

Celebrating 30 Years of Ministry!

October 1, 1978



October 1, 2008

Dear friends of mine,

What a blessed event this Newsletter brings about. Thirty years ago I was a young Christian of two years, who, along with my friend and compatriot Sharon, paid off all of our bills, and traded in both of our cars (mine, a Ford Pinto, Sharon's a little Honda) so we could buy a van to travel wherever the Lord was going to send us! We knew little of what the future would hold, only that the Lord had sovereignly called us together for His glory.

For 24 years we traveled from one end of this Country to another. During that time we ministered in 32 States and in countless retreats, church camps, conferences and church services. We did similar events in Haiti and Ontario, Canada. Both Sharon and I grew up in ministry. Actually, I think more accurately, Sharon grew up and I grew old! Ha! But this month of October is surely one to both look back and to look forward to what the Lord is calling me to now.

Looking back, we started with just the two of us. Sharon, already dating her future husband Jeff Hoffman, continued seeing him as we were on the road and Jeff finished seminary and then served as an associate pastor. In 1983 the two of them were married, and it was my joy to be the Maid of Honor of that wonderful event. And then there were three of us. Before too many years past, Father blessed them with two wonderful children, Andrew and Elizabeth. And then there were five!

We experienced some of the most unforgettable things: At a church camp once (which shall remain unnamed), I was unable to play about an octave and a half just above middle C on the piano. I looked inside the old upright and discovered a huge bird's nest. We pulled it out of the piano, threw it out an open window, and the piano performed perfectly. Another time, I played on a piano that had a #2 pencil (the upper half of it) glued onto a black key that was broken off. Once at a Christian College in California, Sharon and I were preparing to do a chapel service and were rearranging the platform for our ministry. They had a 12-foot long grand piano. Since it was on wheels, I took a bit of a heave and attempted to slide it. The front left leg of the piano fell off!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Sharon quickly set it back up in place – and we left it there!!!!!! (How did we do that???)

We had enough breakdowns in vehicles to write 10 manuals on road repairs while-u-wait! We've been helped by semi-drivers and State troopers. We've driven on black ice and in blinding sunshine. We've played in the Pacific Ocean on days off, went shelling in the Atlantic, and fed wild mules in Arizona..

We ministered in California to a group of 7 (Sharon and I were two of the seven!) and at the National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C. with some 3400 attendees. We've been with the King of Tonga, Billy Graham, and Mary and Billy who have attended their little Methodist Church for nearly 70 years. We've sung in Cathedrals and in tent meetings and absolutely everything inbetween.

Sharon and Jeff and I as well as Andrew and Elizabeth were graced to work together for 24 years. But as with everything this side of eternity, that season was completed in 2002. The Hoffmans made the necessary transition to get off the road and stay at home, primarily for the sake of the children. They have been successful owner/operators of the Chick Fil-A at Jefferson Pointe in Fort Wayne since then. Andrew is now a Junior at Wabash College, and Elizabeth is finishing her Senior year of high school and looks forward to attending college this Fall.

Those first 24 years were so very wonderful, all in all. When the season of "After Sharon and Jeff" began in 2002, I knew the Lord would lead me, but more than ever, was unsure where. On reflection, the Lord has graciously lead me into new avenues of serving Him – things I never would have dreamed of: shepherding small groups, teaching, preaching, worshipping Him with spontaneous songs right from the Word back to Him, baptizing new believers, marrying, burying. Who would have thought?

In closing, may I say a personal word to all of you who have ever given yourself to the Lord – and then waited for His leading. Worship Him in that waiting time. Worship Him and wait. Worship Him and put one foot in front of another. Worship Him and trust Him. Worship Him as if that were the only reason He made you. For in truth it is. It has taken me a long time to finally be still these last several years – and let Him have me, even when I couldn't see the path ahead. But He has conquered my anxious heart, He has quieted me, and He has made me His own in ways I never would have dreamt possible. The Lord Jesus is my Beloved. He is my Friend. He is All Desires. I rest in Him. To live really is Christ, and to die is gain.

I urge you – in light of the times in which we do live – to be very serious about your relationship to Him. He is coming for a Beautiful Bride, pure and spotless and without wrinkle! Oh be ready! He is looking for one who would stand upon the wall of prayer and intercede for His people; Oh stand there and pray! He is coming again soon – but at the Midnight Hour, the time of great darkness! Oh have the extra vessel of oil (a deep intimacy with Him, purchased at great price BEFORE the Bridegroom comes) with you. Sleep, but let your heart be awake!

Thank you who have supported me during these many years. Your prayers, your friendship, your financial undergirding helped make it possible. May He be filled with joy at our shared ministry!

