

# MORE FRAGMENTS OF FAITH



**GERALD SUTEK TH.D., PH.D.**

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“Living by Faith” is not just a song to be sung in church. Living by faith is not something you try a little of, while still musing through the cafeteria line of God’s good gifts. Living by faith should not be simply a history lesson of how the saints of the past used to live. Living by faith is a lifestyle that a Christian determines to make his own, in accordance with the will of God. Living by faith is a fundamental principle of the abundant life in Christ. On one hand, it pleases and honors the good Lord and on the other hand it strongly snubs the world and testifies against it.

In September 1999, we closed the first *Fragments of Faith* with the statement that we would be fools to forsake the wonderful experiences, blessings, and proofs of a life of faith. I am happy to report that we are continuing to enjoy the riches of His grace by living for Him...by faith.

This second edition contains more “fragments of faith”, not simply for your enjoyment, but also for your admonition and encouragement.

## **MORE FRAGMENTS OF FAITH**

### CHAPTER 1

#### *THE GOSPEL OF MARY (PART III)*

Everybody who inquires about Mary Bethany these days, immediately asks, “Did she ever become a citizen of the United States of America?” We left a lot of readers hanging when we ended the first *Fragments of Faith* with the story of the finalization of Mary’s adoption but without a completion of her naturalization. Well, we are happy to report that Mary Bethany Sutek is a full-fledged citizen of the USA. She was sworn in on August 2, 2000, in Jacksonville, Fl.

During her swearing in, I had to act as her proxy. She had to renounce her Philippine citizenship and swear allegiance to the government of America. Part of this procedure required her to promise to serve in the U.S. military, if called upon. As her proxy, I agreed to this, but Robin, in the background, had all fingers, arms, and legs crossed, so that my answer would be immediately voided.

Mary Bethany Sutek is now Miss USA, with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities. The only thing she can’t do is run for president, but considering who took that office recently, maybe she could. Mary is as red, white, and blue as if those colors actually ran in her circulatory system. As she is about to graduate from high school in just a couple of months, she has a remarkable knowledge of American history. She is quite patriotic and would probably serve to defend the American way of life; at least, the American way of life that existed for many good years. She sorrows along with the rest of us citizens over the “Jeremiah-days” decline of our once-great country into abject apostasy.

#### STAYING IN TOUCH WITH FAMILY IN THE PHILIPPINES

Another question frequently asked about Mary is if she knows she was adopted and whether there is still any connection with her family back in the Philippines. The answer is “Yes”, on both subjects.

Mary Bethany’s story is so altogether lovely and God-honoring that we never gave a thought to keeping it under cover, either from her or from the rest of the world. She has grown up wearing like a medal the fact that the good Lord answered the prayers of both her birth parents and her adoptive parents. The story of how the great King put all this together is composed of a myriad of miracles that are incomparable to

any that may be recorded by those in the world. We have used the story many times as a testimony of the benefits of knowing Him.

Fifteen months after we took Mary from her parents, I made a trip back to the Philippines, but Robin and Mary stayed in the U.S. I took a short video of Mary at the age of two (cute as a button and just beginning to talk reasonably well) and after arriving in the Philippines, I was able to gather the whole church, with Mary's father sitting in the front row, to view this video. It was heartwarming as I watched her father's response to seeing his baby daughter toddling and talking, while dressed in a fancy, frilly American dress.

We have a continuing correspondence and loving relationship with all in the family in the Philippines. They have struggled to keep an economic balance and we have been privileged to assist in this, by faith. While Mary's mother was dying from cancer in the hospital, just a few months following the adoption, the father had to sell his caribou in order to pay the hospital bills. (A caribou is a water buffalo, essential in farming rice; what the John Deere tractor is to an American farmer, the caribou is to a Filipino farmer.) We were able to replace that caribou for the family. They lived in a grass dwelling with a dirt floor with six children and no mother. We were honored to help build them a very decent, two-story, concrete home. We were blessed to pay for a Christian school education for all six children, all the way through high school, including books and uniforms. A couple of them went on to Bible college and we helped somewhat with that. We have sent regular monthly support to the family. Now most of the children are grown and some have left home and married. Elbert John, the oldest brother, was killed in an industrial accident nearly two years ago and we assisted with funeral expenses. James, another brother, has started a church in a remote area and we send him support.

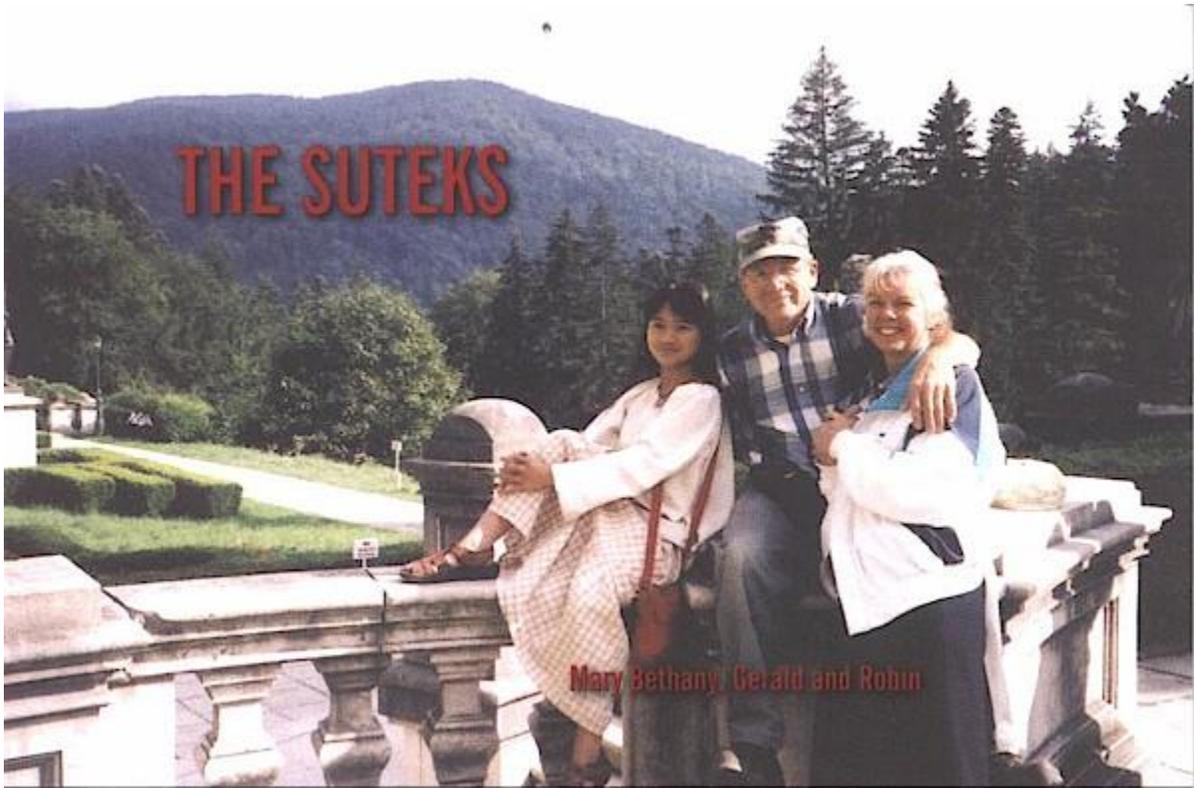
For several years we wrote letters back and forth with the siblings, as they speak and write English fairly well. Recently, we have kept in closer touch with email. Once in a while, they can make it into a city and go to an Internet café.

A little over a year ago, an American friend of ours visited them while he was on a trip there. He made a great effort to round up the entire family and take them to an Internet café, where he had his laptop and a webcam. For the first time, Mary was able to visit (via video) with her father and her siblings. It was a tearful experience for all. The father had never seen a video webcam and did not understand how it worked. Many times he got really close to the screen, and consequently the camera, in order to see his daughter Mary but did not realize that his face then filled our screen. It was funny, touching, and tearful, all at the

same time. It was shortly following this event that Elbert John was taken home to heaven in that industrial accident. The webcam visit was the one and only time Mary ever saw him, when she was old enough to know what was happening.

All of Mary's siblings refer to Robin and myself as "Mom and Dad", which is a tremendous blessing to us. We now enjoy having "grand children" from them. The father is not in the best of health, and his age is now also a factor in his struggle to enjoy a productive life.

With the expected proceeds of this book, as well as another book recently published, our family is planning to finance a long-ago promised return trip to the Philippines. Mary is mature enough now to handle such a physically and emotionally draining trip. Imagine seeing your birth father and siblings for the first time since your first birthday! Add to this the extreme differences in culture and standards of living, plus the stress of such a long journey, and you have the potential for one of life's most tempestuous experiences.



**The Sutek family from a few years back**



**Mary Bethany's Graduating class at BBTI- (Hint: she's the pretty one)**

## CHAPTER 2

THE TRAVELING PREACHER

“America needs your ministry.”

These were the words of our pastor, James Knox, upon our return to America from our ministry in Ireland. (I must double back upon a small portion of the original *Fragments of Faith* in order to bring the times and events together.) We were double-minded about what to do. We had to finish the adoption of Mary Bethany. Since we could not accomplish this in Northern Ireland, not being citizens of Great Britain, we had to make a major decision. On one hand, we looked at the possibility of moving our family and ministry to the Philippines, or Singapore, or any place where we might be able to succeed in the adoption and minister to souls, at the same time. Through all the praying and planning, we always purposed to put the ministry of the Lord first, in accord with Mt. 6:33 and our own request to the good Lord to give us a child that would not distract us from our ministry. Considering the many facets of this complicated situation, and weighing the counsel of our pastor heavily, we made the decision to get back on the road with our original ministry and trust God to fulfill His promise to us. *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.* Phil. 1:6, we took the advice of our pastor and put the jumper cables on our original ministry.

“On the road again, SWAT TEAM’s on the road again...”

The next eight years justified the sound advice of our wise pastor. The good Lord has allowed us to travel and preach in all fifty states and have a vibrant affect in the area of publick ministry upon many churches, Bible colleges, and individuals. And oh, the experiences, the incredible stories, and the sermon illustrations that have come as a result of traveling the world, preaching publickly, and teaching publick ministry.

## THE BLITZES REKINDLED

We had enjoyed three successful National Street Preachers’ Conventions and Blitzes at our nation’s capitol, but their organization was very primitive. They could be so much more effective for both the citizens of the cities as well as the participants in the publick ministry, if they could be backed by and joined to a good local church. While praying about this, we were ministering in a church in California. We were

fellowshipping with the pastor and he began asking questions about what our ministry had done in the past. We gladly told him our stories of the Washington blitzes. He was impressed and asked why this could not be done on the West Coast. When told that we had been praying for the help and backing of a local church, he welcomed the challenge and we all began to plan for the first West Coast Blitz, in San Francisco, Sacramento, and Marysville.



**Preaching at a Blitz in California in 2003**



### **Sacramento, 2003**

The West Coast Blitzes we had in those cities and with that church were quite successful. We saw the church greatly strengthened and souls saved. By faith, we truly believe the public preaching had a wet-blanket effect on sin in the cities where we ministered; howbeit, this effect is sometimes difficult to measure, considering the size of these cities.



**West Coast Blitz, on the Capitol Steps**

The street preachers' conventions have spread and have been held Columbus, Oh.; Buffalo, Niagara Falls, and Rochester, NY.; some cities in PA.; and even the Big Apple, New York City.



**Upstate NY, 2002-“Field Training” in a field**



**Rochester, NY 2004**



**Rochester, NY 2004**



**Amsterdam Blitz, 2001**

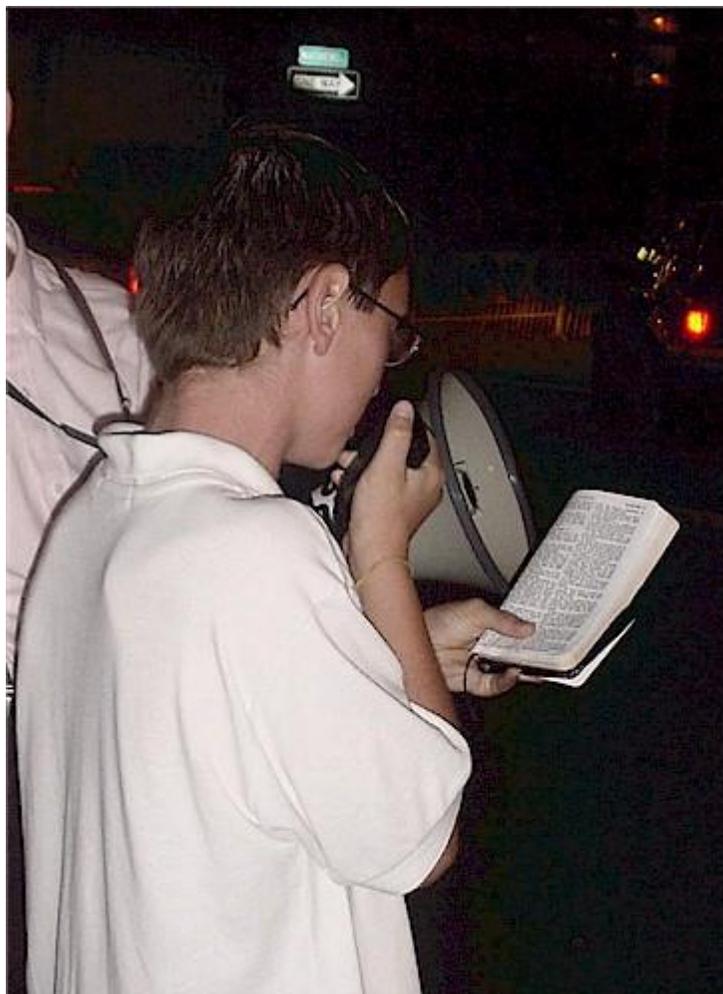


**Amsterdam Blitz, 2002**

## FOUR STORIES OF FUN

In attendance at one of these events was a well-known evangelist, whose ministry included a home for rehabilitating men whose lives had been damaged by sin and the world. The evangelist realized the benefit of public ministry upon these rehab graduates and assigned a 19-year-old to me for a day of public ministry on Fisherman's Wharf. This young man had been told of our experience in public ministry and knowing this, coupled with the vast age difference between the two of us, resulted in his viewing me with great awe. Soon he came to realize I was not to be idolized, but he still would have gladly obeyed my least command. As we strolled down the main street, passing tracts and ministering where we had opportunity, I noticed a four-story parking garage a block ahead of us. I knew what I was about to do; this green recruit did not. I suddenly asked him if, since he had gone to jail for the devil, would he be willing to go to jail for Jesus? A wry smile spread across his face at this prospect and he eagerly agreed--without the slightest idea of what I might have in mind.

We climbed the steps to the roof and made our way between the cars to the railing. My, oh my, what a pulpit. There were several hundred souls who would soon hear the gospel and be without excuse. I told the young man to watch my back, while I preached at top volume. The old, old story reverberated through the parking garage and out onto the streets, all the way to San Francisco Bay. For nearly twenty minutes I enjoyed ministering to hundreds of upturned faces, but when I quit, I turned to face two unsmiling security guards. My second man was so taken with the preaching that he forgot about watching my back. They asked if we were parked in the garage and then told us we were not allowed to do... what we had just done-- I love it when this happens. "Oh, man, I am so sorry, we did not know that. I promise I will NEVER do this again. You men be sure to read these tracts now, and we thank you for doing a good job at guarding. You guys have a nice day." And down the stairwell we disappeared without another word being exchanged. As soon as the stairwell door slammed, my assistant shouted with glee, "Yeah, Yeah, we got them...WOW! That was really something." He was on fire for the Lord, and it was public ministry that had produced this.



**His First Time Out**

### **BEALE STREET BLAST**



We were elated when the idea of the blitzes began to catch fire in several other locations. My friend of three decades, Ken Lansing, came to a West Coast Blitz and consulted with me on starting a similar event in Memphis, where Ken had faithfully preached, alone, on the streets for seventeen years. He said he surely would love to have some help against

the tsunami of sin in that area. To host a national street preacher's convention is no easy or inexpensive task, but Ken jumped right in. We first preached on Beale Street, with several good friends, in 1997. We started the annual convention the following year.

Beale Street needs to be explained to my readers. The street itself is just another of the many business streets in downtown Memphis, but years ago it evolved into a haunt for entertainment--mainly for the black population. Allow me to use a parallel to give you the proper perspective. Beale Street, in Memphis, needs another saloon or honky-tonk or stripper nightclub about as much as Pensacola, Florida or Greenville, South Carolina needs another church. Over the years, Beale Street evolved into a big entertainment business for the white population, who also wanted to tickle their flesh. By the time Ken began the Beale Street Blast, the street was famous all over the Southeast for some of the best wickedness and drunken perversion that was available all year long, even rivaling the big party called Mardi Gras, in New Orleans.



**Beale Street, Memphis, 2004**



The Blasts last Friday through Sunday and we march on Friday and Saturday nights. It is pretty wild on the nights we march, but by Sunday afternoon the gas has been largely spent on sin and the sinners are mostly lying around in their hangovers, pretending the thrill is still there although the season of pleasure has long since passed. We went out on Sunday afternoon between services and minister once again on Beale Street, when we had more of a chance to deal with folks one-on-one.



**Beale Street, Memphis, 2004**

One warm Sunday afternoon in May, I was walking down Beale Street with my accordion, looking for an opportunity to minister. Friday and Saturday night the partying on the streets is so loud that only the strong can preach against GREAT opposition, but Sunday afternoon the streets are considerably quieter. I passed a park, which was usually pulsating with bad music and packed with drunken kids, but this afternoon there was no music. The band shell was empty, the stage was bare, and approximately 200 teens were lying about on the grass, worshipping the sun. Some were sitting quietly in the theater seats in front of the stage. Well, I can spot a golden opportunity to minister when I see one.

I walked to the middle of the stage. At that point, some of the teens noticed me and sat up. I gave the introduction to “How Great Thou Art” and, in a higher than normal key and with full throttle, I sang all three stanzas, with the added advantage of a perfect acoustical backdrop. At the end of the first verse and chorus, the kids finally figured out what I

was all about and they started mocking, catcalling, jeering, yelling, screaming, and throwing things. One kid ran down the center aisle and threw two one-dollar bills on the stage; everyone cheered, in hopes I would take the money and leave. Instead, without missing a note, I pulled from my pocket a handful of twenty-dollar bill gospel tracts. These look exactly like real “twenties” but, once unfolded, are a very effective gospel tract. I walked to the edge of the stage, threw the entire handful to the crowd, and said, “I don’t need your money! I’m rich”. The crowd went wild and nearly rioted, trying to grab a souvenir. As I went into the second verse, some of them made their way up on the stage behind me and tried to dance to “How Great Thou Art”-- anyone knows that you cannot dance to “How Great Thou Art”. On the third verse, the song says, “And I shall bow, with humble adoration...” As I sang this, I bowed onstage and, with head bowed, removed my hat. They did NOT know how to respond to this vulnerable act. When the song was over, I stood up again, and I preached to a quite attentive crowd for a good while. Praise the good Lord for good opportunities in which to serve Him.

#### SINGING TO THE COOKS

While we are on the subject of “How Great Thou Art”, I have another story about that song. I had a meeting in a church in the suburbs of Los Angeles, CA. I had never met the pastor, but I was scheduled to preach in his pulpit that Sunday. Saturday night he invited me to dinner, in hopes of getting to know this wild street preacher who was going to minister to his sheep in the morning. We went to a cafeteria, selected our food and rounded the corner to the dining room. This night was not the best for our private little fellowship, because, you see, this was Senior’s Night at this particular cafeteria and the dining room was full of seniors. For anyone who dropped a small donation into a cup, the organist would play a requested song, while the seniors would try to sing along to “I’m Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover” or try to dance to “How Ya Gonna Keep ‘Em Down on the Farm (After They’ve Seen Pree?)”. It was simply pitiful, but we had our food and were locked into this setting. We found a faraway (not far enough away) corner and proceeded with our get-to-know-each-other dinner. After desert, we were sipping our coffee when it occurred to me, “Hey, if they can do it, so can I.” I dropped a dollar in the cup and asked the organist if he could play “How Great Thou Art”. I asked him to play in a higher than normal key and give me a lot of liberty. As I sang in full, street-preacher voice, the forks went down, the small talk subsided, the cooks came out from the kitchen, and some took their hats off. The restaurant came to a near standstill and when I finished, they applauded. I quickly started to give my testimony along with the gospel. “Folks, let me tell you just how great my God really is...” I barely got the gospel out when the embarrassed organist came

around, took my arm, and thanking me, showed me back to my seat. IT WAS GREAT!

I have sung that song to lovers on the end of a pier in Puget Sound; to folks boarding a ferry in Charlevoix, MI.; to tourists waiting for the ferry to take them to Ellis Island, in New York City; as well as to crowds waiting for buses in Columbus, OH. It is always received very well and is a great lead-in to the gospel.

#### FLYING HIGH WITH THE GOSPEL

While attending a blitz at Niagara Falls, I must tell you of one of the highest times I have had in public ministry. At this blitz, the host pastor fulfilled one of my long-dreamed-of desires. He rented a giant, helium-filled balloon with a huge gondola. This is not a hot-air balloon; instead, it naturally rises, since it is filled with helium. This is just one more attraction at Niagara Falls and normally is used to give rides over the falls to tourists. We rented the balloon for two preaching trips, and we filled the gondola with a total of thirty preachers. The balloon was controlled by a tether, which was attached to a large, motor-powered winch. We were reeled out six hundred feet above the falls, where we preached to the hordes of tourists through a huge truth-horn (a portable PA system). This was certainly an experience in the ministry, **above** and beyond my expectations.



**Preaching from a balloon at Niagara Falls**

Actually, there is an unusual preface to this story. I was preaching in a church in Portland, OR. I used an illustration of a colorful event I had

seen the day before, when I came upon a field filled with hot-air balloon enthusiasts having their own convention. In giving the illustration, I did not mention preaching from a balloon, nor did the idea even enter my mind to do such a thing. A lady in the church approached me when I finished and pressed two one hundred-dollar bills into my hand saying, "This is to be used expressly to rent a hot-air balloon, if you ever get the opportunity to preach from one". This encounter was quite odd, but I took it that the Lord had something in mind, and filed away both the idea and the money. I attempted to seek out such an opportunity on several occasions, but none came to fruition until the event at Niagara Falls.

#### PREACHING ON *THE ROCK* AT A PORTLAND ROCK CONCERT

We were with a good group of street preachers from a good church in Portland, OR. We heard there was a rock concert that night in Pioneer Square, downtown. A TV news flash said that by law the concert had to stop at precisely 10:00 p.m. We were there at 9:00 p.m. and "traced" as much as we could. I noticed that at one end of the park, flooded with teens, there were steps leading up to yuppie restaurants. On one side of the steps was a huge fountain, with a waterfall about two stories high. There were young people sitting on the fountain, as high up as they felt it was comfortable to go. I made my way beyond them to the very top, which was still safe, although quite high. My backdrop was solid concrete, and no one could approach me stealthily from either side. I was in a good position and the time was 9:55. I prayed and readied myself; at exactly 10:00 p.m., the emcee closed down the concert and the big lights went dark. My voice immediately filled the square with, "The Bible says..." and for the next twenty-five minutes ministered without interruption, the gospel to approximately 5,000 kids. A preacher never forgets occasions like that one and neither will some of those kids.

#### PREACHING WITH J. FRANK NORRIS'S GRANDKID

Four of us preachers decided to minister to a small town in PA. One of these pastors had brought along a very old gentleman. I paid nominal attention to this patriarch, but he did not exactly stand out in the crowd. It was obvious that because of my age and experience I would take charge of this street meeting. When we had all preached, I felt obligated, mostly out of genteel courtesy, to invite this super quiet senior, if he wanted it, to take a shot at preaching. He nodded in the affirmative and shuffled to the curb. He was barely audible from three feet away but did a decent job at street preaching. I asked him if that was his first time preaching on the street. His modest reply was, "Nope, my first time was in 1950, with J. Frank Norris." When I gathered myself back together, I surely was glad I asked him.

## NORTHWESTERN BIBLE COLLEGE

Speaking of J. Frank Norris, one of his “boys” named W. B. Riley left Texas and started the First Baptist Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota. He also started Northwestern **Bible** College in St. Paul, Minnesota. The reason for the bold print highlighting the word *Bible* will become evident in the latter part of this story. This Bible college was one of the “bastions of fundamentalism” even up into the early 1970s. As a matter of fact, when I counseled with Dr. Bob Gray about choosing a Bible college, Northwestern was on his list of recommendations.

I was preaching in a church near Minneapolis. The pastor came to me one day during the meeting and asked me if I would like to preach the chapel service at Northwestern Bible College. He said that a lady in his church was taking courses there and the students could suggest speakers for chapel service. Having heard of this “bastion” for most of my Christian life, I was overwhelmed at the prospect. He waited for my exhilaration to slide back to normal, and then told me that there was only one problem. He cleared his throat and told me that it was no longer titled Northwestern **Bible** College. He said the name was now Northwestern...College. He explained, not intending to defend the choice, that the college continued to maintain a “Christian” motif but had chosen to take the word **Bible** off of the sign and stationery. I told him that I could read between the lines of what he was telling me, but that I would gladly preach, even in a nunnery, if I could get the opportunity; I told him to put my name in the hat.

The big day came and we drove onto the astoundingly impressive campus. The successors of W. B. Riley had purchased an ancient monastery. The buildings were built of huge, jet-black stone and the lawns were manicured. We entered the massive auditorium, where the mandatory chapel service, comprised of 1,300 students, plus faculty and staff, was held. WOW! I was impressed...and ready. In my fifteen-minute (mandatory) message I chose to exhort them to be a witness of what the Lord had done for them. I did not harangue on street preaching but simply admonished them to “Walk the walk and talk the talk.” In the middle of the message, a contingency of twelve students directly in the middle of the seating started to boo me. They openly laughed and mocked me. They then stood up, waving their hands in disgust, and booed and scoffed before walking out of compulsory chapel service. I was incredulous. In my twenty-two years of ministering, I had never experienced a ruder audience. So much for the “Christian” motif. Now, some twenty years since that incident, I have noticed the major tendency

toward apostasy among nearly every college that was once among the “bastions”.

When we drove off the beautiful campus grounds, I couldn't help noticing the sign. At the sweeping entrance, they had a lovely brick wall about three feet high, which bordered the curved drive. There were three-dimensional, white letters screwed into the brick. It simply read, Northwestern.....College (without the dots). The ominous space spoke volumes. That night in church I preached on premeditated apostasy. I used the experience at the college as an illustration. At some point in their premeditated apostasy, someone, or some board, had to give the directive to the maintenance department to take equipment out to the entrance and unscrew the letters **B I B L E**. At the same time someone had to change the order for the college stationery, concerning the word *Bible*. Then I admonished the church that absolutely no ministry is exempt from apostasy. J. Frank Norris **was** a great **BIBLE** preacher. W. B. Riley **was** a great **BIBLE** preacher. First Baptist Church of Minneapolis **was** a great **BIBLE** church, and Northwestern **BIBLE** College **was** once a great **BIBLE** college.

#### SPEAKING OF W. B. Riley

While I was in the Minneapolis area I preached at a nursing home. This was not your average nursing home but was a rather fancy one. This was designed for rich people, and everything reflected that. When they announced there was a church service, everybody put on their best Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes and gathered in an elaborate conference room. Since they were first class dudes and dudettes in their first class duds, I thought I would challenge their pride. I told them what we did in the SWAT TEAM and then I exhorted them to find a way to be a publick witness for their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I told them they could take a lawn chair, along with an umbrella and a glass of iced tea and sit out next to the highway, holding a scripture sign. They liked the idea, but I doubt any of them went through with it. When I finished, I shook all their fancy hands and one old, (very old) but still first class lady told me she used to go on street meetings: “Really?” I said, “Yes, years ago I went on street meetings, right here in Minneapolis, with W. B. Riley.” WOW! Glad I asked.

#### SPURRING CHURCHES ON TO PUBLICK MINISTRY

After a couple of years on the road, we had to change church memberships, because our schedule developed into a circuit that did not usually include central Florida, but often included central Texas. After much prayer and counsel with James Knox and Hank Thompson, we moved our membership to Capitol City Baptist Church, in Austin, Texas.

We were then able to be much more a part of our local church, even though we were on the road full-time.

The good Lord allowed us to influence Capitol City Baptist Church in the area of public ministry. By the way, if you have heard the story of Josh and Caleb Thompson and their unjust imprisonment, we took them out on the street and taught them public ministry back when they were pre-teens. Capitol City is still our home church, even though we are now missionaries serving in Romania.

Pastor Hank Thompson promoted our ministry within the church and we had one street meeting where ninety-two people from the church were out serving the Lord, publicly. That was fun, and it was like a shot of spiritual vitamin B for the people. Among other churches we ministered in, we held this enthusiastic response up as a high mark of participation.

During this same time as we traveled, I was given a recommendation to another pastor in Lawrence, KS. Pastor Scott Hanks scheduled me to minister in Heritage Baptist Church on a Wednesday night. We had never met before, and I drove into the parking lot about twenty minutes before the service was to begin. I came pretty close to walking from the motor home, directly into the pulpit, but things worked out just fine. There were about 150 attending that night, and when the invitation was given, the altar was flooded with the tears of many tender servants. During the invitation, the pastor slipped up to me and asked, "Do you ever do street meetings at night?" I replied, "Well, yes, but I am not familiar with Lawrence, KS., and sometimes it is hard to find a crowd to preach to at night." He told me that Lawrence was a college town, so I told him there would most likely be many places to preach. The pastor waited a long time, but even before the altar was clear, he told his sheep, "Folks, we have heard a real challenge tonight, and I hate to let this challenge just pass without taking advantage of it." He continued, "I know this is a school night and many of you must get home, but I am going to pull one of our school busses up in front of the church, and anyone who can go tonight can just get on the bus. We will be back at the church in about an hour and a half." Forty-six men, women and children got on the bus. We headed downtown, preached in front of a couple of bars and passed many tracts: some men preached for the first time, but, we hoped, not the last time. We had a successful encounter with the police, and Pastor Hanks was pleased with it all. What a grand success story of presenting public ministry to a good church for the first time.

Heritage Baptist and Capitol City Baptist became friendly competitors in the number of people they put on the street meetings. On a return trip to Heritage, we put 108 soldiers on the street. Armed with that new record,

I preached again at Capitol City; my pastor took the challenge and put 122 on the street. My figures may be off a bit, but if I remember correctly, Heritage won the last of the contests in publick ministry. The activity outside the church served both churches well, strengthening the individual participants, as well as the churches as a whole.

We traveled the USA for a total of fourteen years from coast to coast and from border to border. We ministered in approximately a thousand churches and not a few Bible colleges. Wherever we went, we did the work of publick ministry and challenged all who would lend an ear. We have been away from that travel in the USA now for five and a half years, as missionaries in Romania, but I still receive e-mails and phone calls from people I have long since forgotten but who have not forgotten us. Many are still active in publick ministry, and they gratefully trace their introduction to that ministry back to the travels of the SWAT TEAM for Christ.

#### TECHNOLOGICAL EVOLUTION OVER THE YEARS

It is interesting to remember our SWAT TEAM newsletters and communications. For our first newsletters, I first borrowed a manual typewriter and made my own letterhead before typing the letter and taking it to a copy place. We all sat down for a good part of the day and worked at addressing and stuffing envelopes, before heading to the post office for stamps and mailing. Today, I write the SWAT REPORTS on my computer and press a button when I finish; within a minute, someone could read it in Hong Kong. We've come a long way, baby.

While we traveled, our first method of phone communications consisted of publishing my mother's Florida phone number. Every few days we would call and get our messages. We evolved to an 800 number, by which we could retrieve messages. We then got a bag phone, which required a year's contract and promised service in ninety-two percent of the country. "Only eight percent of America will be unavailable to you because of the rural regions," the salesman said. It turned out just the opposite. The bag phone *worked* in about eight percent of the country and didn't work in the other ninety-two percent. This was a constant source of irritation. No wonder they required a year's contract. We also tried plugging a regular house phone with a looooooong cord into the church or home where we were parked. The number was published via e-mail, worked fairly well, and was inexpensive.

#### CELL PHONE...WHAT'S THAT?

It will be difficult for young readers to realize that I still remember when I first heard of, saw, and used a cell phone. We were on a trip to the

Philippines in 1994. We were riding in the back seat of a taxi in Cebu City and I mentioned to Robin that I really needed to call David Lavery and check on things at the church in Northern Ireland. The national pastor, riding in the front seat, handed me a cell phone. I looked at it and said, “What’s that?” I made the call to Ireland with clarity and success; David was just as astonished on the other end.

#### E-MAIL...E-WHAT?

E-mail today is so common, as are the problems with email, that psychiatrists have probably already developed a new drug to deal with this special kind of stress. E-mail, websites, computers, and cell phones have certainly produced a very distinct generation gap. I asked Dr. Bob Gray if he had email. He replied, “Does that come with a 1947 manual typewriter?” All these modern devices can surely be a blessing, if used in the service of the Lord. I receive e-mails weekly from people all over the world who have come across my website and read my books. If that is true in your case, I would love to hear from you. E-mail me at [gsutek@streetpreaching.com](mailto:gsutek@streetpreaching.com). It is a joy to have a part in so many ministries, even if the relationship is only through electronic media.

We used to send out what we called a “pastors’ packet” to pastors we hoped would have us in for a meeting. This large envelope was crammed with all kinds of flyers and newsletters, in addition to a business card, prayer card, and some photos. It was cumbersome, expensive, and worthless. Now, if someone wants ANY information on the SWAT TEAM, I just refer them to [www.streetpreaching.com](http://www.streetpreaching.com), and there is more info there than could be sent in a trunk via Fed Ex.

#### PREACHING AROUND THE WORLD ON THE WEBCAM

I was holding a meeting with a good friend and pastor, Dave Dunbar, at Freedom Baptist Church, in Auburn, NY. Auburn is near Syracuse, so we decided to go to the big city and hold a street meeting. I was in Bro. Dunbar’s office one morning, and he showed me a city webcam for Syracuse. I had never heard of such a thing. A camera, mounted on a public building across from the main downtown park, broadcast a live picture about every ten seconds. Many cities have them now, even here in Romania, but back then it was a novel discovery for this patriarch. An idea popped into my head as I viewed the live webcam. “Why can’t we hold a street meeting right in front of the camera, with us singing and holding a huge banner and scripture signs. The camera broadcasts no audio, but the banner and signs would be a good witness.” Then another idea came into my brain/computer. Why not put a message out to all my e-mail contacts and announce the day and hour, so that they could join us from anywhere in the world to watch a live street meeting with the

SWAT TEAM for Christ? We received testimonies from many corners of the globe, with some folks telling of rising at four in the morning so that they could join us. Just be faithful to put out His Word, and He will surely bless it.

The story on how the books were written and published is also in the original *Fragments of Faith*. But rejoice with me that these books have helped many, and we constantly hear from people we have never known before, with a report that they somehow read one of my books and were blessed or helped. One of the greatest compliments came when I was browsing in a used bookstore (somewhere in Ohio, I believe) and found one of my books on a shelf. On the same shelf was a book by Billy Graham and another by Lee Iacoca. I received an email yesterday (April 29, 2010) from a missionary friend living in Israel, who told me that he had found one of my books in a bookstore in Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER 3

### “CAREFREE” MOTOR HOME TRAVEL

Traveling full-time in a motor home may *sound* “novel” and even “romantic”, but it is neither trouble-free nor cheap. We enjoyed our years with meals on wheels, doing the business of the ministry on wheels, keeping a marriage together on wheels, raising a kid on wheels, educating that kid on wheels and maintaining those wheels. Motor homes are made to sell--they were NEVER built to last. They serve well for some years, if used for trips to the tailgate party of a college football game and to the lake for weekend fishing trips, but they are not constructed to travel 30,000 to 50,000 miles per year, for many years.

American auto insurance companies do not even recognize the possibility of someone living and traveling full-time in a motor home. In 1990, I tried to buy the required insurance for our motor home. I went to an agent and told him the truth. He asked how many miles per year I would be using it and where it was kept the rest of the time. I said we would be in it the entire year and would travel at least 35,000 miles. He flipped out and, in any case, had no provision on his payment schedules for such a circumstance. I went down the road to another agent. They found me insurance but only at the rate of \$12,000 per year. I searched further and came up with the conclusion that, although there might be many agents available, there were still only a very few insurance companies that would insure motor homes. It was then and there that I came up with a unique way of solving this problem. I went to yet another agent who asked basically the same questions. When they asked how many miles a year I estimated I would put on it, I simply said, “Oh, well, that is hard to guess, but I would say 10,000 or 12,000 miles...**or maybe more.**” I got the insurance for a price I could afford.

### SHAKE, RAATTLE AND ROLL!

Imagine what would happen if you took your house, put it up on a set of wheels, and then drove it, twisting and bouncing along, over miles and miles of bad roads. How long do you think it would be until it developed leaks and cracks, or something fell off?

### LEAKS, LEAKS, LEAKS

The joke is told, “What is the only food that Noah refused to take with him on the ark?” The answer is... “Leeks!” Ha, ha, ha. The spelling may be different, but leaks in the motor home, we had. Leaks in the radiator; leaks in the transmission oil, crank shaft, gas tank; leaks in the roof; leaks in the fresh water reservoir; leaks in the sewer; leaks in the toilet; leaks in the sink; leaks in the floor, when the tires picked up water and threw it up on the under side of the floor and eventually inside; leaks in the shower; leaks under the bed when the water pipe burst; leaks behind the walls; mysterious leaks never solved and recurring leaks after the problems were “fixed”.

There is a unique camaraderie that develops among those in the ministry that travel and live in motor homes full-time. Buddy Blunkall had been on the road a considerably longer time than I. We were in a meeting together and I thought I would seek some wise counsel from a veteran. I asked him the best way to handle leaks in the roof of a motor home. He said, without hesitation, “Oh, that is easy.” I was immediately relieved, glad I had chosen to seek counsel from this wise, experienced fellow servant. Buddy continued, “All you do is find out precisely where the leak is in the roof; then go directly beneath that hole in the roof and drill a matching hole in the floor and the water will go right back out.” OOOO...I could have punched him in the nose, but he’s two heads taller than I am!

One night, while all was quiet and we were sound asleep in our bed, we heard an unusual noise, like the sound of water squirting against a wall. At the same time, we felt a slight vibration under our mattress. We instantly knew this was not going to be a restful night. Leaping up, we threw the mattress off the bed, opened the storage area under the bed and were shot in the face with fresh water (thank God it was *fresh!*). One of the pipes had sprung a leak; before I could turn off the source, the entire carpet, the contents of the storage area, the mattress, and the wood frame of the bed were soaked. You must realize that when companies build motor homes, they lay the carpet first and then build the walls and cabinets, fastening them down on top of the carpet and securing them to the wood frame underneath the carpet. This makes for quick and easy construction, but greatly complicates life after a major leak. In order to pull up the soaked carpet so it can dry or be replaced, EVERYTHING must be torn up because EVERYTHING is fastened to the floorboard *under* the carpet! The walls, cabinets, electrical conduits, wiring, water pipes, sewer pipes: EVERYTHING must be removed. This is the *romantic* part of living on the road in a motor home-- casually traveling and seeing the country in a carefree lifestyle.

The first motor home we enjoyed was a dinosaur. It had no separate holding tanks for the gray and black water, which meant that if you used

the bathroom one time and then took a shower, you had to empty all the water as black (sewer) water. Because of that problem, you just could not use the restroom facilities. There were also problems with the system for connecting and filling the fresh water. In order to have fresh water, I had to screw a water hose into the side of the motor home and stand there until the overflow tube--which also doubled as an air vent--began to yield water out from underneath the motor home. On one occasion, I was in West Virginia and the weather was freezing cold. Freezing cold makes life in an RV impossible for many reasons, most of which would not be couth to explain here. I stood impatiently in the freezing cold air, filling the fresh water tank and anxiously watching for the overflow drip. Robin came to the window and, with an expression of great fear, asked, "Jerry, why is the furniture moving?" I immediately unscrewed the water hose; the water, under great pressure, shot out straight, for what must have been more than twelve feet, before the effect of gravity turned it toward the ground. You see, the fresh water tank was constructed out of very heavy-duty plastic and was placed under a piece of furniture that we used as a window seat. When the tank began to expand beyond its normal limits, the seat began to move, indicating that the tank was in serious danger of bursting. I figured out later that the reason the overflow did not drip was that it was frozen closed, prohibiting any air ventilation. I had been putting water under pressure into a closed system filled mostly with air. This might have been disastrous.

In fact, on another occasion, we had just arrived at a friend's house and were getting reacquainted and setting up our motor home at the same time. One of Bear's duties was to fill the fresh water tank from the hose, exactly as I described above. Mind you, you dared not leave the scene, or even be distracted, while you watched for the overflow tube to tell you the tank was full. Well, it was a hot day and I was invited in to sit in the AC and sip iced tea. Soon after, Bear came in and did the same. Some time passed casually, and I assumed Bear had done his duty properly, but when I asked him about filling the tank, he leaped up and ran. This meant trouble, so I joined him. Distracted by the invitation to come into the AC and sip tea, he had left the hose running, and the water gushing into the tank. When I opened the front door of the motor home, I was nearly swept away by a tsunami. Replacing of the water tank and cleaning up took most of a week and was not cheap. Just another example of the thrilling times you can have, while leisurely touring the USA in your Chevrolet (RV).

**BUZZ... BUZZ...BUZZ... BUZZ**

While trying to take an afternoon nap after driving all night, I was rudely awakened by a strange buzzing. There was a light breeze, and I thought it might be a branch, touching the RV with each gust of wind. I finally

decided to end my nap and see if there was any serious problem. I climbed on top--nothing. I walked around the outside: nothing touching. This was a mystery, but when living in an RV, life is filled with mysteries. I finally crawled underneath and, to my horror, saw that the trailer hitch wires were rubbed bare of their coating. With each breeze, they were contacting the solid steel hitch and buzzing electrically. This was the Lord gently nudging my senses, possibly just moments prior to a fire. You don't want a fire in a motor home.

We did have one fire. While I was driving, the break drum seal broke and began running on the rear axle. The brake fluid ignited and the flames threatened to ignite the rubber tires of the dual wheels. If the tires caught, that was the end of the world. You could not have removed the tires quickly enough to keep the home from igniting. I grabbed the extinguisher, crawled under the motor home, and began to squirt. It was a cheap, small-can extinguisher and the fire was in several locations. While crawling to reach another flame, I took my finger off the extinguisher, and when I tried to squirt again, I realized that I had bought a cheap extinguisher, the type that only works for as long as the button is depressed. I frantically crawled to the highway and tried to signal someone, anyone, and everyone. No one had the time, nerve, extinguisher, or frame of mind to stop. Meanwhile I was watching the fire spread dangerously. Someone finally stopped but did not have any equipment. He said he lived close by and would run home and get what we needed. He left, but there was not time to wait. The only hope I had was to drive the rig as fast as I could, in hopes the fire would blow out. The idea worked; otherwise, I would not be writing this, seventeen years later.

RUMPH, RUMPH, RUMPH, RUMPH.

Mysteries prevail in the world of mechanics as well. The following story is an excellent example. I started a cold engine and it ran great. We traveled ten miles, and I felt a gentle miss in the engine, but the engine picked right back up and purred normally. Another mile, another miss; a half mile, a miss; then regular misses; then aggravating misses; then bronco-busting misses. The mechanics (that is plural, you will notice, along with the ensuing bills and irregular misses) checked the points, plugs, condenser, valves, plug wires, timing, gas filter, gas tank for water, fuel pump, air filter, oil filter, engine compression, radiator cap, and hub caps. NOTHING! By now the engine was cold again and when I started it the engine ran smooth, so we deduced that the problem was fixed. You do realize that to do all this, these mechanics had to remove the hatch cover of a huge engine, which happened to be in the middle of our living room. I paid the bill, started the cold engine and drove without a problem for ten miles; then came a gentle miss, and the same routine

repeated; only, by now we had moved twenty to fifty miles from that mechanic, never to return. This went on for weeks, until we were so car sick from riding the bucking bronco that we committed to fixing it, regardless of time and expense. This mechanic did all that was done before, except that when he started it this time and while he was looking and poking at the engine, it missed. Praise the good Lord, it missed then and not twenty miles down the road. He continued to poke, shake, touch, search, look, and watch, as I prayed. His screwdriver then touched a tiny wire (not two inches long) running from the coil to the frame. This wire grounded the coil, which was vital to the operation of the engine. You could not see the problem with your naked eye, but the end touching the frame was frayed, and as the engine got warmer, the wire got hotter and expanded until it was no longer in contact with the frame. The mechanic changed the two-cent wire, secured it tightly to the frame, and did not even charge us for the whole fix. And that is exactly what it was, a fix. Praise the Lord for his mercy and bestowal of wisdom upon the mechanic.

#### ENGINE TOTALLY SHOT?

We were making good time on July 4<sup>th</sup>, (which is a good day to make good time.) We were about forty miles from our destination and we were facing a three-mile long, two-lane road to the top of a mountain. My total rig length was sixty-three feet, articulated between my thirty-four foot motor home and twenty-four foot trailer. With this enormous rig, once I committed to this two-lane mountain road there was no turning back. As soon as I began the long ascent, I noticed black smoke billowing out from the rear of the RV. This smoke was choking and blotting out the drivers and cars behind me. My first thought was that since my engine was apparently completely shot, I had nothing to lose, so I kept going toward the top. To stop halfway, block all the traffic, and call for a wrecker would have been out of the question. I *had* to make it to the top, where I hoped I could check this problem out. Still polluting everything behind me--and seriously affecting the ozone layer and global warming--I made it to the top. I pulled off at a safe place and immediately killed the engine. The smoke instantly dissipated. I inquired about an available mechanic and was told there was one located at the bottom of the mountain. Remember, it was 8 p.m. on July 4<sup>th</sup>. I had little choice but to start down the decline. The engine seemed to run purr-fect, and I mostly coasted down. I found the mechanic's shop, but he was just closing, as it was now 8:30 p.m. He allowed me to spend the night on his property and even run an electric line to his shop. In the morning, he and another mechanic climbed all over and under the rig...but couldn't seem to find what seemed like a very serious problem. Finally, he yelled success, from under the rig. He explained that I must have had a two-quart oil filter put on the last time I changed the oil. Normally, that is a

good idea, but on this rig, the extra length made the oil filter too long, and extended it too close to the exhaust pipe. The exhaust had burned a pinhole into the side of the oil filter, and as I accelerated, the pressure squirted hot oil onto an even hotter exhaust pipe. This situation was not too healthy. He told me we were very “lucky” that one (or both) of two possible problems did not occur. One, the oil loss could have burned up the engine and two, an even worse scenario, the oil could have caught fire on the heated exhaust pipe and burned up the entire motor home. We chose to credit the Lord, rather than luck, since we were living each moment consciously--as well as unconsciously--by faith.

#### NATIONWIDE LIFETIME WARRANTY...RIGHT!

Naturally, when you have constant mechanical problems you try to buy parts with a warranty and keep the warranties, yet you still will find yourself with a part that is under warranty but you are 1100 miles from the parts store that issued the warranty.

I had one RV that ate starters. That is, because of poor design the starter was too close to the exhaust pipe and the shield was insufficient to keep the pipe from burning into the starter. I had replaced several starters already, so in anticipation of replacing more, I entered a NAPA auto parts dealership in a small town in California. I asked if they had a starter that offered a nationwide, lifetime warranty. “Certainly we do!” bragged the man. It cost fifteen dollars more than a normal starter, but I would never have to buy another starter for that RV. I installed it and drove to Florida, where, sure enough, the starter burned out again. No problem! I removed the starter, grabbed the receipt and warranty card, and trotted off to the local NAPA store. I plopped the starter and warranty on the counter with great confidence. The counter worker looked at both and knew there might be a problem. He said, “Sir, I know that you think you have a warranty on this, but I regret to tell you that in actuality you do not.” “What?!” I exclaimed. He explained that NAPA does carry a nationwide warranty, but only on their very own products. The starter I had bought was a locally made starter: the local NAPA had the right to attach the nationwide warranty, but it was only good at that store or at stores within the nation that carried such locally made starters. I just continued buying starters until the Lord replaced the whole rig.

#### AN EIGHT FT. ALLIGATOR EATS THE SEWER SYSTEM

While I was barreling down the four-lane road to the next meeting, the car in front of me suddenly swerved: in the road lay an eight-foot alligator. Well, I thought that would get your attention. It was only called an alligator; actually it was the remains of a recapped truck tire,

which are so common on larger highways. The car could swerve, but you don't swerve in a motor home. I braced as the alligator hit square in the middle of the rig. I heard a great deal of commotion and saw, in the mirror, lots of litter and liquid (not good). Upon examination, the problem turned out to be that the metal-reinforced recap had taken out the entire PVC sewer system, along with a full tank of sewer. Oh well, at least we no longer were desperate to dump.

#### TOO MUCH STUFF (Genesis 45:20)

The only new vehicle I ever bought was a much-needed motor home. (The story of how we bought it is in the original *Fragments of Faith*.) We drove it for 9,000 miles, and while it was still practically brand-new, I noticed that it was listing to starboard. When I had it inspected, I found that the rear passenger side had collapsed down onto the frame. The floor of the home was rubbing on the top of the tire. The dealer said, "Man! What are you carrying in here? Rocks?" The problem was that the frame had been built of low quality steel and was not able to support the home. They took the home up off of the frame, put new steel in, reinforced the steel frame with gussets, and three weeks later we were back in our brand-new motor home. You had better think twice before you invest--that is a joke--in an RV. Motor homes are built to sell; once they sell, the dealer is a success, but you may be the sucker.

#### BOOKMOBILE?

We tried many combinations of vehicles to accommodate our "stuff" that was necessary to live on the road and educate a child. Mary has always been an indefatigable reader, so we had the dashboard lined with books, three rows deep to the windshield. I was filling the gas tank on one occasion when a lady approached, looked on the dash, and said, "Is that a Christian bookmobile?"

#### LIVING LIFE ON THE ROAD

Just living a normal life requires a lot of stuff. Robin needed kitchen stuff, sewing stuff, personal item stuff, book stuff, and just stuff. Mary needed schooling stuff, hobby stuff, toy stuff, children's sports stuff, and even pet stuff. We had dogs (notice the plural), a rabbit, a bird, fish, and even a pet rock. We did not want to miss out on anything in life simply because we were on the road.

#### MYSTERIOUS *FEMALE* ANGEL?

I bought a huge roof carrier and fastened it down with strong straps and cords. There was not easy access to the roof and it doesn't matter how much you pay for a carrier...it leaks.

There was a time that I was traveling at the speed limit (maybe a bit more) on a divided interstate. I heard a whoosh. Looking in the rear view mirror, I saw the roof carrier spinning to a stop in the passing lane. By the time I came to a safe stop, I was nearly a quarter of a mile away from the carrier, which was a potential accident: cars were swerving all over the place. I ran back and dragged the carrier off the highway. This thing weighed about four hundred pounds. As I was looking at it and then at the rig and then back to the carrier and then back to the rig, a lady driving a black pickup in the opposite direction spotted me. She crossed the median and stopped. When she got out, she looked as though she weighed all of 92 ½ pounds. She was spry and spunky, though, and offered to help. Over my protests, she said she was a farm girl and this problem was nothing she could not handle. With great effort on my part, we loaded the carrier in the back of her pickup. I rode on the tailgate as we drove back, and in a moment, we were at the rig. We dragged it off the truck, I gave her a tract and she disappeared. If I didn't know correct theology, I would swear angels could be girls.

#### A REAL TRAFFIC STOPPER

We finally evolved into a train. We finally put together what I later called the ultimate road rig. It consisted of a thirty-four foot motor home pulling a twenty-four foot trailer. Inside the trailer was a small car, fastened down to the floor. The trailer was carpeted, air conditioned, and had a window, bookshelves, a large walk-in closet and good electric lighting. The back door served as a ramp to drive the car in and out; when the car was out, this became a huge, extra room. This trailer served as Mary's schoolroom. She had a full-sized keyboard, art and science projects, toys, books, and tapes galore. When we stayed in one place for any length of time, I parked the trailer and rig side by side. Stretching the awning from the rig over the two vehicles made a nice breezeway. If you must live on the road, that is really living.

This ultimate rig had a wide body and was sixty-three feet long. There was a four-foot long tongue to the trailer. The trailer could not be moved, except by the rig itself, so parking and maneuvering was complicated. You don't make quick or unplanned decisions driving a rig like this. In a large city, I realized the rig needed gas. I found a nice Exxon station, but both entrance and exit had quite a hump that had to be taken into consideration. Think for just a moment about how a rig like this bends up and down, when maneuvering a hump of any size. You have the

threat of the back of the trailer bottoming out, effecting great damage, or even the back end of the rig bumping, which would result in great damage. You also have the vertical shaft on the trailer hitch, in the middle of the rig, where the trailer rests when unhitched. When connected to the rig, this hitch shaft screwed up only to about sixteen inches off the pavement. I gingerly maneuvered the first big hump. I pumped my gas and then I had to strategically plan my exit over the second big hump. At the exit, I was forced to pull out into a four-lane, one-way, very busy road and my rig was blocking three of those lanes. The trailer hitch began scraping over the hump. I inched my way forward, hoping and praying--and then.....the trailer hitch's vertical rest bar slid into a groove between the sidewalk and pavement, where it sank down three inches. Ain't nobody going nowhere, honey. Now we have a real problem. Three of the four lanes are blocked, the traffic is coming, angry horns are blowing, a crowd is gathering, and there is nothing I can do. The crowd and I looked at the problem but no one had a solution. The hitch would not raise the trailer sufficiently to release the rig. A police car stopped and one officer went to direct the angry traffic through the only lane still open while the other officer came over to threaten me. When he saw the impossible situation, he backed off of his threats, but offered little in the way of suggestion. I don't even carry a jack, because one big enough to lift the motor home would be simply enormous. The job of changing a tire on an RV requires pneumatic power equipment and is way too much for me. One person in the crowd offered to bring a floor jack from the neighborhood, so we stood waiting. The floor jack leaked, so it didn't work. Time moved on, and the traffic backed up. Finally, I decided to go through the dangerous and laborious work of removing the entire trailer hitch. Once it was removed, I delicately moved the rig out of traffic and, with the rig safely out of the way, was able to reassemble the hitch, put it back on, and get to the next meeting. Such is life on the road with the SWAT MOBILE.

#### BRAND NEW, AND... FOUR TRANSMISSIONS AND THREE REAR ENDS

We all buy something new, in hopes of avoiding major repair bills for a while, right? It doesn't always work that way. We were considered low-mileage full-timers, because we only traveled about 15,000 to 20,000 miles per year. We traveled a lot, but we tried to plan our meetings so that we did not meander. When we stopped, we took the car out of the trailer and used the car to get around town. Most of our driving with the rig was on the interstate, but in the course of a few years on the road--with a brand-new RV-- I replaced four transmissions and three rear ends. This does not include the many lesser repairs. The folks who write the warrantees have developed this business into nearly an exact

science. I'll bet they could guess the mileage life of a transmission within five hundred miles.

### TWO TOW TRUCKS?

One of those four transmission failures occurred when I was in northern Pennsylvania. Well, this is never fun or cheap (\$2,700) but we took comfort in the probable fact that some mechanic in the transmission repair shop needed a witness. I put the rig in the shop and drove our van to Delaware, where we stayed with family until the rig was repaired. The call came at the end of the week, so I took the van to retrieve the repaired rig, planning to connect the two vehicles and tow the van, as usual. At 11:30 p.m., about halfway into the journey to retrieve the rig, the transmission on the van broke down. This was definitely not my day, night, or week. I called a friend who lived halfway between where I was and where the rig had been repaired. He got out of bed and came to my rescue. Because I made special arrangements to pay for the rig, I picked it up at 1:30 a.m., before beginning my journey back to the van. I hooked the van up, as the sun began to rise, and I headed toward Delaware with both vehicles. About a hundred miles into this piggyback journey, the transmission in the rig broke for the second time. Now I had two dead vehicles on the side of the road, about 150 miles from where I need to be.

Two tow trucks, one transmission repair covered by warrantee, one repair not covered by warrantee (all paid for in cash and obtained by faith) and seven days later, we were merrily back on the carefree road of full-time RV living, seeing the sights as we rolled along.

### WRECKS?

The only serious wreck we had in the fourteen years on the road was the time I took an exit off Interstate 80 to buy gas in Winnemucca, NV. I was just entering the town on a four-lane road when I noticed on my left a tractor-trailer that was moving into my lane. It got really cozy, and as I slowed to avoid the truck on the left side, I saw a flatbed truck parked on my right side, where he should not have been. There was no more negotiating; the awning arm of our rig caught on the corner of the flatbed and went flying. The corner of the flatbed continued its damaging effect down the side of the rig, got both doors, and dug deeply into the rig's rear quarter. It finally caught the seam of the home at the rear, tearing a major portion of the back of the motor home away from the main body of the rig. This looked like a disaster beyond repair. All furniture in a motor home is fastened to the wall: when the back wall was torn free of the body of the home, the drawers and cabinets were all torn free as well.

You are truly humbled when your underwear is hanging out of your drawer on the *outside* of your motor home.

This happened in Winnamucca. You know, everybody flocks to that great, full-service metropolis of Winnamucca, NV right? Seriously, there is not even a Wal-Mart there. The nearest RV dealer who could make repairs was in Salt Lake City, Utah: a mere 353 miles away, to the northeast. Oh great! I've got to drive a whole day, very slowly, with my underwear sticking out of the back end of my house. I couldn't drive fast because of the damage.

To make a long story short, we found a RV repair place that had just started in the business and the mechanics were hungry for work. They allowed us to park, plug up, and stay on their property while they fixed it. They were able to get the parts in a couple of days and the good Lord provided all the money necessary for this extensive and expensive repair. We invited the Mormon owners in for lunch and gave them a good witness of the truth of salvation, in Christ Jesus alone. Praise the Lord.

#### SAILING THE SWAT-MOBILE IN AZ.

Interstate 40 through West Texas, New Mexico and Arizona can be a breeze, a real breeze-- a strong breeze. Well, let me just say that many tractor-trailers have breezed right into the ditch on that road. Twice, as I approached Flagstaff, AZ, I have had this same experience. I wondered if I had mechanical difficulties in the front end, because the rig was determined to turn right off the road into the ditch. My arms literally became fatigued from fighting the steering wheel to keep the rig on the road. We were creeping along on the interstate at about forty mph due to this "breeze." Then it happened: a loud clunk on the side, a serious whoosh, and then flap, flap, flap on the rooftop. These are all sounds that an RVer dreams about after eating way too much pizza. The wind was so horrendous that it actually broke the lock on the windup awning and unfurled the awning. Fully extended and flapping, the awning blew all the way across the roof, remaining attached. This was an emergency situation that called for a super hero. Since there was only my wife, my 7-year-old girl, and myself in the RV, that super hero was me. It was miserably cold outside and, without exaggeration, I estimated the wind to be about seventy mph. I could barely open the door against the wind so that I could slip out. I gingerly climbed the ladder to the roof and eased myself out onto the flat roof, making myself as flat as possible, and inching towards the violently flapping awning. In this wind, there was absolutely no way that even fifty men could wind the awning back up and lock it. There was only one solution. I took a strong knife and cut the awning loose. When it was completely cut, I watch it fly across the highway and into the desert. It flew forty yards before it even hit the

ground. The whole time, the motor home was rocking in this fierce wind and threatening to turn over. One hour later, my frozen hands made a Herculean effort to open the door and my family was greatly relieved at my safe return. Oh well, we had to buy a new awning; that one was about to start leaking anyway.

### DON'T "ROCK" YOUR WAY OUT OF MEMPHIS

As a teenager, I grew up in Jacksonville, FL. It was the coolest thing, back then, to cruise the beach. Jax. Beach was advertised as "Florida's widest beach." At low tide, three rows of cars could be parked and lots of beach would still remain before the waterline. We teenagers would slowly cruise through the three rows of cars to look at...a-hum; well, you can figure it out. The day was not complete unless several cars got stuck in the sand and all the "Fonzies" showed off their manliness by pushing the cars out. It was all part of the beach scene in the late 50's. The driver's part was to rock the car back and forth, by shifting the transmission from forward to reverse, while the cool guys would push with synchronization until momentum set the vehicle free. This is how I learned what to do when you get stuck. But.....you don't do that with a combination rig that is sixty-three feet long.

I drove into the field where the RV community was gathering. The field was rough and my wheels settled into a sizeable rut, but it was a good spot and I decided to deal with it after the Beale St. Blast was over. There were many familiar faces to greet and much fellowship to enjoy right now. The Blast went very well that year. As it closed, we said our goodbyes at midday on Monday. Now I had to deal with the rut. There have been countless autos that I have rocked out of sticky places, using the method described above, and I began to do the same with the rig, but something happened inside the tranny. When I finally was on the road, I could only reach about seven mph. Well, I knew I was facing another week in the mechanic's garage and a bill of several thousand dollars. My net worth on this dismal Monday was about four hundred dollars. I called my friend, Ken Lansing, and asked for a recommendation for a tranny mechanic that would allow me to plug up while he worked. Though I kept the rig rolling while I waited for Ken's return call, I was draped over the steering wheel, going seven mph and praying. I told the Lord how much I had (as if He did not know) and claimed the promise of Philippians 4:19. My phone rang; thinking it was Ken, I answered, but it was not him.

At the Blast that year, I met a new guy who was green in the things of the Lord. He had just been saved, had heard about the Blast, and drove from upper Wisconsin to Memphis to see what it was all about. He was received well by the Blast veterans and he enjoyed the fellowship,

preaching, and opportunities for service that the Blast had provided for him. He had to leave early, so he drove home on Saturday. He knew nothing of my dilemma or my prayer. Now, on the phone, he told me that when he arrived home, his mail had contained a check from his insurance company. He had had some hail damage and they were responding to his damage claim. He told me how much he had been encouraged in the things of the Lord that weekend, and then asked me, "Hey, could you use some money?" Thus, the name of this book, "More Fragments of Faith."

## CHAPTER 4

### HANDFULS OF BLESSING ALONG THE ROAD

Although neither living in a motor home nor serving the Lord Jesus Christ, is carefree, there are many blessings along both roads. The good Lord gave us wisdom how we could raise, teach, enjoy, and discipline a small child, Mary Bethany, while living full time in an RV and serving the Lord in the area of evangelism and public ministry. The Lord taught us how to experience the abundant life--that only He can bestow--even under unusual circumstances.

#### HOME SCHOOLING

Our travel, very obviously, made it necessary that we home school Mary Bethany. Our schedule naturally made such a task a nightmare. We chose the Abeka program: Mary began in kindergarten and never missed a day of her curriculum. It is interesting to remember that during Mary's adoption process in the Philippines, our attorney there asked us concerning her education (education is of the utmost importance to the people of the Philippines) and Robin assured him that Mary would be provided with a quality "private" education. He smiled, satisfied with what he pictured as a private education. What Robin had in mind was Mary's education at the kitchen table of our private motor home.

Her school days have been one giant fieldtrip. She has been blessed with the opportunity to visit the Grand Canyon, Mount Rushmore, Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco, Alcatraz, the cruise ship Queen Mary, and our nation's capitol in Washington. She has climbed Squaw Peak in Phoenix; ridden a horse in Jackson Hole, Wyoming; fished in the Atlantic Ocean in Jacksonville, Florida; built sand castles on the beach in Norfolk, Virginia; spent the night beside the Penobscot river in Maine; rafted on the rapids of the Hood River in Oregon; stood on top of the twin towers (before they fell); and had snowball fights in Glacier National Park, Montana. Mary helped make pottery in Boonesville, Tennessee (Daniel Boone's town). Mary has walked the streets of the French Quarter in New Orleans, stood on The Strip in Las Vegas, toured the Alamo, and strolled through the historic districts of Philadelphia and Boston. She has tasted sharp cheddar cheese in Vermont; oysters from Chesapeake Bay and Apalachicola, Florida; lobster from Maine (that's the main thing in Maine); steak and Tex-Mex in West Texas; sushi in Arizona; alligator in Florida; moose in Montana; elk in Wyoming; bear in—somewhere; crab in Delaware; clam chowder and sourdough bread in

San Francisco; fried chicken and fried okra in the south; Manhattan hotdogs; and calamari (which was extraordinarily good). She has seen the Sears tower in Chicago, the Great Salt Lake, the Gulf of Mexico, the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, as well as the Mediterranean Sea. She has been up in the Eiffel Tower, walked Normandy Beach, walked the halls of Versailles Castle, and toured Northern and Southern Ireland. She has been to the Hitler museum in Nuremberg, Germany, The Rock of Gibraltar, southern England and Wales, Holland, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, Austria, Czech, Slovakia, Poland, Spain, Hungary, Luxemburg, and Sicily. Her schooling has been a continuous, three-dimensional geography and history lesson.

Concerning her education and experience in the more important field of service, the Lord's work, Mary has been raised on our National Street Preacher's Conventions. She, like the rest of our family, has been on street meetings in nearly all the major cities of the USA and Europe. She has passed tracts in downtown Brooklyn, as well as in the Gypsy villages of Romania. She has been on door-to-door visitation from Los Angeles to Budila, Romania, and has done her share of the witnessing. Mary has visited Hanham Mount in Bristol, England, where George Whitefield and John Wesley preached for the first time in the open air. Mary has visited what is left of George Mueller's ministry in England. She had her picture taken in the hiding place where Corrie Ten Boom hid the Jews in Harlem, Holland. She has visited the Christian Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. She has served in and attended some of the best Bible-believing, gospel-preaching churches in the world. She is on a first-name basis with some of this church period's great preachers and Bible teachers. She has her Bible filled with the signatures of great men whom God will surely greet with, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant...".

Our family counts these opportunities to be a great honor and privilege in the Lord's work and, on the other side of that coin, our life has been the normal, abundant life in Christ.

### 100°, THEN SNOWMEN, 100°

When living full-time on the road, it doesn't take long to figure out the importance of scheduling your travels so that you are in the north in the summer and in the south or west in the winter. Due to the un-insulated plumbing and freezing winter weather, it is virtuously impossible to function north of Tennessee from October until April, in a cheap RV.

It had been a couple years since Mary had enjoyed building a snowman or a snow angel and having a snowball fight with her dad. Here we were in the desert of Arizona, expending maximum fuel and experiencing

minimum gas mileage, due to the constant use of the dashboard AC, as well as the generator's AC. The road began to incline and we were going into the mountains of eastern Arizona. A few minutes later we were losing traction because of snow on the road. At the peak of the mountain I pulled into a small rest area. Mary and I put some old, heavy clothes on, while Mom fixed lunch. We made a big snowman and snow angels and had a big snowball fight. We got cold and rolled around as if we had lost our last marble; then Mom called and we took off our wet clothes, ate lunch, and drove down the mountain into the one hundred degree desert heat. I told the family, "Now this is my idea of a perfect winter."

### TWO COW FELLOWSHIP

The rig was brand spanking new; it didn't even have a thousand miles on the odometer. I was barreling down the back roads of Montana, in the middle of the night. There was absolutely no traffic and no speed limit in Montana at this time. We had a meeting on Sunday night and a long fellowship following and we were wired from the good service. It was about 1:00 A.M., but we were running high on adrenalin and attempting to make some good time on the road, so that we could get to the next meeting. Robin and I were talking and Mary was sleeping peacefully. There was virtually no danger, so we were just humming along. We were near the middle of nowhere: not quite at the end of the world, but you could see it from there. The new rig was ticking very smoothly and we were enjoying our respite from mechanical troubles. There was just a slight rising in the road, but when the lights settled back down on the road, I saw absolute disaster. Two cows were nose to nose, having fellowship in the middle of the road, not thirty-five yards in front of me. I set the rig on its nose, and the bedroom in the rear nearly became the front bedroom. The rig responded and we screeched to a halt not four feet before beef would have begun to bruise. The cows took lazy notice and began to meander away as our hearts leaped out of our chests. There was no time to say anything. In any case, we were totally without words. We put things back together, including Mary and our hearts, and began to drive cautiously. I said to Robin, "You know, if we had hit those cows, we would have to pay for them because of the open range laws here in Montana." She angrily replied, "I'm not paying for any cows the rancher can't keep track of! Stupid farmer!" Life on the road gets exciting at times.

### EYEBALL IN THE ROAD

David Lavery started serving the Lord under our ministry in his native Northern Ireland. The nature of our ministry in Northern Ireland was the same as always; that is, even though I took over a mission church as pastor, we continued to do lots of publick ministry. David was saved but

not attending church at the time when he first saw us preaching and tracting on the streets of his town, Ballymena. He told a friend, "If they try to give me a tract I'll punch 'em ". He didn't; instead, he eventually visited and liked our church, but swore he would never go on the street. The next week David was on the street with us and immediately loved it. Not long after this, I had to make a trip out of the country. While I was gone, David wanted to be faithful to have the regular street meeting. He took a few members of the church along, including Robin, and drove to Belfast. David did preach, but he asked Robin to stand behind him and tell him what to say...ha! He grew quickly in the Lord and when we went to the Philippines to get Mary Bethany, I put David in charge of the church for those seven weeks. When I returned, I was not at all disappointed. David proved to be a faithful man and still is. He continues to preach publicly on the streets of his small country.

When we came back to the USA and started our travels again, David wanted to travel and serve with us. David has always been a blessing, so we made provision for his living quarters in the large van that we towed. The van had a fold out bed and a place to hang clothes so it fit David perfectly. He helped in many ways, becoming Mary's P.E. instructor, helping greatly on the street meetings and blitzes, and being a blessing in the church meetings. He also helped in the long hours of driving--I won't mention the time he took a wrong route and we had to backtrack.

On a two-lane road in rural South Dakota (all of South Dakota is rural) we came to a halt at the end of a long line of traffic. There was no movement in either lane, so we knew there was a major block of some kind, but it was far up ahead. There are many times when a motor home is a great benefit, and this was one of them. I switched the motor off, turned the generator on to run the AC, put my feet up on the dash with my captain's chair reclined, and told everyone to wake me when the traffic moved again. David said he was going to walk ahead and see what the trouble was: "Pick me up when you move again, OK, Preacher?" More than an hour later, we were once again rolling slowly. When David got back in, he had a story to tell. As we crossed a small bridge, we saw much damage and debris. He told us that a motorcyclist had been traveling at a very high speed when he lost control and slid into the railing on the bridge. When David reached the scene, there were emergency personnel working feverishly to clean the debris, so he asked to help. Since David had paramedic experience in Northern Ireland, they put him to work, looking for body parts. They had found the twisted torso, but were looking for an arm and lower limbs. They had also found the helmet (with brain matter inside) but could not let the traffic continue until they were certain the parts were all found. As David helped, he looked down and saw something looking up at him. It was an eyeball.

ELVIS ON STAGE...  
IN AN INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH

David was still traveling with us as we made our way into the New England states. We landed a meeting in a small church with the right adjectives, somewhere in New Hampshire. I was the main feature of the morning service, teaching and preaching on publick ministry. The group was quite small; that was fine, they were doing the best they could along those lines. There were the usual preliminaries in the morning service and then one last solo *performance* before my message. An older man in his late sixties took the stage-- my words are carefully chosen. His white hair was the customary length for a performer. He gently lifted the mic, draping the cord, as he mounted a bar stool covered with a lamb's fleece. He sat with one foot on the last rung of the stool and one on the ground, just as an experienced performer would do on a TV stage, and nodded toward the sound booth: a tape began to play. A familiar voice came from the tape, while the older gentleman's unfamiliar voice droned heavily over it, creating a truly horrible experience with a truly horrible beat. As soon as this ended, the pastor pointed to me...it was all mine. In desperation, I searched for the Holy Spirit, but He was wiser than I was. He was gone.

I plodded through this awful time and tried to minister. Afterwards, I sat in the motor home eating lunch, Robin claimed the voice on the tape was Elvis Presley, but I bitterly objected that she had gone too far in her accusation. No Independent Baptist church would go that far. David agreed with Robin, so, while I was fighting for the integrity of my denomination, David slipped back into the now-empty church, took the tape from the player, and brought it into the motorhome. It was Elvis!

SWATERS AND SWATETTES

Many a publick ministry apprentice toured with the SWAT TEAM in the SWAT-MOBILE. Nearly all were very serious Christians who wanted to learn about publick ministry first hand. We are very happy to have given a (shoving) hand to many who are still serving the Lord in various capacities around the globe.

SWAT-MOBILE, ROLLING GOSPEL MACHINE AND BILLBOARD

This was one of the most unusual RVs in the world. It was designed from stem to stern, and from port to starboard, to be a witness for the Lord Jesus Christ. The pictures painted on the sides were professionally done, to avoid appearing tacky. One whole side pictured the three crosses and the other side showed a street man, kneeling and receiving

the free gift of salvation. These paintings were accompanied with appropriate scripture. The front of the vehicle was already quite imposing, due to its height, which was considerably greater than that of the average car. On the top, it read, "WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?" In the middle was the answer: "Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ Acts 20:21". The rear of the trailer doubled as a ramp for the car stored inside, and a billboard for those who followed. On a white, six-foot square we had a photo transfer of the Twin Towers, as they appeared on fire on 9/11. This full-color, six-foot high photo caught the eye, while the question caught the heart; "If you were on the 87<sup>th</sup> floor, where would you spend eternity?" was written among the flames and smoke.

I threatened to paint scripture on the roof, for the planes and helicopters, and on the bottom of the engine, for mechanics to read. Speaking of mechanics, knowing what a witness that the SWAT-MOBILE gave when in the mechanic shop, softened the blow when it had to spend time in repair. You should have seen those mechanics when I backed that baby into their shop. The cigarettes lost some flavor and the jokes were not nearly as funny.

#### INTERVIEW ON CNN

The SWAT MOBILE was a striking witness for the Lord everywhere it went. It was rare for us to park in an RV park, but sometimes, between meetings, we would indulge ourselves. Most RV parks were either dumps, or priced nearly the same as the Hilton. We were in an RV park in Connecticut, just having a few family days, when another ostentatious rig rolled in. This rig was plastered with advertising for CNN news and a traveling reporter who had a program on Sunday morning, called "On the Road With Charles Kuralt". He leisurely traveled America in this rig, interviewing interesting folks along the way. He spotted our rig and decided that we needed to be on his program. Mary was five years old and oh, so cute. Mr. Kuralt put Mary and me on film for just a moment, singing together, with the accompanying accordion. He also interviewed me about the declining moral conditions in our country. It was fair--though they edited out the gospel and plan of salvation, the camera caught some of the rig and the pictures on the side were a good witness.

I had a CB radio, which I used to preach on, as well as a powerful PA system wired to speakers in the front and rear of the motor home. When we could not take the time to hold a street meeting in town, we could minister on the run, rattling windows with the gospel as we passed through.

WELL, WHERE WILL YOU...?

As I sat impatiently, waiting for the traffic light machine to tell me I could move again, a schoolgirl passed by in front of the SWAT-MOBILE and was quite intimidated. I could read her lips as she mouthed what she read on the top. I flipped on the microphone, and to her great dismay and near heart failure, loudly repeated the question. “WELL, WHERE **WILL** YOU SPEND ETERNITY?” She would not soon forget that witness!

PREACHING ON TOP OF HOOVER DAM,  
BEFORE AND AFTER 9/11

Several times in our travels from coast to coast, we were thrilled to drive over the top of Hoover Dam. This magnificent marvel of a man-made monument to engineering attracts thousands of visitors daily. From the driver’s seat of the RV, the tourists appeared like ants crawling over a giant hill. I wasn’t going to let this moment pass. I switched on the mic and began preaching. Suddenly, there was something more novel to the tourists than the dam itself. I had their incredulous attention. My amplified preaching simply helped to make their visit to a national monument more unique, and a once in a lifetime experience. As I drove off the dam, heading east to west, up the mountain toward Las Vegas, I noticed that a small truck with a yellow, blinking light was trailing behind me. I pulled over and met a disturbed National Park policeman. He informed me of the illegality of using a PA system in a National Park. “Golly gumdrops!” I said, with jaw dropped, “I didn’t know that: I promise never to do it again.” This was said with a bit of a wry smile, since it was quite a bit after the fact. He gave me a warning and I went on my very merry way, enjoying my unique experience, since not every street preacher gets to preach to thousands of tourists at the Hoover Dam National Park.

Things changed a bit after 9/11; the authorities considered the dam a possible major target for terrorists, so the next time we passed through, heading west to east, we had to pass an inspection by the park police. They came inside, looked around, and asked Robin and Mary if they were being held there against their will. After a hesitation and a questioning glance at me, Mary and Robin answered in the negative. The park police also inspected the basement storage cabinets of the rig. (Now, you must understand that I am still a kid with toys, when it comes to enjoying serving the Lord; I had a see-through plastic drawer in one of those basement cabinets and it was filled with \$20 bill gospel tracts. (I had more fun than a Christian ought to be allowed to have, putting these twenties in the most daring places). Well, this huge, black, park policeman looked at this drawer full of twenties with amazement, and his

expression demanded an explanation. I briefly told him the purpose they served, before grabbing a big handful and offering them to him. He quickly jumped back, as if it were against his moral code to ever be caught taking a bribe. Then he looked this way and that: after making sure no one was visible, and that the tracts were really tracts, he stuffed them in his pocket and thanked me.

I thought I was home free, but as I got back into the driver's seat, he stood at my window and told me to wait a few moments more. He said the authorities were still checking the computer to see if I was allowed to pass over the dam. Rather confused, I inquired why. He replied, "It seems you used a loud speaker on the dam a couple of years ago, and since that is against the rules, they are checking again before they allow you to pass once more." WOW! I had made the computer's "possible terrorist list" by preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. Ain't I something!

Another year passed and I was, once again, passing over the dam. The terrorist threat had not lifted, and so I had to pass inspection, approaching once again from east to west. I didn't recognize him at first, but my lot was to draw the same huge, black park policeman who had inspected us the last time. He waited until we were alone by the side of the rig before he said, "Hey, preacher, you got anymore of those twenties?" I was honored to refill his coffers. He was a brother.

#### PREACHING AGAINST SANTA ON THE PENNSYLVANIA

We had preached a Sunday morning service in early December, somewhere in Pennsylvania and were driving out of the small city, headed toward the next meeting. As I turned onto the main road leading through and out of town, I noticed the roadside was filled with people waiting for a parade. There was no traffic on the road; evidently I was the last vehicle before, "Here comes Santa Claus." I turned on the PA and instructed the parade watchers, "Don't lie to your kids about Santa Claus. Tell them the truth about Jesus Christ." After all, a false balance is abomination, and Santa's deception was hot on my heels.

#### VACATION IN TIME'S SQUARE

Many of you readers will think I have lost my last marble when I tell this story. If someone offered to give me (just me), a paid vacation to the destination of my choice, I would spend it riding around Manhattan, with a big rubber band and a mountain of \$20 bill gospel tracts. Shooting these twenties is the "funnest" thing I can think of to do.

My good friend Mike Veach pastors a very evangelistic church in Staten Island, NY. Mike, at one time, was a cab driver in Manhattan, so he

knows every nook and cranny, shortcut and main thoroughfare that exists. Whenever I get a chance to go to the Big Apple, I call him and he graciously makes time for me in his schedule. We get the street preachers--armed with rubber bands and twenties--from his church, hop into his vehicle, and head out for the city. Driving through Manhattan, we flip or shoot twenties for hours: into the open doorways; into cabs, delivery trucks, or limos that have their windows down; into bus stops, hotel entrances, etc., etc., etc. I love to cross an intersection where there are a hundred people waiting to cross. I take a whole handful of twenties and throw them into the air with the shout, "Help yourself! I'm rich." Well, it's true! They scramble for the twenties and therefore for the gospel. God promised that His Word would not return unto Him void.

On one occasion, Brother Veach and I were driving down Fifth Avenue in the middle lane of five lanes going the same direction. On the driver's side of our van was a fancy-dancy, convertible sports car with the top down. Nearly all the cars travel at the same speed, so judging the wind resistance, torque, trajectory, angle, and force, with one swift movement I flipped a folded twenty over the top of van, where it came down into the lap of the startled driver. (My wife says I was just lucky.) In any case, the surprised man looked everywhere at once but could not figure out how twenty dollars, all rolled up, could possibly have fallen into his lap. All of us in the van laughed ourselves sick for the rest of the day.

A cab that followed us through traffic for miles watched us and finally came up beside to ask us for some twenties. We filled his coffers.

We then had our street meeting in Time Square. I had preached, and while I was waiting for another turn, I noticed a subway entrance. This is simply a flight of steps, leading down from the sidewalk to the subway entrance. There was a steady stream of people entering, with heads down, negotiating the stairs. The stairs were fenced off on the sidewalk level and the fence was covered with advertising. I stood at the fence, where the folks entering could not see me, and flipped \$20 bill gospel tract over the fence, into the subway stairwell, at the rate of about one, every three seconds. They landed on, or near, the bottom step, in front of the person coming down the stairs. The guy, or gal, looked up but could not see anyone; they picked up the gospel tract and continued to the subway, taking the Word of God along with them. A person could do this all day, everyday, and never have one tract rejected. This would be a great ministry for a shy person. I am sixty-five years old, have been in the ministry for forty-two years, have pastored, have been in evangelism, and preached to a lot of the world on the streets, in prisons, in nursing homes and in children's homes. I absolutely LOVE to use this simple, but very effective way of witnessing the Word of God to thousands of sinners. If you put me on a golf course in Hawaii, I would fall asleep on

the second green. If you put me in Disney World, I would abhor the worthless façade and the sordid atmosphere. I am so happy that I can be completely satisfied with such simple pleasures as I have described above.

#### TRACTS FOR DOLLS

Brother Veach, loves Mary Bethany, but then who doesn't? He wanted to give this cute, 10-year-old girl the desire of her dreams. He drove us to Manhattan to the American Girl Doll Store. Talk about boring: this is a five-story department store in the middle of Manhattan, selling nothing but dolls and their accessories. Mom and daughter went shopping, so Bro. Veach and I decided to have some fun. I had a video camera and there was a beautiful doll displayed on a pedestal in the center of the ground floor. I put a \$20 bill gospel tract in the hand of the doll and we hid behind another display. (This was God's candid camera.) The ladies and girls would examine the display doll and then notice the twenty. Some would not touch it, but walked away wishing and wondering. Others looked this way and that, before taking it and walking away, feeling a bit criminal. We turned boredom into bliss.

#### 9/11 BANNER AT GROUND ZERO

While we are still in NYC, let me tell you about an amazing opportunity. I have already described the photo transfer--the Twin Towers on fire--that was displayed on the back of our trailer. I had that same image on a banner that we used for street work. In 2003, I held a street meeting at Ground Zero (this is where the Twin Towers used to stand, but at this time it was a seven-floors deep hole in the ground). I preached, while flying this banner of the 9/11 events. Many hecklers grumbled, saying that I was being disrespectful of those who had died in that event. My response to this was, "My brother died in those towers." This silenced them quickly. Allow me to explain. There were Christians who died on 9/11 in the Twin Towers, and in Christ they are my brothers.



**The '9/11' banner**

## FRESH MUSHROOMS JUST AROUND THE CORNER

Weird things can happen while living in a motor home. One time, Robin was cleaning; we had not moved the motor home for a while, and there had been a box propped up in the corner for a time. When she moved the box, she could not believe her eyes. There were mushrooms growing out of the carpet in the corner. She made me swear I would never tell anyone, lest it reflect upon her poor housekeeping-- so if you read this, don't tell her I included this story.

## MOTOR HOMES ARE FOR THE BIRDS

On another page in the book, I listed the pets we enjoyed, but one time Mary got the brilliant (in a child's mind) idea that she wanted a bird. Being a softhearted dad, I bought a cage, parakeet, and the accompanying paraphernalia and surprised her. We shared adult wisdom in the proper care of a bird, especially since we also had JoJo (our very jealous Pomeranian). After an evening out, we opened the door

of our home to find feathers from living room to back door...but no bird. JoJo acted glad to see us, but showed neither guilt nor remorse. Where did the bird go? The cage door was open and Mary was chided for that, but no windows or doors of the RV were open. It was virtually impossible for that bird to escape, so all circumstantial evidence pointed to JoJo but with the absence of a *corpus delicti* we could not find her guilty. The case remains open.

### SOMETHING QUITE “FOWL”

Somewhere in our travels we inherited mice. Mice can maneuver in the most unbelievably small spaces. We managed to trap a few, but where there are a few mice, there are many. (Maybe they were eating the mushrooms.) Impossible as it may seem, they squirmed their way into the ceiling area above the dash. This area holds nothing but fiberglass insulation surrounding two small storage cubbies and serves primarily to keep the outside contour of the vehicle, as well as to form a roof above the driving area.

I was driving down the road one day, “*in the merry, merry month of May*”...no I won't do that to you. As I drove, something fell from that bulkhead onto the dash. I leaned forward for a closer look and was astounded to see a maggot wriggling on the dash. I smashed it, thinking it somehow blew in from outside. Another ten miles, another maggot. Horror of horrors! Okay, that was it. I pulled off at the nearest wide spot and grabbed my power screwdriver. An hour later, we had all windows and doors open to get rid of the awful stink. We had been smelling a faint odor for a while and thought it just might be the *corpus delicti* from the last story, but it was not. There was no entrance to this area, except for a conduit for the electrical wires that powered the lights on top of the RV. This conduit was barely wide enough to conduct the wires, so how mice got in there is still a mystery. The mice were eating the fiberglass insulation and the maggots came from the mice droppings. Gross, gross, gross. I removed all of the insulation and cleaned up the stench, but this was one of the worst duties I have ever been called upon to do.

### THE TRUTH---ACCORDION TO WHO?

One of the many immeasurable blessings in my ministry has been my relationship with the accordion. God gave me the gift to play this instrument by ear and to be able to teach many, many others to do the same. He also has made it possible for me to supply many of these students with an accordion. As we traveled, people would hear about my accordion ministry and would contribute instruments. Some were very nice and others were garage sale rejects, but over the years, scores of

accordions have passed through my hands into the hands of those who promised me they would use them in public ministry.

### OUT OF THE BLUE

The following accordion story simply cannot be left out of a book with such a title as this. In 1992, a good friend, Joel Logan, visited me as I served in Northern Ireland. He brought me three accordions to use or distribute at my will. I especially liked one of these accordions because it was so small in comparison to the many larger ones I had played over the years. This particular accordion had a full keyboard and was a complete, 120 bass instrument. It was very light, yet it had very good volume for the streets. Being so small, something had to be compromised somewhere, and the manufacturer had made this compromise in the keyboard. The piano keys were extremely thin, designed for ladies' fingers: my fingers are by no means ladies' fingers. I had great difficulty with playing this keyboard, as well as playing the chord side. The keys had been severely scrunched up, so much so that you could not put the fingers of your hand on three separate keys or cords simultaneously. I came very close to giving this accordion away, but in my uncertainty I forced myself to make the adjustment to playing it. Once I did, I really, really liked it.

I took that accordion to churches in Ireland, the USA, and much of Europe. It was great on the street, because it weighed only fifteen pounds. It played very well and served my purposes perfectly, until the year 2002. We had a meeting in a church outside of Austin, TX. I unloaded all the necessary equipment. I sang, preached, and prayed; afterwards, I loaded *all* the equipment back into the van. We got into the van; I started the van and began to back up. The vehicle met a slight resistance. I asked Robin to check if I was against a curb. She replied, "No, Jerry. You just ran over your accordion." Oh, heart failure! My dear, my beloved, accordion! How could I be so stupid!

Well, our motor home was plugged up at our home church just a few miles away, so I postponed the funeral until friends could attend. The next day, I was showing the blood and guts of the accordion accident to a few Bible college students from our church, when my pastor, Hank Thompson, looked over someone's shoulder. He is such a gracious and generous man that I really didn't want him to find out, because I knew what he would do. Our principle throughout the SWAT TEAM travels was that we did not ask anyone for anything at anytime, so, keeping to that principle, I told no one else. That is not entirely true; I did call my dear friend, Brent Logan, but I told him that my pastor had already supplied another accordion. (Pastor Thompson took one look and told his son Caleb to go get a blank check from the church, so that I could replace

this vital piece of equipment for my ministry.) I praise the Lord for his action there, but let it be known to all that it was totally unplanned and unexpected. It was my own stupid mistake.

A blank church check is admirable on the part of the church, but it places a heavy responsibility on the recipient. Brand-new was never an option, because it would be in the thousands of dollars, so I looked in the pawnshops and used music equipment stores all over Austin, TX. for a replacement. There was nothing, however, that could truly replace my dearly beloved accordion. I found something that was good and would suffice, but the longing for my perfect accordion remained a longing. Thank you, pastor.

Eight months later, continuing to travel the USA from coast to coast and border to border, I was visiting my mother and step-dad in Jacksonville, Florida for a few days. When my mom married after the death of my father, her name became Tucker; thus, the address where I grew up was now the Tucker home. We never published our schedule, so virtually no one knew we were at my mother's (or anywhere else we might be). Mary Bethany was swimming in her inflatable pool, while Robin and I were playing Scrabble with my mom and step-dad on the porch. A UPS truck drove up in front of the house. The deliveryman grabbed a large box and asked if there was a Gerald Sutek here. Totally astonished, I answered in the affirmative; he asked me to sign the delivery form so that he could release the box. Upon opening the box, I had to look again at the return address--I was certain it had to be heaven--but there was none. Inside the box was a brand-new, straight from the factory, still wrapped in plastic, Video accordion. (These accordions are valued between 2,000 3,000 dollars.) The only explanation was an anonymous note, which simply read, "Thought you might be able to use this in the Lord's work."

This accordion was the exact duplicate of my beloved, but departed, instrument, even down to the color; only, it was brand-new. Glory! Now add to this miraculous story the fact that nobody knew what had happened to my other accordion. I immediately called Brent Logan, the only person who knew about the old accordion, but he thought it had been replaced sufficiently. His words to me were, "Brother, I truly wish I could say I had some connection with this miraculous provision, but I can't. I did not do this and have no idea who might have." I did not even know that the company that made Video accordions still made them, or was even in business. As far as I knew, no one even knew what brand of accordion I was in love with anyway. If I did not know about the manufacturing company, how could anyone else know? Plus, no one knew I was at my mother's house in Florida. I feel that the following verse was manifested to me on that memorable day. Eph. 3:20 *"Now*

*unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us..."*

To complete this miraculous story, Travis Lewis, from my home church, was on deputation, with plans to go to the Philippines as a missionary. He is quite skilled at playing the trumpet and had asked me for one of my famous fifteen-minute accordion lessons. I accommodated him, but at that time I did not have an accordion to give him. After the Lord gave me the desire of my heart, I contacted him and gave him the accordion our pastor had bought. As far as I know, Travis is still using it in the Philippines. Praise the Lord! He knows what He is doing. I wouldn't trade my life of faith for Bill Gates's home and bank account.

### SUPER MAN, WOMAN, AND DAUGHTER

Contrary to the opinion held by many that the SWAT TEAM is above needing medical treatment, there have been (and probably will continue to be in the future) times when we are weak and even sick; albeit, we have enjoyed good, above average, health. What do you do when you live on the road, have no family physician, and cannot make an appointment a month in advance? Well, the good Lord knows all of this so we let Him take care of this vital aspect of life as well. As most Americans know, unless your brother-in-law is your dentist, you cannot get an appointment, without three months' advance scheduling. To see a doctor, many physicians require that you make regular "well visits". Before seeing a specialist in any field, a person is required to make several visits to his family doctor and follow the prescribed process. None of the above options were possible or practical in our lifestyle.

Mary Bethany came from the jungle of Philippines and her little body was full of parasites and heavy metals. Her mother suffered from cancer, even while she carried Mary in her womb, and she died of cancer, nine months after Mary's birth. Needless to say, under normal circumstances, we were facing some very serious health issues with this girl. Many symptoms began to manifest themselves in her body and we began to pray. We located a highly recommended natural health and Chiropractic doctor, who ran extensive blood tests and other types of tests: his words were, "Unless something miraculous happens in her body in the next few months, we are looking at cancer". He recommended a regimen of treatments, which would necessitate us being off the road for a couple of months. The Lord provided a place near the doctor's office to park and plug up the rig, and the treatments began, along with prayer for the child, as well as for the monetary provision. Mary continues to take many natural supplements, but is very robust and healthy to this day. These tests and treatments were not cheap. Amazingly enough, everything was paid for in cash. To God be the glory.

Buddy Blunkall raised his family of seven kids on the road, in a bus, doing evangelism. His concerned (but faithless) father-in-law asked him what he planned to do about health insurance for the family. Buddy told him, "When a member of my family goes to the hospital and the secretary asks me about insurance, I tell her that my company is spelled C.A.S.H." If you trust Him, the good Lord always supplies.

Robin had some female medical needs that required a specialist. We got an appointment the same week we called. The secretary/nurse asked for our information, which included our insurance company. I copied Bro. Blunkall's quip. We never made any request for any special arrangements, prices, discounts, or payment schedules. The doctor, not a Christian, asked what line of work I did and I told him. He then proceeded to attempt to impress us with the charitable work he does in Haiti. He told us that he travels there often and gives free medical treatment to the poorest of the poor. He mentioned that he does not have the fancy equipment there that he has available to him in the States and must operate and prescribe medication very simply.

Robin's medical problem could have been quite serious, but no one except a specialist could make that judgment. He examined Robin, came to a quick decision, grabbed a needle and quickly resolved the problem. He pitched the needle in the garbage bin and announced that all would be well, before leaving the room. We prayed and thanked the good Lord, after which, I told Robin, "You know what you got? You got the Haitian treatment." This specialist could justly have charged us an enormous fee and we held our faith/breath as we walked out to speak with the same secretary. Looking at the clipboard given to her by the doctor, she simply said, "Oh, no charge today!" Hallelujah! Glory! Praise the Lord!

#### DIFFERENT FORMS OF INSURANCE

There are a great variety of mindsets, ideas, opinions and/or convictions on the issue of whether or not to carry insurance. I am of the Romans 14:5 persuasion "...*Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*" I will let you run your life and household, if you will just let me run mine. That seems a fair deal. I have always seen insurance as a bad investment: one where you must have a wreck, get hurt, get sick, or die in order to have the investment pay off. We have always made our insurance payments to missionaries, an investment that has always proven to be a fail proof system.

NO REGRETS, ONLY GOOD MEMORIES (EVEN THE BAD ONES)

We lived on the road for close to thirteen years. We had three motor homes, not including the Bear's accommodations. We were in a thousand churches scattered throughout all fifty states and a few places in Canada. Sometimes (very seldom) we would have to postpone a meeting, but we never had to cancel a meeting for any reason, including mechanical or medical.

#### RIGHT ARM, LEFT LEG, FIRSTBORN

There was a gas station that had this on their signboard, back when the gas prices were fluctuating so violently. For the price of regular gasoline it said, "Right Arm." For unleaded it read, "Left Leg." And for premium, it posted "Firstborn." Normally, if you plan to live in a motor home, on the road, the price of gasoline would be a major consideration. When we started on the road, the price of gasoline, nationwide, was about fifty or sixty cents a gallon. Just before we disposed of the motor home and went to Romania, I remember buying gasoline in California for \$ 1.99 per gallon. I remember this distinctly, because I was driving, needed gasoline badly, and was shopping at every exit for the best price. When I saw a sign for \$1.86, I took the exit immediately. I eased in and pumped nearly eighty gallons (do the math). That much gas would take me about six hours down the road. When I went to pay, the price per gallon was \$1.99. I was outraged and argued for my \$112.00; they quickly pointed me to a small gas station, hidden just around the corner. I paid the \$1.99 per gallon, but when I drove away, I took a glance; I was just fifty feet around the corner from \$1.86. I was tempted to drain the whole tank, just to fill it with a better deal, but wisdom won out over anger.

#### EVERYTHING IS RELATIVE

Living on the road like we did, we were constantly asked, "What kind of gas mileage do you get in those rigs?" The answer usually flabbergasted every man. The "ultimate rig" (with our trailer attached) averaged 6 ½ miles to the gallon, on the open road. It is not my motive to present myself as a spiritual giant, or to snub others for their lack of faith. Rather, let me reason with all of you just for a moment. You must agree with me that there is absolutely nothing any of us can do about gas prices, except to pay and gripe. The more you gripe, the less spiritual you become. You also must agree that all Christians are theoretically supposed to live by faith. Now, to live by faith simply means that you are living on God's economy and not the world's. Then, if you are living the way the good Lord wants you to live and according to Proverbs 3:5,6 and Phil. 4:19—that is, if you are not wasting gas for any ungodly reason—then why should you care what the gas prices are?

The SWAT TEAM had two rigs on the road, going coast to coast, for four years, doing the Lord's work. During this time, it cost the Lord twenty-five dollars per hour, in gas alone, for us to move. That does not include repairs, food, clothing, phone bills, or Disney World. We NEVER ran out of gas or reached the point at which we could not pay the prices—whatever they were. Come on, now; don't just get disgusted with me: reason with me.

When we moved to Northern Ireland in 1991, the gas prices were five dollars per gallon. That is higher than it has EVER been in the USA even today. We drove all over the island of Ireland and did our ministry. I performed all of my pastoral driving duties and we gave tours to all who visited us from the USA and I NEVER was found out of gas or without sufficient money to buy it at that price. I was the missionary on the Word for the World mission board with the lowest income support and living in the second highest economy in the world.

We now live and minister in Eastern Europe. The price of diesel gas here is about seven dollars per gallon. When I fill my van, it costs me a little more than one hundred dollars. I drive everyday, sometimes all day, and have done this now for five and a half years, but I have NEVER been out of gas or been unable to afford it, even at seven dollars per gallon. Isn't it more God-honoring to just trust Him to supply your need instead of being bothered, constantly distracted and endlessly griping about the gas prices? Let the heathen be bothered by that; we Christians can sing the song, "Living by faith in Jesus above, trusting, confiding in His great love..."

#### EASTERN EUROPE...WHY?!...HOW?!

Often we are asked, "Why Eastern Europe? Why Romania? And how?" Well, the story goes like this.

We served in Northern Ireland for 3 ½ years--from September of 1991 until February of 1995. During that time, we traveled all over the island of Ireland and did publick ministry, but that wasn't enough. We traveled to Scotland and England and did publick ministry, but that was not enough. We had an insatiable appetite for travel and publick preaching. I still have that itch, but Robin and Mary are slowing down a bit. A couple of times, I was invited to preach in a conference in Germany and we did publick ministry there, as well as over the border in Czechoslovakia. This latter country was of particular interest to me, because this is where my grandparents emigrated from, in 1904. These travels and ministries were all great, but they served to heighten our desire to go further east. At this point, we seriously considered moving our ministry to CZ. Prague was simply enchanting and seemed wide

open for our ministry. Upon returning to Ireland from Czechoslovakia, a missionary visited us in our home. He had been much further in his travels than we had, and he offered some enticing information. He told us that if we liked ministering in Prague, Czechoslovakia and were considering moving our ministry in that direction, we should make a trip to Bratislava, Slovakia.

A brief history/geography lesson is necessary right here. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, both Czech and Slovakia were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. When that empire broke up, the two countries merged to form Czechoslovakia. Incompatible as all European people are, they decided to get a divorce, which became effective as the year changed from 1992 to 1993. Now they are two sovereign nations: the Republic of Czech and the Republic of Slovakia. It was while this divorce was taking place that we first visited Slovakia.

This story of Slovakia is told in great detail in the middle of the original *Fragments of Faith* so, suffice it to say, we had long had a heart and a desire toward Eastern Europe. Many trips there, since, had neither quenched the thirst, nor satisfied the hunger to minister in Eastern Europe. These heart desires lay dormant, but still warm, in our breasts for many years.

#### YEAH, ROMANIA. LET'S GO

I first met Brent Logan when he was a first-semester student and I was a visiting speaker and teacher at Trinity Baptist College in Jacksonville, Florida. He was nineteen and I was forty-two and we were both beginning to learn about serving the Lord by faith. Brent later visited us in Northern Ireland, before becoming a successful pastor of a church in Virginia. Our families bonded quickly; we respected each other and often merged our ministries. After eleven years of pastoring, Brent felt a strong directing to serve the good Lord in Eastern Europe and to begin that ministry in the country of Romania. We watched, prayed for, and supported him in this direction, possibly because of our dormant desire toward that part of the world.

While Brent was on the deputation trail, we kept in touch. His journeys to present his burden for Romania led him to our home church in Austin, Texas, and we just happened to be there. His presentation of his desired ministry in Romania was excellent and very compelling. The service at Capitol City Baptist Church came to an end; Robin and I loved his presentation, and assured him of our continued love and support. We walked to our car, and got in, but for some strange reason I hesitated for just a moment before starting the car. In that moment Robin said, "Jerry, what about..." and I interrupted with, "Yeah, Romania. Let's go."

That dormant desire popped right out of our warm hearts and began to bud and blossom like Aaron's rod. Within six months we were living in Romania permanently. That is the way the good Lord has always worked in our lives and ministries.

#### BUT HOW DID...WHAT DID...BUT...WHY DID???

This is the life of faith. Remember when the good Lord told Abraham to move? He did not tell him how, or give him many details on why. The Lord did not even tell him where. Imagine applying for a rental truck without knowing where you are going. After some experience at living by faith, you sort of get used to the lack of complete information.

Oh, we prayed about it. We consulted Brent about the partnership. We counseled with our pastor Hank Thompson. We notified our mission board. But the decision was made in our hearts that night in the car. Now it must be well known, at this point in the story, that our ministry was quite established. We had some of the best equipment of anybody ministering full-time on the road. We had a schedule of meetings, some annually scheduled, others less often, and still others in prospect. We had dates for future blitzes and conferences. Know also that we were not at all worn out on public ministry or tired of presenting it as a challenge to churches and Bible Colleges; no, not at all. On the contrary, we were closer to the peak of our long ministry on the road. When we had begun in 1987, we were nobodies and nobody cared. If you read the first five pages of this book, you will surely note that we were a joke among the brethren. But after eighteen years of experience and four books to our credit, we were at least able to present a presentable ministry. When we started, I would make as many as forty-five phone calls to pastors before landing a meeting. In 2004, this ratio came down considerably. We were familiar with this ministry and knew what to expect. We could project our ministry into the future and plan. In fact, when you consider the famous five stages of apostasy in every ministry, (those stages being a Man, a Movement, a Machine, a Monument, and, finally, Materialism) we had begun as a man and had started a movement. Had we remained on the road any greater length of time, it would have inevitably evolved to a machine.

#### *SMALL CHANGE...SLIGHT TURN*

Yeah, right! This was no small change or slight turn; this was a mid-life, 180° reversal of all that was familiar. This time, the move involved three persons (one of them a ten-year-old who needed a full curriculum for her education), and two dogs. We also had to deal with disposing of our ultimate rig and a car, obtaining more support, canceling scheduled meetings, acquiring furniture, obtaining a container to move all that we

have, extensively buying and packing necessary items, paying for three tickets and visas for Romania, finding a vehicle and place to immediately stay in Romania, and saying goodbyes without any promise of future hellos. Such is the strong pull of gravity, striving against a transfer in the service of our captain. It is one thing to experience all this at the age of twenty-three, when you're young and dumb, but I was within months of turning sixty when all this took place. Once we determined it was right to do this for the Lord—and that happened that moment, on that night in the car—we never doubted or hesitated or second-guessed one time.

When you look at the US military system and how they arbitrarily (it would seem) move whole families, with all their goods and vehicles, around the world, then two years later move them right back, why should it seem unreasonable for the Lord in His superior wisdom to require the same of us? If the good Lord is willing to supply the wisdom, money, and all things required, then why would you give it a second thought? And we didn't give it a second thought—prayer, yes— but no doubts were involved, once we determined that it was the Lord's will.

Phil. 4:13 *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

Rom. 8:28 *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

#### FIRST.....DISPOSING

When Joseph gave instructions for his father Jacob and his household to make a permanent, mid-life move, Joseph told them all, "Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours." Within the American lifestyle, it is customary to acquire and hoard stuff. If this custom becomes cumbersome (Lk. 10:40), then you have a stuff sale and turn it into mad-money; you know, sort of a sin-slush-fund. American tradition would never allow for giving something valuable away to a total stranger. Well, if you care to review the story of one of our first motor homes on page seventeen of this book, you will find a fine example of an action that went completely against the American tradition. Keeping this in mind, you may believe the following story.

Our pastor wanted to use our trailer on his property, so we made provisions for that with him. The car we sold for a small sum. But the SWAT MOBILE we eyed as a possible source of funds, we could use to set up housekeeping in Romania. It made perfect, reasonable, logical sense if you live by sight. The motor home being in fairly good condition for eight years, we had it valued at \$30,000. We put an advertisement in the newspaper and a sign in the window and parked the RV in a visible

location, but nothing came; not even a call of inquiry. Then, upon second consideration, I looked at the scripture witness and the pictures on the SWAT MOBILE. I had to make a great effort think like a worldly, prospective RV buyer, but when I did, I realized that there was no way worldly folks would even notice the “For Sale” sign in the window. They would never get past the outrageous religious fanaticism. At this same stage in the disposal process, I had mentioned the SWAT MOBILE on my website and also on my email list. The word must have gotten out.

I received an email from someone I had never heard of. He said he had read my book *Fragments of Faith* and was wondering if I would do the same thing for him that the Amish/Mennonite man had done for us, back when we started the SWAT TEAM. He was a beginning street preacher with a young family and needed a motor home to travel and minister in, exactly like the SWAT TEAM. I called Robin and when she read the e-mail, she replied, “Oh well, give it to him”. I checked him out through his pastor, we made the necessary arrangements, and at the right time he came and claimed his prize of faith.

Some cherished personal items we kept and put into the shipping container, and others we gave away. We lightened the load considerably, but we also needed some things. We had lived for many years in a motor home with built-in furniture and appliances. With that disposed of, we required the basics to live in a house. It was not at all coincidence that at this exact time, my mother required special care and had to leave her home of forty-six years. No one in the family needed her furniture, so the good Lord supplied our need at exactly the right moment. By the way, we are still using that furniture in our home in Romania and my mother just celebrated her ninety-fourth birthday.

Every other real need— visas, tickets, support, scheduling, vehicle and housing in Romania—was supplied at precisely the right time. When the good Lord is in it, He is in it. To God be the glory.

#### LONG TERM RESIDENCY IN EASTERN EUROPE

We were not strangers to Europe or even Eastern Europe but to move to, minister in, dwell in, and operate in this new and strange land was another grand adventure in our lives. Actually, we arrived one month before the Logans, and we immediately started a Bible Study in another missionary’s home. This gathering became a church within six weeks, and this church had its own rented location within eleven weeks. The church now has its own building and property, with a recently built addition. The church has a regular attendance of about thirty on Sunday morning. We hold three services per week. The church is quite evangelistic, with nearly all our members active in our weekly street

meeting, visitation program, tract distribution, children's home ministry and prison evangelism. We have men in our church who regularly visit in the dormitories of Transylvania University, which has a student body of 17,000.

We have our own means of printing tracts, small books, and whole Bibles. We have graduated five men from our Bible institute program. We have done several village-wide evangelisms by tracting an entire village and then holding a major evangelistic meeting in the community center of that village or town. We have also held a large city-wide evangelistic meeting in our main city of Brasov (population 350,000). We held two evening services in the Dramatic Theater and had over eight hundred people in attendance: we also gave free Bibles to all in attendance. Some of the people in our church today are there as a result of those meetings.

We have started several Bible studies in some of these villages, in hopes of growing a church. One study did grow into a church in the village of Racos, about one and a half hours from Brasov. Missionary Chuck Zander came from the U.S. and took that work. The church is basically a Gypsy church, running about sixty people on a normal Sunday, and is now ready to start building its own church building.

#### UP TO DATE...CURRENT EVENTS

Well, we have tried to bring our veteran readers, as well as first-time readers, up to date with the events in the lives of the Sutek family and the SWAT TEAM for Christ. This October 2, 2010 will mark twenty-three years since the SWAT TEAM started their journeying. Anyone who has ever read the thirty-third chapter of the book of Numbers can get a good idea of what our life has been like over this period.

We have traveled and preached in nearly all the major cities and many, many smaller cities of all fifty states. Most of these places we have been to repeatedly. We can say much the same of a good percentage of Europe, both east and west. Add to this our extensive ministry (from north to south in the Philippines, Trinidad in the Caribbean, Canada and Mexico) and you have a fair sized chunk of the world.

#### ALL THE WORLD

The SWAT TEAM has ministered in 31 countries of the world, but we still have 164 to go. I am running out of time; I wonder if someone will ever add even MORE to *More Fragments of Faith*.

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GREAT BRITAIN,  
REP. OF IRELAND

We lived and ministered three and a half years in this part of the world and have made several trips back. The following cities have heard the gospel from our lips and read it from our hands:

*NORTHERN IRELAND*

Belfast, Ballymena, Londonderry, Limivady, Antrim, Ballycastle, Coleraine, Lisburn, Newtownards, Bangor, Ballyclare, Newtownabbey, Magherafelt, Omagh, Cookstown, Maghera, Larne, Portrush, Portstewart,

At the beginning of many of my street meetings, I played my accordion and sang "How Great Thou Art". On one occasion, I was in Londonderry, on the square, and was just starting the second verse of the song, when an old man (jolly with juice) came up behind me and joined me in the chorus; he stayed with me for the rest of the song. I tried to ignore or duck him, while Robin tried to discourage him, but he finished the song and then left when I began to preach. It was pretty bad.

Though we have never joined him in a street meeting, we have seen Dr. Ian Paisley holding his own publick meeting in downtown Belfast. Because he is a member of the British parliament, as well as the European parliament, his bodyguards stood guard while Dr. Paisley preached the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In Belfast, we encountered a man with a gospel tract in each hand; he held the tracts close to his chest. He was standing with his back to a building, and stood there through our entire street meeting. I preached and Robin aggressively passed out tracts. He was holding the same tracts at the end of our meeting. I asked him what he was doing; he said, "Well, if a person is one of the elect, he will come to get the tracts." In attempting to correct him, I pointed to Robin and her eagerness to get the saving gospel into folk's hands. "Oh no, you can't do that." he said, and added, "If they reject the tract, their blood will be on your hands." So much for hyper-Calvinism.

I pastored a mission church in Ballymena, Northern Ireland and the larger part of our ministry was to bring snotty-nosed "rug rats" from the other side of the tracks. I had a small, four passenger, hatchback type of car. One Sunday morning, I put seventeen children, plus myself, in that car to drive a short distance to the church. Don't tell the authorities.

We ministered in Northern Ireland during the last years of the serious paramilitary conflicts between the north and the south, or more distinctly between the Catholics (IRA) and the Protestants. I have preached many times to British soldiers wearing grease paint and armed with automatic weapons, while patrolling from the turret of an armored personnel carrier. It was considered hazardous duty for a British soldier to serve in Northern Ireland. We watched as the military cordoned off the major part of many cities, including ours, and evacuated civilians because of a bomb threat. Many people died in those Catholic/Protestant war days. On several occasions—during simple, twenty-five mile journeys—we were stopped at least four times, and the vehicle was inspected for bombs and guns. The soldiers or police nearly always took tracts. I preached in Coleraine in a prominent public location; the IRA set off a bomb on that exact spot, just twenty-four hours later, damaging eighty buildings in that city. We never involved ourselves in the conflict, because we were neither Catholic nor Protestant. We were Bible believers and Independent Baptists. The terrorists, however, did not know what these adjectives stood for, nor did they care. There was always the possibility of becoming an innocent victim, though, like so many others had been.

While serving in Northern Ireland, we had the lowest support of any missionary there, yet we traveled extensively. The other missionaries could never figure out how we could afford to travel so much, when they couldn't. They never considered that they were always in debt, making credit card payments with interest and living above their means. If you don't obey God's rules of finance, you can't expect to enjoy the blessings of His economy.

### *SCOTLAND*

Edinburgh, Glasgow, Sterling

While we were preaching in Sterling, we saw a street man sitting on the sidewalk holding a cup and a sign which read, "Homeless and hungry". Now, you have to try to understand the mindset of Socialist, British citizens. Charity is a fixation of the mind. On any day, any time you enter or exit a grocery store, there is a person with a charity cup asking for donations—and getting plenty. People will give to anything but the Lord. I watched this beggar as I preached and he was making a decent living, while enjoying a store-bought cigarette (cigarettes sold for \$5.00 a pack). After he refused a tract, I knelt down and made a comment about what his sign said versus what the cigarette proved. He laughed, rubbed his belly, and frankly said, "As a matter of fact, I had a really good breakfast this morning...ha, ha". As I was still kneeling, a woman passed by and dropped a pound sterling coin (equal to \$1.60) into his cup, which was not nearly empty. I couldn't let this pass, so I stood up

and said, "Why don't you buy him a pack of cigarettes? He is almost out." Her sharp retort was, "That's none of your business. If I were homeless and hungry, I'd smoke cigarettes too".

*ENGLAND*

London  
(Piccadilly Circus and Tower of London)  
Leeds  
Bristol

I preached briefly from Hanham Mount, near Bristol, where both George Whitefield and John Wesley preached publicly for the first time.

*WALES*

Cardiff

*REP. OF IRELAND*

Dublin, Galway, Letterkenny, Cork, Donegal, Drogheda

I was preaching in the center of Donegal. I knew absolutely no one in the town. There was a group of four public telephones to my right, not that I paid any attention to them. A man approached me as I preached and stopped about twelve feet from me. I noticed, but was neither alarmed nor distracted. He stayed for a good while, and appeared to be listening, which motivated me to lengthen my message. When I finished, the man told me there was someone waiting to talk with me on one of the phones. Sure enough, there was a receiver hanging from one of the phones. Unbelievably, I took the receiver and asked how I could help the person. The person on the other end was in one of the surrounding hotels and just wanted to know what I was doing. No one has ever figured out how he knew the number, or has explained any of the other details of this peculiar opportunity to witness.

Robin was passing out a tract entitled "Mary's Commands For Catholics" during a street meeting in Dublin (a 98% Catholic city). One woman took a tract; at the same moment, another lady, coming from the other direction, hesitated, whereupon the first lady said to her, "It's OK. It's for Catholics." She took it.

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*THE NETHERLANDS (HOLLAND)*

Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Arnhem, Utrecht, Maastricht, Antwerpen



**Amsterdam**



### Amsterdam

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### BELGIUM Brussels

For one ministry trip, I was preaching with a group of four other men in various locations during the European Soccer Playoffs. We were in Brussels and just happened to come into the world-famous Grand Place. This area comprises at least five acres, which are completely surrounded by architecturally magnificent hotels, museums and Government buildings. It forms a huge bowl, and is one of the most acoustically perfect locations I have ever preached in. Add to this the fact that there were probably 3,000 to 5,000 tourists, walking about with cameras or sipping drinks in the many outdoor cafes. All of them could hear the preaching.

The problem was that off to one side, standing ready, were about thirty policemen with riot gear, as well as an armored military riot vehicle. You must understand that European soccer ALWAYS causes riotous behavior. I looked at the situation and prayed for wisdom. I knew we only had one shot at this opportunity and that we had to make the best of it. At this point, we looked like thousands of other tourists so there was no alert. I told the men to each get a large handful of tracts; we synchronized our watches, spread out to pass tracts, and in fifteen minutes met back in the center with hands empty. We stood in a small

circle facing outward and as I played the accordion, we sang “Victory in Jesus” with street preacher volume. So far, so good; the riot police were about fifty feet behind me and had not moved yet. I preached at top volume, enjoying great attentiveness from the crowd for about five minutes. Then, in my peripheral vision, I saw a riot cop coming my way but taking his time, while talking to “Roger, over-and-out” on his radio. I brought the message to a quick close and preached, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved!” just as the cop moved directly in front of my face. He said, “You can’t do that”. I just love these after-the-fact police encounters. I asked why: he said that no political or religious demonstrations were allowed in the Grand Place.

Now, there comes a time when a new definition is needed for “religious or political”. We had been looking all day at weird, crazy, riotous people who were more than willing--even eager--to fight, make a pilgrimage, go on a crusade, injure themselves in penance, serve in prison, and even die for their favorite sports team. They had paid as much as five hundred dollars per ticket, and had built multi-million dollar temples, just to be present when their “saints” lost, before fighting their way out of the stadium to make the next “fellowship”. They made sacrifices, worshipped, prayed, preached, and were martyred for the many gods of sport, but that behavior did not qualify as religious. And they call us fanatics! Someone needs to write a new dictionary.

Exactly at the moment the riot cop told me, “You can’t do that.” a cheap, souvenir air-horn released an ear-piercing blast. The cop and I both glanced in the direction of a hotel that included an outdoor café, about sixty yards away. A “fan”, dressed as an absurdly bizarre clown, was standing between the open double doors of the second story. There were no stairs, just open doors. He had a rope tied to his back. His friend, back inside the room, would let out the rope and this clown would lean out over the open-air café, blowing his horn, to the great delight of the café patrons. This was obnoxious, unsafe, and fanatically religious. I pointed to him and asked the cop, “That is OK, but the preaching of the gospel is not allowed?” He just shrugged. We preachers had timed it absolutely perfectly. We had done what couldn’t be done, and thousands of people will never forget that encounter with the gospel.

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FRANCE  
Strausberg  
(seat of the European parliament)  
Paris

We ministered in Paris, at the Arc de Triomphe on the Champs Elysée.

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SPAIN  
Málaga

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GERMANY  
Nürnberg  
Heidleburg  
Dresden  
Berlin  
Chemnitz



**Marx is dead, but Christ is alive**

Constanz

(John Huss was burned at the stake here)

Frankfurt

I was with a very good friend and fellow publick minister, Troy Green, in downtown Frankfurt. He was preaching from a low, two-foot wall to a good-sized group of folks shopping in a pedestrian mall. I was watching his back and passing out tracts. Two policemen came up, saying, “You can’t do this.” as if I had never heard this before. A quick thought prompted me to tell them, “Excuse me, but the European Constitution guarantees us the right to do this. You had better check with your

superior.” This threw them off just enough to cause them to leave and ask for instructions from their chief. Upon returning, they asked how much longer we would be. I love to hear this, for it is nothing less than a verification of our right to continue. Troy preached right through the encounter but heard the conversation. When Troy finished, he stepped down excitedly and asked me, “Preacher!!! What does the E.U. constitution say”? I told him, “I have no idea...but neither do they.” Troy said, “Oh, Preacher, that’s a good one. I’ll have to remember that one.”



**Preaching in Frankfurt, Germany**

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AUSTRIA  
Felkirch

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SWITZERLAND  
Lucern  
St. Gallen

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ITALY

Rome  
Pisa  
Palermo (Sicily)



**Preaching in Pisa, Italy**

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POLAND  
Boleslawiec



**Preaching in Poland in 2003**

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REP. OF CZECH  
Prague  
(Home of John Huss)

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SLOVAKIA  
Bratislava

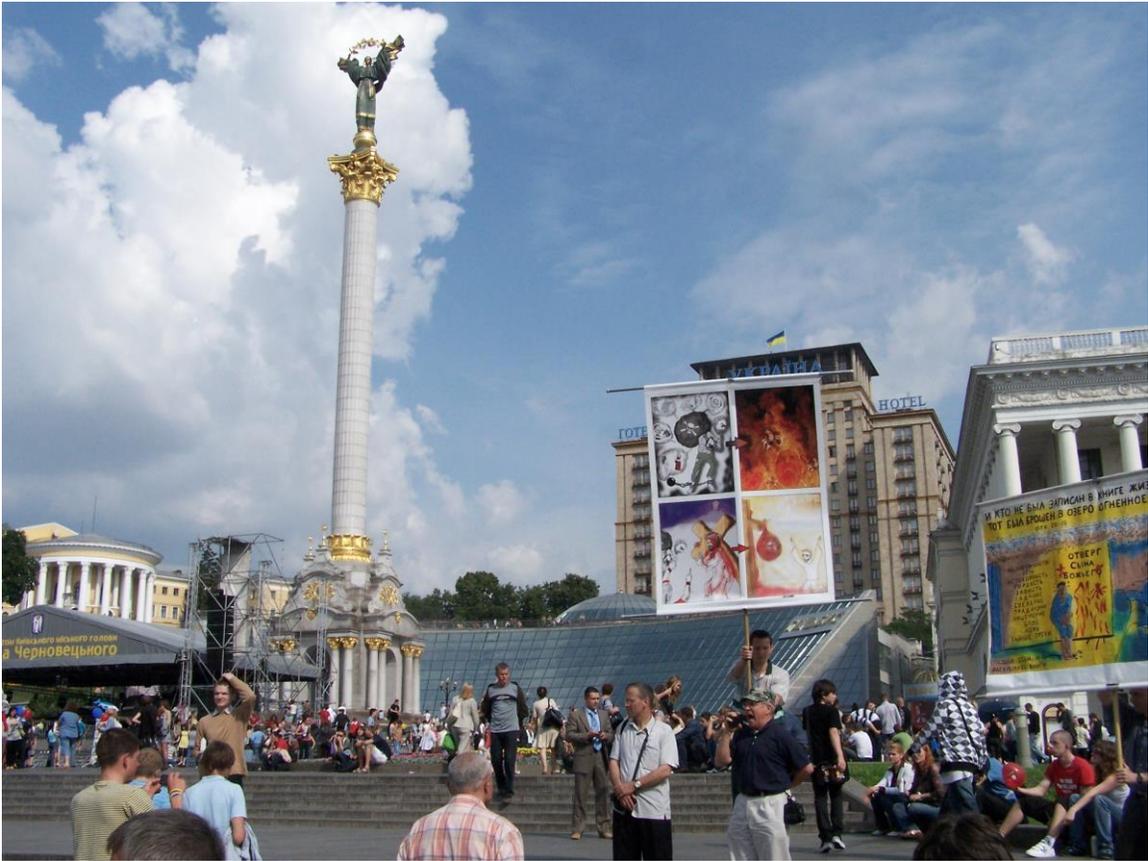
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HUNGARY  
Budapest

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UKRAINE  
Cherniviti  
Odessa

Kiev



**Preaching in Kiev**

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MOLDOVA

Chisinau



**Preaching in Moldova**

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ROMANIA  
Brasov  
Bucharest

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GREECE  
Thessalonica

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REP. OF GEORGIA  
Tiblise  
Gori  
(Stalin's hometown)  
Several small villages

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RUSSIA  
Moscow

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CANADA  
 Niagara Falls  
 Nanaimo, Vancouver  
 St. John, New Brunswick

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MEXICO  
 Mexicali  
 Nuevo Laredo

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TRINIDAD  
 Port of Spain

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PHILIPPINE ISLANDS  
 Tarlac  
 Manila  
 Cebu City  
 Davao City  
 Baguio City  
 General Santos City  
 Several smaller villages

#### INVITATION AND ALTAR CALL

Every head bowed and every eye closed, with no one looking around. For every moment, every day, and every year that I have lived *“by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”* I have enjoyed the abundant life which our Lord Jesus Christ promised in John 10:10. For all the times I have walked by sight, chosen my own way, enjoyed the pleasures of sin for a season, boasted myself to be my own man, vaunted my own vanities, and thereby caused my own pain, I must express regret. I have seen and enjoyed a few fragments of faith in my life, and I want to *“be caught up together with Him”* or *“walk through the valley of the shadow of death”* by faith. By faith, I want to be surprised by the joys of heaven, because *“Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.”* At the same time, I do not want to be overly

astonished by the unspeakable and immeasurable blessings of an eternal heaven, because I knew, by faith, His promises are true.

As I approach the close of my time on this earth, I want to highly recommend to every reader that you search your heart in light of the Word of God and fill your sojourning on this earth with as many fragments of faith as possible.

## END OF THE ROAD



*34' motorhome and 24' trailer*



*Rear of the trailer*

These photos are of our last road rig. We had three motor homes in the course of 14 years on the road and this one was the best of all we have seen on the road. The home was 34' and the trailer was 24'. The trailer was carpeted and air conditioned with bookshelves and a walk-in closet. Anyone who has ever traveled in a motor home for any length of time will appreciate this. I had it made so that I could put a cloth down and drive the small car inside and fasten it safely. When the car was out the trailer provided a very needed multi-purpose extra room. We could park them side-by-side and let the awning out which formed a breezeway in between. The second photo is what was on the back of the trailer. As we traveled the highways this was the first thing that was seen as you would pass us.

After this we went to Romania for 7 years and now we have been in Philippines for 7 + years. It may be time to write "Even MORE Fragments of Faith".