in another period, I would have been legally blind and been able to do or read so little. Instead, hundreds of books line my office and so many things have been done for your glory. Thank you for the gift of sight. Now to persevere three months with glasses until having lens transplants in both eyes in April. It's not an easy transition (headaches, double vision, and looking through a fishbowl), but I gladly accept it for future gain.

The eleventh seven-year span of my life begins with great anticipation of the goals and projects I'm praying about for 2017. As always, I commit them, Righteous Master, to you. You have guided every day of my life with blessing.

Give me your divine assignments in 2017 and be honored in every one of them.

January 22, 2017 - 24,015 - 7,486

It was really inspiring to watch the Inauguration of Donald Trump on Friday as the 45th president of the United States. Hundreds of thousands came out for the touching, powerful, patriotic event and all that came with it. Trump is an unusual messenger, but a clear miracle of God in a nation fighting for its identity and revival.

The next day, hundreds of thousands of women marched in DC and many other cities around the world in protest of Donald Trump. I will share a blog below that I wrote on the subject.

Lord Jesus--may your Kingdom come in power into our divided world and bring billions to know and worship you.

San Diego, California

January 27, 2017 – 24,020 - 7,481

I am on my way home from a very inspiring three days in San Diego with the National Prayer Committee that I have served on for many years. After the stunning 2016 election of Donald Trump, and the many good things that are happened at break-neck speed in Washington D.C. (today was the March for Life with hundreds of thousand attending and VP Mike Pence addressing the crowd (there was much to thank God for by this esteemed group of intercessors. And we believe the best—REVIVAL—is still to come.

Because I'm wearing glasses for the first time due to having lens implant surgery in April, I decided to not rent a car and stay with my friend Paul Fleischmann in Poway and let him do the driving. Had a great time with Paul and Toni who took great care of me. It was a little cold in SD, getting down into the 30s at night, but I enjoyed hanging out with them and going back and forth to the NPC meetings that were held at the Town & Country Resort.

About 70 prayer leaders attended. Highlights included:

- The new NDP leader, Anne Lotz Graham, speaking to us on Wednesday morning and sharing her vision for the coming years. She spoke out of Daniel 9 & 10 and really encouraged us to persevere onward. Some great changes are coming to the National Day of Prayer.

- Good prayer times in small groups with the great prayer warriors in America.
- Some great new visions by young leaders—*Awaken the Dawn* in October 2017, Claim your campus prayer focus, and *Decision America* 2017 tour.
- Lea Carawan gave a powerful report on the need to get behind legislators all over the country to protect religious liberty. Time to strengthen the “Creator realm” in the US.
- Was strong emphasis and teaching on the importance of using social media to generate prayer and get out our message. *I need to pray about making some changes in this area.*
- 40 Days of Love focus (40daysoflove.net and love2020.com) September 20 to October 30th of this year. This is an attempt to mobilize the Church nation-wide to win our country with love.
- Forming a Facebook page for intercessors (private group) to pray for the nation. There are one billion people on Facebook each day. Also prayasone.org and prayfirst100. Cell phone networking could be the greatest tool in the coming global revival.
- Praise reports of the many godly people being appointed to the Trump Administration and those who are personally sharing Christ with Donald Trump and his family.

Though I felt pretty weak during the time due to my poor eyesight and was also struggling with a cold, it was a very encouraging time with wonderful friends, great vision, outstanding prayer, and the beauty of God’s love and unity among the prayer people of America.

It has been the privilege of my life to serve in these kinds of settings. I go home greatly encouraged to be a part of the coming revival.

Gearhart, Oregon

February 13, 2017 - 24,037 - 7,464

Had a great service down in Gearhart, OR February 5 (accompanied by Rich Riedesel) at the Lighthouse Church. God led me to speak on "What I've Learned from 50 Years of Walking with God." Powerful response.

We almost didn't make it to the service as it began snowing as we were crossing through a pass between Longview, WA and Astoria, OR. Rich was driving up a slick hill where a large tractor trailer had jack-knifed on our right and some cars were in the ditch on our left. As he slowed and tried to thread the needle, I told him not to lose momentum or we were sunk! With white knuckle driving, he brought us through, and we enjoyed the service. Praise the Lord for the angels pushing on our back bumper.

A week ago, we received one of the largest snowfalls (6-10 inches) that I have ever seen in this part of the country. Power was out for 15 hours (new NG generator worked wonderfully!) and many branches and trees buckled under the weight of the heavy snowflakes. Our neighbors across the street lost some flowering plum trees and some big branches off the Sweet Gums. We hope that most of them can be saved.

I have been thinking recently about the many wonderful roles God has given me in the past fifty years of walking with Him. Here is my list:

--evangelist, revivalist, teacher, missionary, author, and now professor.

It's such a privilege to serve the king of Kings in these many capacities. Thank you, Lord Jesus for the privilege. Help me to be faithful to the end.

Port Orchard, Washington

March 4, 2017 - 24,056 - 7,445

Today is dad's birthday, and Shirley and I honored him by going up to Sunset Lane, spending time in front of his grave, and thanking God for his life. We are so excited about seeing him again in eternity--and my mom, Dorothy, and all of those who have gone before. I whispered a prayer to God to let dad know how much he is loved and how grateful we are that in a multitude of ways, he made our life possible.

We are trying to do the same for our own children.

March 10, 2017 - 24,062 - 7,439

While reading the story of the Road to Emmaus in my morning quiet time, I came across a translation of Luke 24:19 (about Jesus) that I would be honored to make the epithet of my life:

"He was a man of God, a prophet, dynamic in work and word, blessed by both God and all the people."

Lord - please help me live up to your amazing example.

March 12, 2017 - 24,064 - 7,437

Today I turned 64, and now the 10th seven-year stage of my life begins.

Had the privilege of speaking and raising money for missions at CLC in the morning and then Shirley and I went out for a birthday celebration dinner with our parents in the afternoon. For the rest of the day, I enjoyed seeing the greetings of well-wishers on Facebook and getting

great calls and cards from the kids. (Bethany's e-card was cool: "Life doesn't come with a tool kit. It comes with a Dad.")

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for the gift of 64 years, my salvation, my family, and myriads of friends and co-workers in Your kingdom. I am open to your marching orders for this 10th stage of life and want to do nothing less than serving and pleasing you in all respects.

I love you, Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit. "In YOU I live, move and have my being."

March 28, 2017 - 24,080 - 7,421

This week Shirley and I finished 13 months of losing weight and being accountable to each other by filling out our "chart" for the last time. During the first six months we lost 25 and 40 pounds respectively, and then we maintained our optimum weight for another six months.

Mission accomplished! Now to maintain the fruit of self-control, and healthy eating--to the glory of God.

April 13, 2017 - 24,100 - 7,401

Today was a miracle day for me. After having poor 20/800 vision for all my life--though wondrously mitigated for 53 years with the marvelous invention of contact lenses--I had my first cataract removed from my right eye and a new lens implant put in. Today I'm seeing 20/30 in my historically worst eye. It's amazing technology that God has allowed human beings to harness.

I found out through this process that I have extra-large oval-shaped eyes. Normal eyes are 22 to 23 centimeters in length (front to back). My eyes are unusually long measuring 28.3 centimeters. Doctor told me this is a major reason for near-sightedness as the eye is stretched out like a pulled rubber ball making the cornea more susceptible to distortion.

But today, the Christian-based Pacific Cataract and Laser Institute brought me in for a six-minute procedure where my eye was deadened, the old lens that had become hardened (cataract) was pulverized and removed, and a new lens was implanted. Twenty-four hours later, I can see through that eye perfectly.

Next week I will have the second eye done and be a new man. Makes real the words, "I was blind but now I see." Thank you, Lord, for this amazing surgery which restored my vision, brightened my world, and will be a great blessing for the rest of my life.

May my physical and spiritual vision be used for the glory of God alone.

P.S. We walked the Cross of Cross through Port Orchard today for the 25th straight year (I carried it for the first time when I was 39). Was a blessing to pray for our community and uplift Christ. May there be a great revival of faith in our area of the world.

April 25, 2017 - 24,112 - 7,389

Here is the full story on my **amazing eye surgeries**, April 13 & 20, 2017 as reported in my weekly blog.

Was Blind but Now I See

A year ago, my optometrist gave me the bad news that cataracts were forming on my eyes--and that I would need cataract/lens implant surgery to correct it.

I waited a year after learning of the problem and my vision grew worse. Around Christmas, I decided to pull the trigger and prepare to have my "headlights changed."

There was one problem. I had worn contact lenses for fifty-three years and would have to wear glasses for three months so the curvature of my eyes could return to normal.

I'd never worn glasses before. But I had no choice. Plus, my eyes were *bad*. 20/800 bad. Practically legally blind.

But not anymore.

I once was blind, but now I see.

I didn't realize for most of my life that God gave me larger than normal eyes. Opticians tell us that most human eyes are 22-23 millimeters in length. That's measuring front to back. During the past year, the doctors told me my right eye was 28.3 millimeters long and my left was 27.6. They also told me that this was the main reason I was nearsighted.

Large and oval eyes are prone to not seeing well. Thus, for all my life I was legally blind. Fortunately, I lived in the latter part of the 20th century where glasses were a good option (though years ago they would have been as thick as Coke bottles for me) and especially contact lenses.

When I was ten years old, contacts were becoming popular and three members of our family received them gladly--my mom, older brother, and I. My eyes were the worst (biggest) of the bunch, but we all needed help. So, at a very early age I learned to pop them in and make them part of my life.

For over fifty years I wore them successfully. Praise God. If it weren't for contacts, my athletic life would have been much different. And if I'd been born before the 14th century (when spectacles were invented) I might have been a dunce sitting in a corner. At least I would have faced a major handicap to overcome.

In January, I bit the bullet, took out my contact lenses for the last time and went to glasses.

For the first two weeks I experienced headaches and double vision (not good for driving). Then after receiving new lenses because my eyes had already flattened, things evened out and I lived in the glasses' world for three months.

It was a new experience.

I think "glasses people" act humbler than others. They are constantly aware of a contraption on their noses that limits side vision and every place where the metal or plastic is in view. When it rains, the lenses get wet. When you go from hot to cold, they steam up.

Never had those problems with contacts. The sky was big and blue and there were no limits (except losing them). So, I guess having the limitation of glasses is a greater reminder of fallen humanity.

Three months dragged by and the time came for surgery. My optometrist referred me to Pacific Cataract and Laser Institute. They worked out of fourteen clinics on the west coast from Alaska to New Mexico. One was thirty minutes from home. Their literature stated that cataract surgery was one of the most common and successful procedures in the world. They had helped pioneer some of the newer techniques, and by 2017, had performed hundreds of thousands of surgeries.

They were also a faith-based group. A testimony in their booklet stated: "My surgeon asked me if I'd mind if he prayed before surgery. I appreciated it because it showed that he didn't think he was infallible and that he's got a higher Guide above him. He was just asking for a helping hand."

I wanted that "helping hand" too.

During my prep appointment, the PCLI optometrist told me I was not a good candidate for mono vision correction. That's what I'd done with contacts--used a "long-distance seeing" contact in one eye and a "reading" contact in the other. (Yes, in our forties the ability to read close-up becomes challenging and most people get reading glasses.)

For fifteen years I fixed that problem with two different contact prescriptions. It worked great for me, especially since I speak for a living. Now I was being told that because of my long eyes, they had to use more complicated formulas for the lens implants--and I probably would still have to wear glasses or contacts to read.

I prepared myself for that reality, but asked friends to pray. After all, God knew the exact "formula" needed and could show the doctors.

On April 13, I went in for the first eye. They scheduled thirty patients that day and we all sat in a room taking turns getting our eyes dilated, then half of our face deadened.

Finally, it was time for surgery, and I went into the operating room. I couldn't feel anything in my right eye--didn't even know whether it was open or closed. Dr. David Gano went to work after leading the room in prayer. First, he used a small ultra-sound tool to break up the cataract (hardened) lens I had been born with. It's located behind the cornea. Then he used another instrument to vacuum out the pieces.

Finally, he made a small slit and inserted the new acrylic lens. (What revolutionized cataract surgery seventy years ago was noticing that WWII pilots who suffered broken glass in their eyes didn't react to the shrapnel. It didn't bother the eye. That changed the ballgame.) Then Dr. Gano unfolded the new lens, anchored it to the surrounding sack with acrylic "ties", washed out the eye, and said he was done.

The whole procedure took all of six minutes. Afterwards, they gave me a video of the surgery and sent me home with a patch. Within 18 hours, the vision in the right eye cleared to 20/20. God had shown them the right formula.

I could see perfectly in my right eye for the first time in my life.

Because they "nailed" it, I had the courage to ask for mono vision. I really had nothing to lose. On April 20, we came in for the left eye to be corrected for reading distance. I again asked some friends to pray that God would give the doctors the right reading. (You can't correct an implant once it's in. You've got to get it right the first time.)

The person who deadened my eye that day had performed the very *first* surgery with PCLI some 32 years before. She told me she had done more procedures of this type than any person in America. I felt very secure in her care.

But I was also depending on the Great Physician.

This time Dr. Paul Chung was my surgeon. He laid hands on my head and prayed for God's blessing. During the six-minute operation, he told me that he had done five missionary trips to North Korea, doing many surgeries there. We talked about missions the entire time. What a great way to have repairs done. Then I went home with my second video, eye drops, and great expectations.

Within three hours, the left eye opened but everything was "slanted." Then the fuzziness and double vision began to wear off. After sleeping through the night, when I woke up on April 21, I noticed that I could read the alarm clock from bed for the first time in my life. Jumping up, I realized I could read easily in one eye and see the room perfectly with the other.

They had done it. They had corrected Mr. Big Eyes with exact precision. I felt like a 20-year old again who could clearly see the street signs but also read my cell phone.

Hallelujah.

And for the first time in my life, I didn't "take my eyes out" that night before going to bed and ask Shirley to guard the house against burglars (because I couldn't see).

I was blind, but now I see.

Fifty years ago, I was also *spiritually* blind. I remember the day that Jesus my Savior, the truly Great Physician, removed my spiritual cataracts and revealed his love and grace. Light poured into my life that has never dimmed. I can see long--heaven. And I can see close up--earth.

That surgery saved my soul. This most recent one saved my eyes. Vision is a gift we must never take for granted. Without spiritual and physical vision, the world would be depressingly dark. But God gives sight to those who trust Him. His work is instantaneous. He never makes a mistake.

I'm deeply grateful for the gift of sight.

Rejoice with me.

I was blind, but now I see.

Washington, D.C.

May 9, 2017 - 24,126 - 7,375

I am flying home from this year's National Day of Prayer events. What a week! God is really moving in our nation and I am so privileged to be a small part. I spent the first few nights with Rob & Cheryl Schenck at their condo near Catholic University. They are good friends.

I hit the ground running on Sunday, got delayed on the subway due to maintenance, and rendezvoused with Inece Bryant just in time to make it to The King's Chapel. Then the miracles started. I was speaking on the subject of "God's Sovereignty" in our lives and world and mentioned the work in Mongolia and the project to help Sodoo and Aldaraa pay off their apartment.

Afterwards a few people came up to me and gave me some gifts and notes. On the subway home, I was looking over the items and saw that one family had handed me a check for \$12,000! That's exactly what's needed to pay off the apartment. I nearly cried as I worshipped and thanked God for His faithfulness. He greatly strengthened my faith through this generous act of provision.

On Monday I enjoyed an encouraging lunch with Doug Burleigh at The Cedars then spent time in the evening with Roger and Mary Cresswell in Manassas. After sharing about Mongolia there, Roger got up and wrote a check for \$1100 to give to Aldaraa to help with furnishings in the new apartment. This was another answer to prayer.

Tuesday morning, Jason Hershey and I toured the new YWAM property in Fort Washington, MD which is just outside DC and sits on a hill with three homes on the land. Part of the down payment for the property (\$40,000) came from that special gift to CBN remembering our work in the 80's.

While we were walking the property, Jason pointed to a home nearby that was also for sale and asked that I pray for God to provide as it would meet a final need for housing for another staff family. We prayed in faith. One day later, YWAM D.C. received an anonymous gift for \$50,000 which is the perfect down payment for the new house. Another sign of God's faithfulness.

Tuesday evening, I traveled by metro out to the Dulles Crowne Plaza Hotel for the opening session of our Youth Ministry Executive Council (YMEC). It was great to be back in the nation's capital after being away for a few years. I helped set up many of our "field trip" events on Wednesday. They were very inspirational and included:

- Touring the American Center for Prayer and Revival and hearing from Dick Eastman and Jason Hershey on what God is doing in the prayer movement. Inspiring!
- Meeting at Pastor Louis Jones' Pilgrim Baptist Church and getting the heart of God for urban renewal and God's heart for youth—with Steffen Humbert from National Community Church, Dr. Corinthia Boone from the NRNDP, Dr. Jones and others. Enlightening!
- Shared a personal tour of the under-construction **Museum of the Bible**—an awesome 100,000 square foot building funded by the Green family to draw our nation back to its biblical roots. It will be a beautiful, high tech structure that can point people to the impact of the Bible in our culture and world. It is first class—a billion-dollar project which opens in the fall. Amazing.
- From 5-6:30 pm Rep. Robert Aderholt and his staff gave us a personal guided tour of the US Capitol building which meant a lot to those who had never seen it. We prayed in the George Washington Chapel and heard about those following Christ in Congress. Encouraging.
- Then we finished the whirlwind day with dinner at the Equinox restaurant—wrapping up our time together (we have been meeting for almost 30 years). Exhausted.

The National Day of Prayer came on Thursday and was utterly wonderful. I began the day with the pastor's prayer group on steps of the Supreme Court as in past years. What an answer to prayer that Neil Gorsuch is now the new justice. After praying, we had breakfast in the SCOTUS cafeteria, and I sat and talked with Bill Murray of Madalyn Murray O'Hair fame. I met him years ago during some of the culture wars in the city.

Much was happening in the city on that day. I watched excitedly at the House of Representatives begin the repeal and replacing of Obamacare. We were watching on live TV with Pastor Pat Mahoney while the vote was happening—and he was Facebooking Live his

16,000 followers to ask them to pray for the Planned Parenthood de-funding to stay in the bill. It did and it passed. President Trump also hosted a prayer gathering at the White House that morning (after an eight-year absence at the White House) and signed an EO on Religious Freedom which included repealing the Johnson Amendment—allowing pastors to speak freely in their churches about political issues.

This was a great day of righteous legislation in the nation's capital. Elections have consequences. God is using President Trump and others to begin reversing some of the moral and political carnage of the Obama years—and I am deeply grateful.

I had moved downtown to stay two nights at Faith and Action on 2nd Street NE and that made it easy to attend the Capital Region prayer event on the west Capitol lawn in the afternoon led by Corinthia Boone and friends. It was wonderful and inspiring as unusual.

For the first time ever, the evening meeting was held in Statuary Hall in the Capitol—the original meeting place of the US House of Representatives. The ornate dome is lined with statutes of a famous statesman or woman from all fifty states. 250 chairs had been set up for the evening event. It was packed. (This was the first time in 30 years that this gathering was not held in the Cannon Caucus Room due to renovations.)

This was also the first year of Anne Graham Lotz's chairmanship of the NDP—and she decided to change the format. Here were the highlights:

- Whintly Phipps sang God Bless America and Amazing Grace to a crescendo of praise.
- Rep. Louis Gohmert gave a history of prayer in the Capitol, and Dick Eastman recounted the full historical backdrop of the National Day of Prayer.
- Senate Chaplain Barry Black led the group in prayer and Senator James Lankford (former member of NNYM) shared the Scripture out of Daniel 9.
- Then Anne Graham Lotz gave a powerful prophetic message on the need for personal and national repentance in America. (The program had a probing list of both personal and national sins that needed to be repented of.) After her words, different leaders led us in small group prayer as the hundreds cried out to God. It was deep and impacting.
- The evening ended with thunderous worship as this “National Celebration” was beamed nationwide to the 45,000 gatherings that were also taking place in all fifty states around the nation. It was a tremendous night and day that exceeded expectations.

Aslan is on the move.

Starting another new tradition, we convened a NDP De-briefing on Friday morning at the J.W. Marriott Hotel to thank God for the past day, meditate on his magnificent character, and

thank all those that served. Anne Graham Lotz led the final meeting also and I enjoyed encouraging and talking to her for a few minutes afterwards. I would love to build a “prophetic” relationship with her in the future.

Then Paul Fleischmann and I went with other friends to the 15th annual Christian Solidarity Meeting with Israel at the Israeli Embassy. Two-to-three hundred were in attendance to hear Ambassador Ron Dermer address us and re-affirm our commitment to God’s plans in the Middle East and the importance of Israel as the only democracy in that region. We “prayed for the peace of Jerusalem.”

I spent the afternoon and evening with my cousin Jim in Ashburn, VA then he took me to the airport this morning for my trip home. As the plane was taxiing out on the runway, I get once last glimpse of the city—Washington, D.C.—laid out in a cross, and meant to be a light for Christ unto the nations.

This year marks a turn—a reprieve in the inertia of sin and God’s righteous judgment. But we still desperately need a Heaven-sent revival to renew the America nation. That cannot come through legislation, but only by changed hearts and minds.

Do it, Lord Jesus. Let it begin in my own heart.

Gearhart & Salem, Oregon

June 15, 2017 - 24,163 – 7,338

A lot has happened in the last month as I have been away from my journal. Life always goes on--and there is much to ponder and see from God's perspective.

I traveled down to Oregon twice this month. Once to speak at the Lighthouse Church on June 4th, and God blessed the message with a \$900 offering for Mongolia. They are a very supportive congregation that I deeply appreciate.

Another Saturday I trekked down to YWAM Salem for a quarterly board meeting. That work is now nearly forty years old and has sent thousands all over the world in missions. It is my privilege to help them launch a new Master Plan for the future this year and advise and support their great work. It truly is a place of "peace."

Also finished the Spring Quarter at FIU on June 9. I am really feeling at home in my new ministry assignment and greatly enjoying mentoring the students toward their potential in God. Each week this quarter I sent them two "Leadership Quotes"--one from the general world and one from the Bible--to encourage their growth. They seemed to appreciate it.

I want to be the very best professor I can be. Help me, Jesus.

And finally, after many years of writing and preparing, I signed a contract this month with Dorrance Publishing to publish what I consider my *Magnum Opus*. The title of my latest book is *River of God: Where Religion Began and Why Grace and Love Will Triumph*.

Here's how I introduced the news to our supporters this month:

"I've tried to write the clearest book on religion ever attempted. The most important question a person will ask in life is, 'Is there a God?' If the answer to that question is yes, then the second most important question is, 'How do I come into right relationship with God?'"

"My unique contribution to these questions is that the world's religions come down to five views of God. Four of these views are partly true but contain certain distortions--like false forks off a river. The eternal source of truth about God I call the "River of God." Whereas four religions are based on fear and works, one soars above the others through grace and love. The book will appeal to a wide swath of people who are seeking spiritual truth and looking for answers to life's deepest questions."

The book should be out by year's end. I hope it will change and encourage many lives.

Port Orchard, Washington

July 2, 2017 - 24,180 - 7,321

I finished up my preaching (for raising money for the Mongolia Gateway Camp) by speaking at First Christian Church on June 18. Gave a message on "God's Sovereignty and Missions" that really touched some people --and led to a large offering. Praise the Lord. Also finished the Spring Quarter at Faith with my 40 + students. I am trying to inspire them to grab onto God's destiny for their lives.

Just days before leaving for Mongolia, God impressed me to stay home this year due to Chuck Cookson's failing health and other family concerns. It was not an easy decision to make--I struggled with it for a few days--but God eventually broke through as to why it was right and good--another death of a vision-- that he would use in my life and others.

So, my 20th year of going to Mongolia didn't happen. But the money was sent, the camp took place, and all because all of us are expendable--Jesus is the only one who is not. That's a great truth to be remembered from time to time. We do our parts in His grand plan but hold all of them very loosely.

I guess it goes back to the message: *He's sovereign*. Thank you, Lord, for teaching me patience and learning more your ways. I used the week that would have been overseas to "huddle" with God here at home, work on my syllabi for FIU and rest in the Savior.

Here's the letter I wrote to supporters about the decision:

July 2017

Dear Faithful Friends,

It is a good thing that I learned to play quarterback in junior and high school, because a couple of days ago I had to call an audible (change of play).

I had been planning for a year on going to Mongolia in June-July as I have done every summer for the past twenty years. I took the first King's Kids team to Mongolia in 1997 when the Church was embryonic in the nation, most of the people lived in the countryside, and the average Mongol made about \$20 a month.

This year, with your gracious contributions, YWAM helped to sponsor the fifth annual *Mongolia Gateway Camp*--and I was planning on being there this week. But the failing health of my father-in-law and some other family needs caused Shirley and I to reconsider. In the end, we felt that it was more important for me to be at home this year than overseas.

So, at the last minute, I informed our friends in Ulaanbaatar and told them I would not be coming. They totally understood. They know that *family comes first*. It's one of the biblical principles that I've been teaching them for the past two decades.

This morning I was thinking about how seventy years ago--before the age of airplanes--it would have been highly unlikely that I would ever made it *once* to a nation like Mongolia. It would have been a long boat ride and even longer car and horseback trip to make it to the land of the Khans!

Ulaanbaatar Mongolia (by SKYPE)

This year, I didn't make it in person, but thanks to modern technology, I spoke to the Camp via SKYPE and was able to teach them God's ways--from 7000 miles away and 16 hours time difference. What a privilege. All the money raised for the camp (to sponsor the neediest kids from the furthest provinces) was wired to them and arrived safely. I miss not being there--but there's greater joy in being obedient to the voice of God.

Salem, Oregon

Earlier in June I enjoyed visiting YWAM Salem for an important board meeting on developing a Master Plan for the campus. Next year, Oregon's largest YWAM training base will turn forty years old. (I remember walking on the property in 1978. Thousands have been sent out in missions over the past four decades). Later in the month, I met with the leaders of YWAM Discovery Bay to plan the next year. Their teams are greatly impacting China and India--and last month they hosted a special training school for pioneer leaders.

In this life, God's work goes on with or without us. God calls us to special missions, assignments, purposes and plans (Acts 13:36), but the only Person who is *non-expendable* is the Creator and Savior, Jesus. He holds everything together (Colossians 1:17) and without Him, we are nothing.

I will give you a full Mongolia report next month once I hear from our leaders. Pray for America this Fourth of July season and continue to serve the King of kings. You may also have to call some audibles that He gives you in your life. But you can trust Him. He never makes a mistake. Thanks for your faithful support and prayers.

Listening and obeying,

Ron

Port Orchard, Washington

I have really been enjoying the book of Colossians in my morning quiet time because of its grand picture of Christ. I can't have a big enough view of Him. Here are two other Scriptures that also spoke to my heart this week:

"These were Asher's sons, all of them responsible, excellent in character, and brave in battle--good leaders" (1 Chronicles 7:40). **Want to train my students to be like Asher's sons.**

And,

"Live well for the Master, making Him proud of you, as you **work hard in His orchard**" (Colossians 1:10). I want to do the same in "Port Orchard"--for the Master.

August 5, 2017 - 24,215 - 7,286

It's been a speedy and warm summer so far with many things going on and God's grace being abundant. Here are the highlights of the past month:

- Summer quarter began at Faith with me teaching one hybrid class and eleven others on-line. I'm very grateful for my cadre of students whom I view as my disciples or mentees in the Lord. It is

my privilege to impart my life about 120 of them each year. It is one of my ways of "making disciples."

- Enjoyed a good week with Nathan who flew up north to finish a music video for Cityscapes (Jason's band) and share some time with us. He and I enjoyed a special conversation on beach drive one night where I believe we renewed our commitment to each other and open communication on a deep level.
- The publication of *River of God* is proceeding for a late fall release. I did the first edit on the manuscript last week and am excited about releasing it to the world.
- Shirley's dad is beginning to fail. . . and we are enjoying every day that we have with him. Today was his 91st birthday (and tomorrow is their 67th anniversary). Spent a special time with them at their apartment and are asking God to take him quietly into eternity with eyes focused on Jesus. It is our privilege to serve our wonderful parents--in Jesus' Name.
- Enjoyed the last few weeks ministering our next-door neighbor's nine-year old nephew named Antonio. He comes over each night and helps me in the garden. He is from a broken home in San Diego and is a sweet kid. I invited he and his mom to VBS last week and have taken them to church the past two Sundays. God always provides surrogate grandchildren to those who don't have them. It has been a pleasure to minister to and befriend young Antonia--my amigo. Lord--bring him clearly into your loving Kingdom.

August 18, 2017 - 24, 228 - 7,273

The third week in August was an awesome and teary time as Shirley and me, my mother, and Margaret cared for Chuck Cookson during his last days of life. On a Monday, we brought our hospital bed into their apartment where we could care for him. Four days that week, I slept at their place to serve the family and be available.

On the morning of August 18, our Heavenly Father took Chuck home to be with him. He had allowed him to be with us through his 91st birthday and 67th anniversary just two weeks before.

Now he is with Jesus and we are preparing to honor him at a memorial service on Saturday, September 16.

Here is what I wrote in my blog to honor the memory of my father-in-law:

Simply Redeemed--With A Smile and a Hug:

A Tribute to My Father-in-Law, Charles Edward Cookson (1926-2017)

On Friday morning, August 18, my beloved father-in-law, Charles Edward Cookson, breathed his last and was transported into the arms of Jesus. I am sure his homecoming was marked with a big smile and warm hug.

Both were a trademark of Chuck Cookson. The other was simplicity of heart and life--two rare qualities in today's complex world.

He is now *simply redeemed*.

Chuck Cookson was born on August 6, 1926, in Port Orchard, Washington during the Roaring Twenties. His father, Leonard Cookson, built a small home at 816 Sidney Street, only six blocks up the hill from the downtown waterfront.

His mother, Clara Dixon, was three-quarters American Indian and a gracious woman who worked extremely hard. Chuck was the youngest of three and said he was born in the "shack" behind the three-bedroom house.

In 91 years, Chuck never moved more than eight blocks from his roots.

A few years later, the Roaring Twenties became the Great Depression. Chuck sold newspapers and did odd jobs to help the struggling family. At the tender of nine, His father deserted the family, leaving them to fend for themselves. Young Chuck cried and pleaded with him not to go. (Not a good start to his image of a good and faithful Heavenly Father.)

Six decades later, Chuck would reach out to his dad and help him in his later years. Every Sunday afternoon, Chuck and Maggie took their aging fathers out for lunch and a drive.

The 30's and 40s were hard times as Clara worked numerous jobs, the children contributed their meager earnings, and they even housed boarders at their home. Chuck graduated from South Kitsap High School in 1944, and after some electrical apprenticing, decided to open a Texaco gas station with his brother, Tom, in 1947.

Cookson's Texaco stood just across the street from the Port Orchard City Hall. Tom sold his part in the business a few years later, but Chuck faithfully manned his post for the next forty-two years. Many in the South Kitsap community knew Cookson's Texaco as it was the only filling station with a sign which read: "If You Can't Stop, Smile as You Go By."

Smiling back would be the handsome, beaming face of Charles Edward Cookson.

The gas station hired a young, spunky bookkeeper from Parsons, Kansas, in the late 1940s. Margaret Irene Taylor married Chuck on August 7, 1950, one day after his 24th birthday. Two months later they moved into an 800 square foot upstairs apartment on Bay St., just one hundred yards from the station.

Chuck and Margaret would spend the next 67 years in that same apartment. When Mark Rill, the local funeral hall director asked Margaret how long Chuck had lived at his "most recent address," she replied, "67 years." Mark exclaimed: "Well, that must be a record!"

Early in their marriage, Margaret learned she couldn't have children. But God had other plans. On February 26, 1952, they joyously welcomed Shirley Jean Cookson into the world.

I always said that God created Shirley just for me. But her dad felt the same, and during the final week of Chuck's life, Margaret turned to me and said that she felt God created Shirley to "keep her company."

All three were true. Shirley would remain an only child, prompting me to remind Margaret that I *had* to be her favorite son-in-law.

Chuck was one of the hard-working men I ever knew. He served his customers with grace and a smile that could light up a room. He was a quiet man who didn't serve in WWII due to deafness in one ear (caused by Scarlet Fever when he was young). During the Korean War, he was accepted, but was deferred due to Margaret being pregnant with Shirley.

He went back to work and flashed his famous smile at Cookson's Texaco for nearly five decades. One fringe-benefit of being a poor son-in-law in the late 1980s was getting free gas during the height of the oil embargo--that pushed prices alarmingly over \$1 per gallon!

Chuck was always generous with gas, help, and his famous smile. In fact, his bookkeeper wife constantly complained that *not one month in fifty years* did they ever make money on candy and pop at the station. (He gave more away than he sold.)

During Chuck's years as a small business owner, he often worked 84 hours a week--twelve hours a day, seven days a week. He woke up at 4 am, did his routine, then opened the station at 6 am. At 6 pm he walked or drove the one hundred yards to their apartment, had dinner, spent some time in "his chair," and then went to bed before 9. In his later years, he continued to go to bed early and get up at 4.

Only change? His reclining chair became his bed.

Early in their marriage, Chuck and Margaret started attending First Christian Church, close to their apartment and the *first* church in Port Orchard. In the 1960s, through the preaching and friendship of Pastor Jack McDaniels, Chuck was baptized. He would later serve as the perfect church greeter, known for his warm and firm hugs.

Nobody did them better.

Due to the Cookson connection at FCC, the church would become the "anchor" supporters of Shirley and my forty plus years in Youth With A Mission.

Mom and Dad Cookson took one real vacation their entire married lives--to Palm Springs, CA. His other passion was the Seattle Seahawks. His daughter caught the bug, too. Recently Chuck remarked to Maggie, "I think she knows more about football than I do."

Probably true. I spent many afternoons in the Cookson apartment listening to Shirley and dad talk about their beloved birds while Mom and I gazed at the floor. Shirley not only looked like Chuck and shared his gracious spirit but became his "Go Hawks" buddy. Her last present to him was a Seahawk Bear that now sits on the family mantel. Chuck died on a "Blue Friday." (Fans will understand.)

Father and daughter were two peas in a pod.

During his sixties, Dad Cookson deepened his faith in Christ greatly. I remember meeting personally with him during that time and watched God do a deep work in his heart and life. He closed the gas station in 1994 and lived out his retirement years in his favorite chair in their apartment, while serving family and church.

Chuck's early and retirement years served as bookends on a half century of hard work with a smile and a hug.

It was a simple, but great life.

This summer, as he approached 91, Dad grew weaker. He had never loved doctors and medicine. In fact, before he passed, he had not seriously seen a doc for sixty years. He believed in hard work, healthy eating and plenty of supplements (kelp pills, soy powder, vitamins and the like). In his thirties he had been diagnosed with a serious form of anemia, but it never stopped him. Years ago, a physician told to take blood pressure medication. He refused--and lived to 91.

He always told Margaret he wanted to die at home. He wanted to pass into eternity from the place he had lived most of his life.

He got his wish.

The last week of his life, Dad showed signs of failing. We moved his favorite chair and put a hospital bed in its place so he could gaze out of their upstairs window on Sinclair Inlet and the Olympic Mountains. Twice a day my mother (an amazing nurse!) and I turned him, took care of him, and made him comfortable. My job was to hold him in a bear hug while mom worked. I told Dad to imagine a Kam Chancellor tackle! He smiled and said, "Thanks, Ron."

Margaret kept vigil day and night and Shirley remained present, always serving. The final afternoon, Chuck was unusually alert and shared eye contact and some words with Margaret and Shirley--the two people he loved most. The room glowed with tears and words of affection.

I stayed overnight the final four evenings to be a needed male presence. I sang to Chuck "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," talked about heaven, and told him that, though we would miss him greatly, it was "okay" to "go home." Margaret slept on the couch, just three feet from the hospital bed.

At 5:30 am, on Friday, August 18, God woke me and nudged me to check on Chuck. Margaret was awake, and together, at 5:45 am, we heard him gasp his final breaths, then be released from his body to meet Jesus face-to-face.

You don't measure a life by countries visited or possessions owned. All that really counts is faith and love which, when completed, bring everlasting hope.

Chuck Cookson's faith brought him salvation through Jesus Christ. His life blessed many others.

Now he is simply redeemed--and thoroughly enjoying an eternal smile and infinite hug.

* * * * *

The final day of Chuck's life, on three different occasions, God led Shirley and I to listen to a powerful song by Christ Tomlin called "Home."

Here are the victorious words:

"Home"

By Chris Tomlin

This world is not what it was meant to be
All this pain, all this suffering
There's a better place waiting for me
In heaven

Every tear will be wiped away
Every sorrow and sin erased
We'll dance on seas of amazing grace
In heaven

CHORUS

I'm goin'

Home!
Where the streets are golden
Every chain is broken
Oh I wanna go
Oh I wanna go
Home!
Where every fear is gone
I'm in Your open arms
Where I belong
Home!

Lay down my burdens, I lay down my past
I run to Jesus, no turning back
Thank God Almighty, I'll be free at last
In heaven

Blinded eyes will finally see
The dead will rise on shores of eternity
The trump will sound, the angels will sing
Hallelujah, hallelujah
I am goin'

I'm goin' home
I'm on my way home
I'm goin' home

September 16, 2017 - 24,257 – 7,244

It has been some busy weeks as I ended the summer quarter at Faith, and we grieved and rejoiced and prepared for Dad Cookson's Memorial Service which was held today at First Christian. About one hundred people showed up for a very special time of honoring and remembering Chuck. **All our kids shared--and they were uniquely excellent in their words and spirit. Other friends also shared, the songs and videos we played were powerful, focusing on dad's strengths and his reunion in heaven.**

Here is the message God gave me to give. I pray it bore much fruit in many lives.

GOING HOME!

A Tribute to My Father-in-Law, Charles Edward Cookson (1926-2017)

On behalf of both the Cookson and Boehme families, THANK YOU for coming today to honor and celebrate Chuck's life. We are grateful for the wonderful thoughts and memories already shared.

Now, I would like to recount a bit of his history and legacy as well. And I'd like you to leave you deeply pondering the meaning of the word "Home."

HOME BIRTH

Chuck Cookson was born on August 6, 1926, in Port Orchard, Washington during the Roaring Twenties. His father, Leonard Cookson, built a small home at 816 Sidney Street, only six blocks up the hill from the downtown.

His mother, Clara Dixon, was three-quarters American Indian and a gracious woman who worked extremely hard. Chuck was the youngest of three and said he was born in the "shack" behind the three-bedroom house.

In 91 years, Chuck never moved more than eight blocks from his roots.

HOME PROBLEMS

A few years later came the Great Depression. Chuck sold newspapers and did odd jobs to help the struggling family. At the age of nine, his father left the family, leaving them to fend for themselves. Young Chuck cried and pleaded with him in vain not to go. But he never became bitter.

Many decades later, Chuck would reach out to his dad and help him in his later years. Every Sunday afternoon, Chuck and Maggie took their aging fathers out for lunch and a drive.

HOMETOWN & BUSINESS

The 30's and 40s were hard times as Clara worked numerous jobs, the children contributed their meager earnings, and they even housed boarders at their home. Chuck graduated from South Kitsap High School in 1944, and after some electrical apprenticing, decided to open a Texaco gas station with his brother, Tom, in 1947.

Cookson's Texaco stood just across the street from the Port Orchard City Hall. Tom sold his part in the business a few years later, but Chuck faithfully manned his post for the next forty-two years. Many in the South Kitsap community knew Cookson's Texaco as it was the only filling station with a sign which read: "If You Can't Stop, Smile as You Go By."

Smiling back would be the handsome, beaming face of Charles Edward Cookson.

HOME LOVES: WIFE MAGGIE and DAUGHTER SHIRLEY

The gas station hired a young, vivacious bookkeeper from Parsons, Kansas, in the late 1940s. Margaret Irene Taylor married Chuck on August 7, 1950, one day after his 24th birthday. Two months later they moved into an 800 square foot upstairs apartment on Bay St., just one hundred yards from the station.

Chuck and Margaret would spend the next 67 years in that same apartment. When Mark Rill, the local funeral hall director asked Margaret how long Chuck had lived at his "most recent address," she replied, "67 years." Mark exclaimed: "Well, that must be a record!"

Early in their marriage, Margaret learned she couldn't have children. But God had other plans. On February 26, 1952, they joyously welcomed Shirley Jean Cookson into the world.

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He went back to work and flashed his famous smile at Cookson's Texaco for nearly five decades. One fringe-benefit of being a poor son-in-law in the late 1980s was getting free gas during the height of the oil embargo--that pushed prices alarmingly over \$1 per gallon!

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HOME CHAIR

During Chuck's years as a small business owner, he sometimes worked 84 hours a week--twelve hours a day, seven days a week. He woke up at 4 am, did his routine, then opened the station at 6 am. At 6 pm he walked or drove the one hundred yards to their apartment, had dinner, spent some time in "his chair," and then went to bed before 9. In his later years, he continued to go to bed early and get up at 4.

Only change? His reclining chair became his bed.

HOME CHURCH

Early in their marriage, Chuck and Margaret started attending First Christian Church, close to their apartment in downtown Port Orchard. In the 1960s, through the preaching and friendship of Pastor Jack McDaniels, Chuck was baptized. He would later serve as the perfect church greeter, known for his warm and firm hugs.

Nobody did them better.

HOME TEAM

Dad C. loved to gaze on the sun setting behind the Olympic Mountains. He also loved reading the Comics and doing Crossword Puzzles. His other passion was the Seattle Seahawks. His daughter caught the bug, too. Recently Chuck remarked to Maggie, "I think she knows more about football than I do."

Probably true. I spent many afternoons in the Cookson apartment listening to Shirley and dad talk about their beloved birds while Mom C. and I gazed at the floor. Shirley not only shared Chuck's coloring and gracious spirit but became his "Go Hawks!" buddy. Her last present to him was a Seahawk Bear that now sits on the family mantel. Chuck died on a "Blue Friday." (Fans will understand.) Father and daughter were two peas in a pod.

HOME TO FAITH

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LEAVING HIS EARTHLY HOME

Chuck always told Margaret he wanted to die at home. He wanted to pass into eternity from the place he'd lived most of his life. He got his desire.

The last week of his life, Dad showed signs of failing. We moved his favorite chair and put a hospital bed in its place so he could gaze out of their upstairs window on Sinclair Inlet and

the Olympic Mountains. Twice a day my mother and I turned him, took care of him, and made him comfortable. My job was to hold him in a bear hug while mom worked. I told Dad to imagine a Kam Chancellor tackle. He smiled and said, "Thanks, Ron."

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Chuck Cookson's faith brought him salvation through Jesus Christ. His life blessed many others. Now he is redeemed--and thoroughly enjoying an eternal smile and infinite hug.

Chuck Cookson is *eternally home*--in heaven.

IS HEAVEN YOUR TRUE HOME?

Now that Chuck is there, what would he want me to say about it? I think I know.

+ It's easy to make *two mistakes* about heaven.

(1) Some believe there *is no heaven*. When we die, it's all over.

(2) Others believe *everybody goes to heaven*--except maybe Hitler and a few really bad people.

(3) Both of these ideas are UNTRUE.

+ Yes, there's a heaven. But we have a problem that's pretty bad news.

-- *We humans have ALL lived selfishly and are estranged from our Heavenly Father and His home called Heaven.*

+ But there's GOOD NEWS. One famous verse captures it the best:

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that anyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

+ In other words: Jesus loves us so deeply that he was tortured and died on a cross for you and me. When we confess our guilt and give our lives back to Him, the estrangement is dissolved, friendship is restored, and Heaven is our destination! --just like Chuck.

-- Story of graveside service.

+ I want to give you that same opportunity today. If you are willing to be reconciled to God right now, pray this prayer with me in the quietness of your own heart:

-- Father, I am guilty and estranged from you. Please forgive me for my pride and ignorance. I respond to your love and grace. Please clean up my heart and life through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. I put my trust in Him alone and give my life back to you.

+ If you prayed that prayer sincerely, asked forgiveness for your sins, and put your trust in Christ, then I have some very encouraging words for you:

WELCOME HOME!

-- The angels, and Chuck, are smiling down on you.

November 12, 2017 - 24,312 - 7,187

I let fifty-seven days go by from my last post. I must admit that Dad Cookson's death left me in a bit of a "holding pattern" mentally for a period of time--kind of suspended between earth and heaven in my thoughts. I was a little less "certain" during that time and it took a while to get back to normal.

But many things happened during these past two months which I wish to reflect on here.

MOM COOKSON

At first, Shirley I am really tried to persuade (if not push) Mom Cookson to come and live with us following Chuck's passing. We didn't want her living alone, isolated and physically vulnerable at 405 West Street though we knew she wouldn't want to leave her home of 67 years.

Failing to get her to budge, we ultimately gave in to her firm desire to stay--and simply place that now in God's hands. She is not one to be told what to do--even to get a Life Alert around her neck. So, we have backed up and will simply let her call the shouts while we continue to love and care for her. When she's ready, our place is open and available. So are our hearts.

HERE FOR OUR MOTHERS

Now that both of our fathers are in the presence of Jesus, we are very committed to spending times with our mothers on Sunday (went out to a nice meal after church today) and taking care of their needs. We see their frailties and needs and are sold out to meet them as first priorities. Jesus--draw both closer and closer to you.

Tacoma, Washington

FALL QUARTER AT FAITH

The Fall Quarter at FIU began October 2 and I am teaching 14 total classes with one on "Strategies for Evangelism" being live. I enjoyed putting it together and love the class on Thursday nights. Want to re-charge my own batteries in sharing my faith with others, and the course is a great incentive to do so.

One of my Korean students named Grace got married this past weekend. She didn't have a place for the wedding, so we were able to open up FCC for her--a real provision from God. She beautifully decorated the buildings and got married to "David" on Saturday. I am so glad when the church can step in and meet needs like this for glory to Jesus' alone. She was deeply grateful. This type of generosity comes only from the hand and heart of God.

Port Orchard, Washington

REVIVE US AGAIN AT FCC

I'm teaching what I believe will be my final video-taped series at FCC on Wednesday evenings on revival--my very first calling and still-held desire of my heart. It's a twelve-week series filmed by Ron Finney and attended by a small group of interested friends. No deep moves of God so far, but I'm simply trying to be faithful to the truths God has given me and hope that He will use them in people's lives--either live or over the videos.

Have been using Wednesdays to re-do all my former messages and meditate upon the past dealings of God. These messages will become a part of the YouTube Library where now over 120 messages on Missions, Discipleship, The Kingdom of God, and Revival will be preserved and at God's disposal.

Please use them, Lord Jesus, for your glory. You gave them to me. Anoint them to impassion and awaken lives.

RIVER OF GOD BOOK

I have completed the final edits on my Magnum Opus (Great Work). *River of God: Where Religion Began and Why Grace and Love Will Triumph* will be out in a few months published by Dorrance Publishing. I even used Printing services here in Port Orchard to create the cover jackets for the book. I am excited about how God is going to use it--and look forward to speaking on it in many places next year.

Interestingly, it was the cancellation of my Mongolia trip due to Chuck's illness that provided the monies for the printing of *River of God*. Lord--your ways are amazingly wise.

POSSIBLE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN NEW LIFE AND FCC

After praying about this possibility for 3-4 years and meeting with both Jonathan Stone and Joel Morris from time to time, just one week ago I met with the First Christian elders and laid out the vision God has given me for a possible partnership between the two groups: One Campus--two congregations. The FCC elders are currently in prayer about the situation and a momentous decision could be made soon.

I believe it is a win-win situation for both churches to work out of our FCC campus--with us proving a debt-free property and certain strengths and NL bringing in passion and evangelistic zeal to reach the South Kitsap community. Having been raised himself at FCC, Jonathan is uniquely poised to lead this new venture into the future--no matter what that means.

It's all for the Kingdom of God. Nothing else lasts. Only the King and His Kingdom. Lord, show all involved what You want to do and give us the courage and wisdom to take the next steps. It will only work if You are in it and guide every aspect.

BACK PAIN AND NEUROPATHY

I will decide in the coming six weeks about pursuing some medical therapies for my lower back pain and also the growing neuropathy (numbness) in my feet. I have met twice with a Dr. Leone in Tacoma who may have some non-invasive techniques for helping with both conditions.

I put this decision in your hands, My Great Physician.

All-in-all, I feel that God is using this fall to help me finish up numerous commitments and projects He has given me for 2017. In fact, this may be the first year that I end up checking off every single box of my "Numbered Days" chart as being completed. Thank you, Lord. I'm then very excited about praying about 2018, and what the future holds.

I remembered this morning in my quiet time that 2018 represents fifty years that I've had the privilege of knowing Jesus and walking with Him. It was in the spring of 1968 that I bowed

by head and gave my life to Christ in Steff Steinhorst's basement in Parkwood. What an amazing fifty years it has been of God's direction and using my life.

And I am looking forward to a year of celebrating His goodness and looking for new marching orders for the "next fifty years."

Jesus Christ is worth every minute of every day.

Discovery Bay, Washington

December 4, 2017 - 24,334 - 7,165

Just completed a good week teaching up at the Discovery Bay YWAM base. With last year's "break" in teaching at YWAM schools, it was great to be called back--kind of a confirmation that this part of my life is not yet finished. Youth With A Mission has been a great part of my life, and I am thankful that I believe it will continue until the day I go to heaven.

Port Orchard, Washington

December 31, 2017 - 24,361 - 7,138

I finished up various things in December and spent a good part of the month planning and praying for next year (as has been my custom). Thank you, Lord Jesus, for leading every day of my life and guiding me in your plans. I don't want to miss one of them.

Highlights:

1. Finished up the *Revival Series* at First Christian, bringing to completion putting my "legacy" messages on YouTube. Didn't see a great moving of the Spirit during class, but definitely impacted lives and completed the assignment. May God use it to bring revival to FCC and beyond.
2. Have been working with Jonathan Stone and Joel Morris to possibly lead FCC and New Life into working out of the same campus. The ball is moving forward. and now it must be You, Jesus, that creates enough vision and humility in hearts to make it happen.
3. Finished the *Fall Quarter at FIU* with God's blessing. Next quarter will be my largest student load ever--and I appreciate God's blessing on this new dimension of my life--teaching at a collegiate level. In some ways I feel born for it.

4. I shared with a few supporters about the neuropathy need in my feet, and God spoke powerfully to Dan Martin and he sent in a \$3000 check. That's almost half the cost. What an encouragement! Because of this, I believe I am to move forward in faith and begin getting the treatments at the end of January. Lord--heal my feet for your glory.

5. As I was praying in church yesterday (powerful service), God spoke to me about the fact that He "carried" me through the difficulties of my earlier years and will do the same in this later stage in life. This word so encouraged me. He is the same "yesterday, today, and forever." He is the sturdy foundation of our lives.

During the Christmas season we gathered the entire family for celebrating the birth of Christ. Nathan, David, and Ryan flew up and others joined in. It snowed on Christmas Eve and on Christmas morning. Our four sons took a picturesque walk throughout the nearby neighborhoods enjoying God's beauty and visiting people. We shared wonderful meals with our mothers on both nights and really enjoyed quality time with our kids.

Next year I celebrate in the spring *fifty years of walking with Christ*. What an incredible journey it has been that literally changed the direction of everything for me and allowed us to serve the King of kings and Lord of lords for all these five decades.

I haven't served You perfectly (as no human does), but my heart has been Yours all these years and I only want that to grow.

Lord Jesus--lead us into 2018 to accomplish all the assignments you have given to us. Thank you for another year of life. There are plenty of trials and struggles, and even times of doubting unanswered prayers for our children.

But I have one hope--and that is YOU. Help me to be faithful until death.