

December 29, 2007

Did you enjoy Christmas? I did. I found it relaxing. But I didn't find it to be refreshing. I was hoping it would leave me feeling more energetic but, I think, with all the other issues swirling around us right now--moving, waiting on authorities in Panama to furnish documents, etc, etc.--feeling refreshed was only an ideal that is slightly out of reach right now.

Having said that, though, it was great being with family and friends. Lots of laughs and moments of seriousness.

Christmas eve was wonderful as we engaged in our traditional fondue with our son Josh, our daughter-in-law Tyla and grand-baby Taija-Lynn Arvada. Part of the festivities included transferring a family heirloom to Joshua. The heirloom is a ring which is to be given when the firstborn has their first child. I had the good fortune to have had it for 22 years. I had written a letter, which is part of the ceremony, describing the importance of this ring and the significance attached to it. I found it all quite moving.

Finally got some word from the Panamanian authorities yesterday. It looks like everything regarding immigration and housing should be finalized by the end of next week. This provided me with a great sense of relief! Colleen and I can hardly wait to get going in order to set up our own home once again. We are excited about painting and decorating and furnishing the condo. It is as though we are starting fresh as we have nothing to put in it at this time. Thankfully, we had put aside some money from the sale of our other furnishings so we have money to purchase the new stuff. It would be a real pain to move to a new country and have nothing to put into our new home.

I leave tomorrow with my dad, Bill, for Kelowna B.C. His oldest sister is not doing well and Dad would like to visit with her for a few days. Since I don't feel comfortable letting Dad drive through the mountains at his age and at this time of year I thought it wise to take him myself. It would appear that life has progressed to the point where we children have to begin to give practical care to our parents. I am looking forward to this trip as Dad and I have never spent this much time together. I hope we still like each other at the end of it.

Thank you for praying for us. We know your prayers are effective and we cherish them. Please continue to pray that our transition would be smooth

and the cause of much joy.

See you in a few days.

December 21, 2007

I'm a bit nervous today. We are still waiting to get things all together for our move to Panama. This process has been a bit frustrating to say the least. Our cultural context says we stay in contact until every thing is finalized. On the other hand, their cultural context says: don't worry about it. It will all get done in due time. I would suggest they are equally as nervous and frustrated by me as I don't always wait for them to get back to me. So we're even.

This is called the *Class of the Cultures*. While it makes me a bit nervous and creates a little bit of frustration it is also the thing I like about working in a foreign culture. I appreciate the differences that exist between "us" and "them". I find it fun to engage another culture. In saying that I am not insinuating that I would desire to abandon, completely, my culture as I kind of enjoy it. It is what I'm used to. "What I'm used to" is what makes my culture attractive to me in the first place. There is a certain comfort in "same old same old".

I just think it is good to get stretched a bit from time to time through the simple act of engagement with another culture. I have found in doing this I have an ability to look at life from a different perspective; it helps me to engage the little things along the way.

Culture is a good thing. It is also a bad thing. It is good in that it gives us our moorings but it transgresses when we make it "Lord".

I am not at all sure why I got off on this topic. I was going to say something nice and Christmasy. But that would be cultural.

I wonder what life would be like if we did one thing per day that was outside our cultural norms.

You can ponder that over Christmas. Enjoy unwrapping your gifts!

By the way, today is the Equinox, isn't it? Every culture recognizes this.

See you soon.

December 20, 2007

Hey, welcome back!

I heard a phrase the other day that got me thinking. It was this: "...that was the last thing on my mind." It compelled me to ask myself the question, "What if the last thing on my mind was really the last thing, literally, on my mind?" Would it embarrass me? Would it honor my family, friends. Forget about them! Would it honor God?!

God gave us an incredible mind. Do I want to live as though the last thing on my mind was "fluff"? Now, I'm certainly not wanting to subject ourselves to living lives that would imply we go around with dour looks upon our faces. The envy of every sour pickle.

I believe God also created us to enjoy fun. And a lot of it. He does say in one of the Proverbs that laughter does good like a medicine. We need to "pop" some of that stuff into our systems in a hurray! But having fun, laughing and enjoying life is not "fluff". It's the stuff God wants in our lives. It is part of His imagine. I believe God is fun. But I also know He is pretty serious. I feel God made fun to be serious business. IE. He wants us involved in it!

What I'm trying to say is that I just don't want "fluff" to dominate my mind. And I certainly would not desire it to be the "last thing on my mind."

I am going to guard my mind just a little closer in the future.

December 16, 2007

I am sitting in the cabin of a good friend. It is snowing outside, cold and barren. It is a melancholic type of day. But I get to watch a ton of football which seems to me to be a worthwhile situation. Why would people not want to watch football? Only a true football fan understands this question. Of course, you may be wondering where I have been the past couple of weeks or so. I made the promise to myself to keep up to date with this blog. However, as good as my intentions have been it, obviously, has not

happened. To begin with (enjoy my excuses, as poor as they are), I am still distracted with this whole grand parenting thing. It is easy to procrastinate when the choice is doing a blog or holding a grand-baby. Secondly, we have been travelling a bit but that really isn't a good reason. Thirdly, last Monday I was admitted to the hospital for major surgery and am in recovery mode. This is why we are at our friend's cabin. It is the first time I have had major surgery and been under general anesthetic. I was not ready for how long it actually takes to recover. I thought I would be "back at it" in just a couple of days. Was I ever mistaken! Thankfully, the Christmas season is not too busy for me. Mainly I just feel weak.

I am a bit frustrated in that some of our paperwork still has not been completed for our transition to Panama. I'd appreciate if you would pray that things would get sorted out quickly so our arrival in Panama would not be to any great degree. I know, from experience, that the legal machinations go a little slower than we are used to in Canada. I am continuing to learn patience. This seems to be a life-long pursuit for me. (It seems you are involved in a similar pursuit as you patiently await the writing of these blogs).

Meanwhile, in between plays I am looking outside at the snow falling. It really is a pretty day.

Talk to you soon.

November 26, 2007

It's all about the money! Missions that is. This sounds like heresy and, if taken out of context, it is. People are the real issue. But the reality is simple. It takes money to do missions. It would be great if it didn't but that is not anywhere close to reality.

As I go about fundraising this money thing is an issue.

It costs to feed the poor. It costs to clothe people. It costs to dig wells. It costs to do training. And it costs to put missionaries on the ground.

Is there anything we can do without money or some kind of exchange mechanism? I'm not sure there is. If you find something let me know about it.

Money is a big deal. But people are a bigger deal. That is why I don't

struggle in asking for money to accomplish the task to which God has called Colleen and me. Money is simply a means to accomplish holy ends for a holy God.

Of course, there has to be a compelling reason for people to commit themselves to giving. I think we have one. In fact, when you look at our website I think you'll see a number of compelling reasons. Look over our seven priorities and ask us to answer any questions you may have. We'd be happy to take the time. And I also believe people give when they know the money they give is handled with integrity. I'm grateful for the built-in checks and balances the PAOC has put in place for us.

So, I'm asking you to be involved in our ministry through your generous financial giving and prayer. You would be surprised how much can be accomplished when people respond to the urging of the Spirit. Thanks for taking the time to consider what God would have you do for Him and for His people.

In the meantime, keep being a vessel of grace.

November 24, 2007

In a moment of revelation I piped up, "I'm not a supermodel"! I know this be somewhat surprising to many of you. In response, my wife, Colleen, curiously said, "Really?" (you should have seen her quirky grin) I get what she was (or wasn't) saying. Now I'm thinking my wife is supposed to be my greatest supporter. I told her so. But she retorted, "I can't lie". I told her I'm not asking that she lie. She gave me a quizzical look and I figured I best detour from the conversation. I told her she could have boosted my ego by saying, "Oh, but you are. You are my supermodel!" Actually, that wouldn't have worked as I know she'd have been faking it. But I digress.

My statement was all taken out of context. I meant I wasn't a supermodel. IE. I model Christ. I model the fruit of the Spirit. I model being a father and a husband. But my intent was to say that I'm not the best at it. That I fail. I struggle. One moment I'm on the top of my game, the next I'm in the midst of a disaster of my own making. I suppose I'm better than some and worse than others.

Anybody find it stressful being a consistent model of Christ? It could be said it shouldn't be stressful as it is the normal way to live a life that is

under the control of the Spirit. That may be true. In fact, it is true. But it can be stressful to live in constant vigilance of my conduct and attitude. Wouldn't it be easier to have a care-less attitude? To not care who you offend? It might be easier but it wouldn't be good. I think I might offend so many people I'd not have many friends. This would be a real disaster! We need friends. I need friends. In fact, I kind of like friends. They have tendency to add value to my life I otherwise would not experience.

It is stressful trying to live the life of a supermodel. And I may not be, very often, super at it. But I am a model. I know people look to me for insight, not always in what I say but in how I live my life. People look to me as an example. And why not? After all I do claim to be a follower of the Christ. So they have a right to expect something of me and I have a corresponding responsibility to show them something concrete about what a Christian looks like.

The end result of my stress in being seen as a supermodel is this: I tell myself, "Suck it up, princes!" The Christian life is not a call to a shallow life based upon what is comfortable or easy for me. It is all about being Christlike. It is all about being a supermodel. Sure, I fail but my goal is to be super. Isn't this modeling thing a Call? Isn't it a response to the gift of life Christ gave us when we received Him into our lives?

The deal is this: I often feel stressed about being a supermodel when my eyes are on me. On the other hand, when my life is centered upon Christ I find it is a privilege to emulate the Christ. Stressful? No. Tough? Sure, because my human nature makes it a stretch at times.

I don't condemn myself anymore for faltering. Neither do I wish to be released from the privilege and responsibility of being a supermodel. My task is to be the best imitation of Christ I can be. Let's help each other out.

Talk to you in a few days.

November 21, 2007

My life has changed! Increased actually. Exponentially. It all happened yesterday at 5:02 a.m. in Saskatoon at the Royal University Hospital. Taija-Lynn Arvada Guskjolen came into the world! As you remember from my

last blog I wasn't sure how I would respond. I knew what I was supposed to feel from what others had said. Well, I was surprised at how emotional I was when our son Joshua gave me the call. I got all choked up!

I was in Ottawa so I got the earliest flight back. Colleen picked me up at the airport and hustled me off to the hospital. When she picked me up at the airport I said, "Hi Grandma." This was so cool. When I got to the hospital all I could do was stare at and hold Taija-Lynn and say, thanks, to Tyla and Josh.

Of course, Taija-Lynn is gorgeous!

One of the shocking thoughts that came into my mind as I held Taija-Lynn was this: she does not belong to Colleen and me. She is part of our legacy but she is not ours. Our responsibility toward her is simple: to cherish and to mentor. We are looking forward to this privilege. May God help us to do it well.

We are now going back to the hospital to spend the day as a family. Wish you were there! Actually, not!

Talk to you again in a few days.

November 17, 2007

Got word yesterday that Tyla, our daughter-in-law will give birth to our 1st grandchild on Monday. To use an old word that is familiar to some of us who lived through the 60's and early 70's: this grandparent thing is "groovy". I know that makes me sound like a nerd but big deal, grandparents get to be goofy from time to time. In reality, I don't really know what to think of being a grandparent. I know what I'm supposed to think and feel because others have told me. But I don't know. I'm guessing that when I hold the baby for the first time something "deep" will happen and then I'll know what every other grandparent means when they say it is the greatest thing in the world. I'll let you know in a few days how things go.

There are two things I'd love to be able to do: 1) sing very well and 2) be a comedian. But there is no chance! So let's stop the discussion now and

move onto something with a measure of realism attached to it shall we.
Thank you.

Is it just me or do you feel the same thing, too? I'm talking about a mixture of confidence and insecurity. One time I feel confident. The next I can feel insecure, and for no apparent reason. Why is that? I know one thing: it bugs the daylights out of me. (How about that phrase!? Thankfully, we know what it means because we have grown up using slang phrases like that but think of the poor immigrant who hears that phrase. I can just imagine them getting out their English dictionary and try to figure it out.) I suppose I have to grow in the confidence that God has uniquely gifted me and I don't have to be shy or nervous when I know He has something He wants to say through me. It bothers me that I am 48 years old (I'll be 49 on January 1st) and still having to deal with this stuff.

I think life is good! And I'm glad to be a part of it.

I'm going to hit the hay (another phrase to drive immigrants crazy).

Talk to you again.

November 8, 2007

Good intentions. Bad results. I'm talking about my original intentions of maintaining my blog 2 times per week. I have failed miserably. Part of the difficulty is that I'm driving a ton of miles and staying in places with no connection to wireless. Often when I have time it is late at night and, by then, I'm way too tired.

This week I've been meeting with friends and leaders all through northern Alberta. People have been really receptive of our ministry and many have decided to support us. This is great news as we are leaving for Panama at the end of next month.

The Lord is building our ministry even though we are not yet in Panama. Various aspects of our 7 Priorities (you can see them on our homepage) are already coming together. Connections with many other ministries are

being made. We are developing relationships with leaders in both the spiritual and secular realm. This is exciting news!

Let's get something straight. As in the last paragraph most of us talk about work as being secular or spiritual. I think we have to change that way of thinking. It is my belief that everything we do whether "secular" or "spiritual" is holy. We do it as unto the Lord. Therefore, our work, whether we are in vocational ministry or working in a secular context is always spiritual. How would it affect us and our workplace if we really believed we were doing spiritual work in a secular context?

Hurricane Noel was really devastating. I can't imagine living through something like that. Having to scramble to higher ground or climb to rooftops is beyond my understanding. I've never had to do it. Nor do I want to. My heart goes out to those who experienced this devastation and are now working at unscrambling their lives. I've been in contact with some of our contacts who lived in the path of the hurricane. They say we can't imagine the devastating effect it has had on the population. They are telling me it will take months to recover and get back to some sense of stability. Pray for their efforts and for those who have, quite literally, lost everything. And they have no way to replace it. What would it be like to literally lose everything?

I read a statement a few years ago that continues to impact me. The pulse of the statement refers to my relationship with those who live in poverty. The statement is simple: "Their Reality is Our Reality." I have mulled that statement over many times and I keep coming back to the truth that what happens to others is my responsibility. I am "my brother's keeper". I am learning that what happens to the disenfranchised is something I need to deal with. This is hard because I don't always find that easy. I probably never will. But I do know this: what I do to, and for, the disenfranchised I also do unto Christ. Another question: How am I going to live if I really believed: Their Reality is Our Reality"?

Till next time, be a vessel of grace.

October 22,2007

Is busy good or bad? Maybe it is neither. But one thing I know for sure is that busyness seems to be here to stay and it doesn't really care what we think about it. Why am I discussing busyness? Because I think I have been busy the past while. In fact, this past month I spent almost 2000 minutes on the phone and several weeks on the road. I felt like a real road warrior! Rather than feeling weary it actually energized me in that I was able to talk to people about my burden for missions and minister to many of their needs as well. It was good to give and to receive. What a privilege to share in the work of the Lord.

I also felt grateful for the family of God. I caught myself thinking that no matter how far I was from home I was never far away from people I could count on. You see, in driving around I was glad for all the churches I saw. Why? Because if something went wrong and I was stranded I knew I could call on somebody and receive help. This makes for stress free travel! I discovered that when a Christian is stranded they are never really stranded.

We continue to focus on fundraising and all that entails. Some days seem to surpass our expectations. Others seem somewhat less than exhilarating. But in them all we feel the very real presence of Jesus as He directs our steps and gives us favor with those we talk to.

Colleen and I are getting really excited about moving to Panama. God has given us a clear understanding of what He desires to do through us (see our home page and our 7 priorities) and we are thrilled to simply be vessels of His grace to the region of Latin America and the Caribbean. We keep finding out about missionaries who might desire to partner with us. This is exciting as we believe partnering with other ministries actually makes the Kingdom stronger. That is why we are excited about you partnering with us in prayer and financial support. With you we are stronger and better equipped to accomplish that to which we have been Called. You see, in the act of supporting us you are spiritually partaking in the activity in which we are engaged. It is similar to what Paul said when he spoke that while he was physically separated from his friends He was present with them in spirit.

Thank you for joining us.

Talk to you again.

October 19, 2007

The world passes by and so does life. The past few weeks have seen a few changes none of which have involved me. But these changes have involved my memories. In particular, they focus on the lives of people that I grew up watching and listening to.

First, there was Alice Ghostley. You probably don't remember her by that name. You might remember her as *Esmeralda* on the old sitcom *Bewitched*.

I relate all this because it reminds me of facts. People die. We are supposed to. The question I live with is this, "what have I done in the meantime"?

Another person I grew up listening to (primarily because I was told to) was Rex Humbard. He was a tele-evangelist when it was cool to be one. Rex seemed to accomplish something that few others did at the time. He gave millions the chance to hear the gospel and respond to Christ. In his time he was as big as Billy Graham. He did something "in the meantime." His impact has been long-term.

Then there was Marcel Marceau the great pantomime that we would all recognize if we saw a picture. He never really impressed me much. My wife Colleen enjoyed his theatrics. He just looked goofy to me. I don't know if that says more about her or about me. And I don't know what he did "in the meantime." I suppose he gave some people a measure of enjoyment. Personally, I'd have enjoyed a sandstorm more. But that is another story for another time.

And then I learned about Lois Maxwell. She is one of the world's most recognized yet least known actresses. I find it interesting that in one particular sequence of 14 movies she spoke less than 200 words and had less than 60 minutes of screen time. And this was over the course of 23

years. Yet her role and movie name became one of the most well known in movie history. You would remember her as *Miss Money Penny* of James Bond fame. Other than her most important role beginning with *Dr. No* in 1962 I don't know what she did "in the meantime" either.

All this stuff has left me thinking about my personal "in the meantime". What am I doing that really matters? Maybe, as our brochure says, you would like to join Colleen and I in "the change of a lifetime."

I'll let you mull over that for a while.

Talk to you next time.

September 15, 2007

Since I left you hanging about my lousy week in my last miniature tome I should probably fill you in a bit more.

The last few days have been marginally better but a great deal of anxiety has still attached itself to me as we have had to cancel/shift and remake plans. Originally, Colleen and I were scheduled to leave for B.C. this past Tuesday in order to promote LAC Ministries. These plans have been totally obliterated.

However, when plans change we have to assume God is up to something; this is our assumption. Of course, it would make for a rather nice day to understand exactly what it is that He is up to. But this isn't the case so we continue to trust in His sovereignty.

One of the great things, though, to have come out of all this is that Colleen and I will be spending about 10 days at a friend's cabin somewhere within this hemisphere. It will be great to relax, kick up our feet and get a ton of personal and romantic time that we've not had for quite a while. In fact, during this time I may not take my cell phone or my computer. I only hope the world can survive without me.

I have come to believe that:

1. God is always in charge of our lives.
 2. He allows certain circumstances to develop without which we might never get to the place He wants us to be.
 3. God's ways always end up being better than what we had planned for ourselves.
 4. I am not needed as much as I would like to think I am
 5. God loves to bring us to points of change. Why? So we are reminded that we need to trust him.
 6. My webmaster is great!
- Thanks for walking with me. We'll talk again.

September 12, 2007

My week has been lousy. How's that for transparency? I have never had one like it. The tragedy of it all is that I have no one to blame but myself. It makes things a lot easier if you can get mad at someone else but in this case I can't. One thing about this week is that I have been humbled and it has become ever clearer that God has to rule my life. Only His rule and reign will bring real joy to my life and that of my family.

I won't go into it all, of course. Actually, I won't go into any of it. But I will tell you this: when you are desperate you sure hope God is control. And this is the test. I have to get out of control and let God take the driver seat put His hand on the wheel. I'm in a place where I have to do exactly the opposite of what I want to do. And this is not a bad thing. In fact, it's a good thing! Because the way I am having to be now, is the way I should be always. This is the tough part. I have to change and as we all know this is extremely difficult to do.

The result is that, even in the most difficult time, God is using it to change me and make me into the person He desires me to be. Do I like this process? Not on your life! But without it I'm not sure I'd get to where He

desires me to be as a person.

So, I suppose I'm supposed to be joyful because of the end result. That may be true and one day will be. But right now, if you were to see me you would not see the joy you would expect to see in someone who is having an experience with God. You see, God meets us in all kinds of circumstances. He even orchestrates some of those circumstances. Remember, He is a Father and Fathers have the right, and the responsibility, to discipline those who need it.

So, I trust Him. That about sums up the Christian life doesn't it. Trust God. Trust His love. Trust His sovereignty. Trust His ability to put us back together again. He is definitely not like the incompetent "kings horses" and "kings men" that Humpty had to deal with. Nope. God can actually solve the problem. That is His responsibility. Trust is mine. The question is this: will I rest in trust?

I'm trying, but it sure is hard.

I'll talk to you again.

September 4, 2007

It has been a rather inconsistent month in terms of communicating through this blog. I'd love to apologize for that but I won't because the truth of the matter is that I have been exhausted. The experience of transitioning from one ministry to another is much more draining than I had anticipated. On top of that is the responsibility of raising all of our own support which we have never had to do. So, by the time I have the time to settle into writing my mind is mush and I lack the drive to blog. No doubt, as I settle into the task before me my mind will be less like mush and, once again, become rapier like (quick and sharp; though I suspect this may only have ever been only a dream). I envy those people with sharp wits. I know we aren't supposed to envy but the fact of the matter is that I do. Is this classified as a confession of sin? And am I now absolved?

I read the other day, I think it was in *Business Week* magazine that Americans (and I suspect it is, proportionately, also true of Canadians) spend 41 BILLION dollars annually on their pets! The writer claimed that was more than the GDP of 64 countries! Now, I'm all for loving our pets and taking responsibility for them. But 41 BILLION dollars seems to take us beyond loving and into the realm of worship. Do we idolize our pets? I think that is a good question and is one that needs to be answered. I could go on but it would turn into a rant.

I got a new Mac today. My first impression is that it will help me accomplish my ministry effectively and efficiently. The problem is that the setting up of a new computer is intimidating to me. Transferring my stuff from the old PC. Setting up email. Learning a new system, etc., etc. Thankfully, I have some friends who can help me.

Friends are a good thing! Seriously, where would we be without friends who are actively engaged in our lives? Friends pick us up when we're down. They correct us when we're wrong. They laugh with us, and sometimes, at us. You can think of dozens of reasons why friends (and, therefore, you) are so valuable. Friends make the world a kinder, gentler and much more fun place to be. The challenge is to be a good friend. I'm not so sure I always succeed at that but I'm trying.

Talk to you in a few days.

August 28, 2007

We haven't chatted with you for about three weeks. (I hope you noticed). During that time we spent one week in Panama, then 11 days in Toronto and then the past number of days in Manitoba. Up till this past weekend, which we spent with some good friends at their cabin, we were exhausted. In fact, the past few months since we put the house up for sale have been stressful. But, on the other hand, it has also been a tremendous thrill to experience the presence and the provision of God.

Some of you are probably wondering what Panama was like. The short answer is: we don't know. While we spent a full week there we did very little travel or sight-seeing within the country. Our opinion was that we will have plenty of time to do that when we move there. Our goal was to find a place to call home and to enjoy Panama City. Those goals were realized and we really look forward to living there and engaging the culture and language. We also met some very nice people with whom we want to build a relationship. And we did learn enough about the country that we are looking forward to exploring it in some detail in future years. I look forward to telling you more about this as we experience it ourselves.

In Toronto, we attended a seminar called "Transitions" which is sponsored by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. Many issues of concern to those going into cross-cultural ministries were discussed. It was very profitable but by the end of it we were blitzed. There was so much to take in and digest. One of the great things about the seminar was meeting a number of other missionaries and sharing stories and fears.

We are in Winnipeg this week to visit with friends and potential supporters. You can be praying that we are a blessing to those who we are in contact with.

I have to go an appointment, so we'll talk to you at the end of the week. Hopefully.

August 2, 2007

As I walked out the door of the District Office on Wednesday for the last time on Wednesday I thought of how the Lord has blessed me in my ministry. I find it is good to reflect from time to time. Reflecting does a couple of things for me: 1) it makes me realize that God really has been in charge of my life, 2) that if God was in charge in the past then He is still in charge today, 3) it challenges me to not take things for granted and 4) it makes me want to apply myself to do better in the future. So, I sat in the car for a few minutes before driving away.

I'm sitting and watching football with my friend Rob. I enjoy watching sports with people who have a good knowledge of the game. There is something to be said about the joy of being an "arm-chair" coach, judge and critic. This is especially so since we are not accountable for anything we say. Wouldn't life be great if it were always like this? Say what we want. No repercussions. Actually, life would be pretty bad since there would be no concern for the feelings of others, especially mine. So, let's keep being polite.

We leave for Calgary in the morning (my Riders just scored!!!) to visit friends then we fly to Panama to look for a home. This has got us really excited and we believe God has already chosen a home for us as He has a tendency to look after us rather well.

From Panama we fly to Toronto for a 9 day missions seminar our fellowship hosts at Humber College. From there it is back to Calgary for a couple of hours then we drive to Winnipeg for a few days then we finally get back to Saskatoon on about the 3rd of September. It will be a long trip but very rewarding as it will give us a chance to speak to many people about our ministry plans.

Because of the travel I'm not sure I'll be able to keep my blog schedule. However, I will try.

The Lions just scored. This is not good. I wish God cared about sports. Particularly my teams.

I am starting to fade so I'll bid you adieu till next time.

July 31, 2007

Traditions. Whenever I think of that word I think of the Father in *Fiddler on the Roof* singing "Traditions!". I think some traditions are nice. Some are

good. Some might even be termed necessary.

I ran right into tradition on the weekend! I was asked to perform a marriage celebration for one of my cousins in the little town of Semans SK. It was a great time and fun to get together as family and friends. BUT, the temperature was in the high 30's and, though it was an outdoor wedding, tradition dictated that we all wear formal clothing. For the men that meant suits and ties. This became like a near death experience! We men began to perspire profusely. In fact, somebody said we had started to melt. For some of us this was a blessing. Those tight suits began to look better on us the longer we felt the effect of the heat. Every bit of clothing was soaked. I thought I'd change later so went back to the trailer we were staying in only to discover that the air was not working and it was 39.7 degrees in the trailer! There was no escaping the heat. So, I ask, you this: is it really necessary to follow every tradition? Of course, we don't want to go about in a loin cloth. At least, I don't. I wouldn't make a good poster boy for loin cloth companies. But there has to be a way to be comfortable and still show honor and respect. But what is that way?! I'm open for suggestions.

Colleen has gathered a few intercessors together for a couple of days to pray for our new ministry in *Latin America and the Caribbean*. Particularly, for our upcoming trip to Panama to look for a home. I say "home" because we are not just looking for a house but we desire a "home" where visitors feel welcome. We'd appreciate if you would pray for us, too. This is a big deal as we want to make the right decision and choice. We fully trust God in the process but we are often tempted to grow fearful. This brings up another thought. I think that people are too afraid of fear. I do not believe that fear is the opposite of faith as people often suppose. In fact, I believe fear is the very thing that drives us to Christ and compels us to trust in God's faithfulness. The opposite of faith, I think, could be hate or one of its cousins (bitterness, malice, etc.). You see, John said, "Perfect love casts out fear." Faith doesn't cast it out. Love does. Therefore, taken to its logical conclusion it would stand to reason that fear and hate (and its cousins) are bunkmates and the avowed enemies of faith. Mull over that one for a while.

I'm not sure how to describe how we feel right now except to say I feel the same way I used to feel before a big game. I was full of nervous tension,

not fear, but a primal desire to just get at it. Perhaps, I feel like I did when playing hide and seek and I was about to be discovered. It wasn't about fear. It was all about excitement. I think these are pretty accurate definitions of how we feel right now.

Thanks for coming with us on this journey.

Talk to you again in a few days.

July 24, 2007

Yes I am alive! In the 10 days since I last blogged we have spent at Living Waters Camp which is our District Bible camp. We had a great time there. The speakers were very good, the weather was excellent, the beach was relaxing, etc. It might have been the best camp we've had in several years. I almost did not want it to end. Even the storm that knocked down about 30 trees was exceptional. We hadn't had a storm like that in quite some time. All that being said it was nice to get home. I hope to be home in Canada every year for camp.

I have till Friday the 27th to be in this office. After that I hit the road in a big way to promote and raise funds. I still have not found a word that adequately describes how I felt about this transition from District Superintendent to Regional Director. Certainly I am excited beyond words yet I am really going to miss those that I minister with/to on a regular basis. Right now, I just want to get everything in the office packed in an orderly fashion. Since we aren't taking a lot with us to the mission field I have to make sure that what I pack away won't be needed anytime soon. How does one cull 26 years of ministry resources to the size of a small suitcase? This is proving to be problematic but if I forget something then the worst that can happen is that I am forced to trust God to bring what I need back to my remembrance. How bad can that be? Isn't that what I'm

supposed to be doing anyway?

I fully rely on God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. However, in the area of computer technology I rely on Roger and Darrell. I'll get Darrell to see if we can open the blog to replies as a couple of people have requested.

July 13, 2007

Paraskevidekatriaphobia: Fear of Friday the 13th. The word itself is enough to scare people! By the way, is there a phobia that relates to the fear of words? My good friend Rob is not superstitious by nature or belief. However, he has a phobia. We call it "coolcappaphobia". It is the fear of what iced cappuccino will do to him. He overindulged once and laid awake all of one night. Now, he won't touch it. Even if it is in the early a.m. The big question now is: Can Rob find freedom?! We, his trusted friends and advisors are doing all we can to help him find release from "coolcappaphobia". Perhaps you could pray for him? ... Back to Friday the 13th.

It is a day built upon suspicions. Do these superstitions have any basis of fact? I think that whether they do or not is not really the point. The point I try to make is that I won't live my life by superstitions or phobias. Is this possible? I'm not sure it is given that there are so many things that we are fearful of. However, my choice is to trust God. Is this always easy? Not always. Especially when things seem to be going haywire. But maybe that's why things are allowed to go haywire for us once in a while; because it is then that we are forced to trust. There is nothing else we can do. In fact, there is nothing else we should do!

Well, I'm winding things down at the office. I'm cleaning out the computer of all personal items and trying to make sure the files and other administrative stuff is in such a place where the next Superintendent will be able to find it. Of course, I could mix it all up so he'd have something to do for the next long while.

God has been showing us great favor as we have been talking to people about our new adventure. We pray that this favor translates into prayer and financial support, of course, but it is just so reassuring to know that people are behind us. It gives us renewed confidence that we have heard from God.

It's a great day. Even **Paraskevidekatriaphobia** can't spoil it!

July 10, 2007

Friends are great. Life would be a lot less without them. And I admit, I need them.

One of my great friends is Colleen. She also happens to be my wife. We celebrated her birthday over the weekend. It is actually on the 9th but we had to have it on the 8th as I have to be gone on the 9th. We had a great time. We had a picnic then came back to our friends place where we hit the hot-tub. Took some good pictures and video for memories. The older one gets the more important memories become.

I was needing God to clearly speak a word of encouragement into my life a couple of days ago. Usually when this is the case I like to take my Bible and go to a nice quiet and relaxing spot; I find the fewer distractions the better. So, I spend some time in the back yard and the Lord began to speak to me through a particular passage of scripture. I read it over several times and took down as many notes as I could so I wouldn't forget what it was He was saying. As it turned out His message was clear, concise, and unambiguous. It was exactly what I needed to help me in our time of transition. It also built up my faith considerably. I have learned as you have too that God actually does speak to us. It may be one way then another, but He does speak. This begs the question: how well do I listen? Can/do I slow down to hear? And I have learned not only that He does speak but He wants to speak to us. I know this can be a bit "spooky" for some but this is the reality of my experience. And as one great philosopher said, "That's my story and I'm sticking to it!"

By the way, if you read my blog regularly and if I were to read yours, does that make us friends or simply voyeurs?

July 6, 2007

I have only a few weeks left in this office as District Superintendent. I am a bit melancholic about the whole thing. I am going to miss this ministry yet I am thrilled about our next adventure to Latin America and the Caribbean. I'm finding myself concerned about whether or not my ministry in this office has been effective. Have I done all I could? Did I do things in a timely manner? Would I be embarrassed to stand before God and give an account for all my activities? These are huge questions but at the same

time I can't do anything about what I did or did not do now. I have to live with the decisions and the consequences. I'm not sure this is an easy thing to do. I suppose, eventually, though, I will come to the point where I realize my success is not from achieving a lot of goals or engaging my obligations and responsibilities in a manner becoming a leader but in doing what I could the very best I could every time I could. And how do I answer that? I am pleased with the favour of the Lord as we have begun to engage ourselves in fund-raising. I have been pleasantly surprised at how people have responded to us. It has all been very encouraging. Our only hope is that the Lord continues to bless us in this way. Of course, we have no alternative but to trust God. In fact, we are toast if He does not provide. All I can do is not enough. We desperately need God to give people a spirit of generosity toward us.

I got something in my right eye today and it is really bothering me! (how's this for a change of pace?) I have been trying to flush it out with eye drops but nothing seems to be working. Perhaps a good sleep will help. I think I'll try it.

Good night.

July 3, 2007

Usually I like to make sure long weekends are times of doing nothing. This time it was different. We attended the 90th anniversary of Elim Tabernacle in Saskatoon. Elim has been my home church since about 1969. I had the privilege of sharing on a couple of occasions during the festivities. Once was on behalf of the District of Saskatchewan and the other was a time of personal reflection. I am struck by the significant impact the church has had on people over the years. It was interesting to listen to people share seemingly insignificant events that, in reality, were life changing for them. This got me to thinking about my own life and I realized that many of the most significant moments that I have experienced did not seem like that big a deal until years later. It is often the little word of encouragement or jest or hurt that plays the largest part in our lives. I was challenged this weekend to be mindful of the little things; they often turn out to be the most important.

Today we are trying to plan flights to Panama so we can see what the housing situation is like there. I am a little nervous about the whole housing thing. Do we buy or do we rent? If we do buy, should we buy a condo or a house? Normally I would not be too concerned about this but when it

comes to buying in foreign countries there are issues one must attend to or there can be expensive surprises. Thanks for praying for us!

Our son Joshua and his wife, Tyla, celebrated their 2nd anniversary over the weekend as well. Obviously, we are excited for them and are very proud to see them growing in their relationship. They went to the spa in Moose Jaw so Colleen and I stayed at their place to look after the pets. I can hardly wait till it is grandchildren we will be looking after! Talk to you again.

June 28, 2007

Hi. Again I'm late with my blog. So much for trying to do it every Tuesday and Friday. That is still my goal. But I'm having trouble meeting the deadlines due to all the responsibilities I have right now as I tie up all the loose ends as I leave my current office of District Superintendent and begin to engage my new task as Regional Director. This transition is a lot of fun but winding things down is a lot of work. What would life be without this kind of excitement.

My parents divorced years ago. I suppose one gets used to that after awhile. However, the 27th would have been their 50th anniversary. I was thinking of how much fun it would have been to throw a big party on their behalf to celebrate. I'm a little surprised I am still affected by this as much as I am. I find myself thinking, perhaps a bit too much, about what things would/could have been like.

Regarding our transition to the mission field, I have been talking to our realtor in Panama and I will be scheduling a time to go down and look at houses and condos. Colleen and I will probably head down in a month or so. There are a lot of things to consider when looking for appropriate accommodation. We need office space as well as room(s) for guests. We'd appreciate your praying for us that we make the right decisions along the way.

This has been a tough week. A week ago I was part of a decision that directly impacted a good friend in a negative way. The decision was extremely difficult yet it was the right one to make. I just wish people weren't hurt when you make them. Yet, I guess that is part of what leadership is about: making the tough choices. I'm glad God gives us the grace we need to handle the emotional strain of them. God is so good! Gradually people are connecting me with missionaries in our region that have no official affiliation with the *Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada*. This

has been exciting as we want to network with ministries in the hopes that there will be less duplication of activity and thereby reduce the outlay of expenses. Our hope is that we will all be more effective in the Kingdom as a result. If you know anybody in ministry within the region please let me know and I will connect with them in the future.

Your vessel of grace.

June 16, 2007

We survived! It has been a while since I blogged but there was a reason for that. We were in India and Sri Lanka for 2 _ weeks. While there Colleen and I met with the other Regional Directors (there are 5 of us all-together). It was good to be there as a team as we are wanting to work together to reach our world for Christ.

The first Sunday in Sri Lanka was interesting. I travelled to the city of Galle with Colleen. It was here that the Tsunami hit hard. They have done some rebuilding but you can still see the destruction. It was good to be there and be with some of the people who experienced it firsthand.

In India we visited with some of our missionaries and were quite impressed with what they are up too. All this got me even more excited about beginning our own adventure in *Latin America and the Caribbean*. We have started to fund raise and we are excited about it. I find it easy to ask people to give to missions. This should help us achieve our financial targets. We would appreciate, though, if you would commit to pray for us the God would continue to give us favor as we present our needs to others.

By the way, I'd be happy to share more about our time in India if you let us know you are interested.

May 11, 2007

This moving business takes a lot of energy! It probably wouldn't be so bad if we didn't have a ton of stuff to do besides moving.

We finally got our container moved to the acreage of a friend. We are grateful for their kindness in letting us use their property for who knows how long. The only concern is that the container keeps our stuff from the elements as well as keeping out the mice. But what else do we do? It is far too expensive to rent a storage unit for the length of time we would need it so this is the next best option. We'll trust God to look after the contents. We'll be moving our stuff into the container next week.

I have found that stepping down from my role as District Superintendent is not easy. But neither is stepping out into a role. In stepping down there are a lot of things I'm going to miss about the role. And in stepping out into the role of Regional Director of Latin America and the Caribbean I find myself nervous about the size of the task and also raising the funds needed to carry out the task to which we have been called. I have had to constantly remind myself that as God has called us so He will provide.

In fact, a number of people have already given verbal commitments to us regarding support. I think this is God telling me He has it all under control. I believe that but boy is it hard to live that attitude. I have preached that kind of thing dozens of times. Now I get to put it into practice. I may as well enjoy this process of growth.

Colleen and I are traveling to Winnipeg today where she will be speaking at Emanuel Pentecostal Church on Sunday. She is a very good speaker and I look forward to her message. I am hoping to make some contacts regarding missions as well. We are asking God to give us favor with everyone we come into contact with. By the way we are giving Tim Barker a ride to Portage La Prairie as he has to start work on Saturday morning. Tim has just graduated from Horizon College and Seminary (formerly known as Central Pentecostal College) in Saskatoon.

We'll talk again.

May 8, 2007

The past 10 days have been really a blur. In that time Colleen and I have sold our house, Chaired the District Conference in which we saw the election of our successor, prepared for a garage sale, and travelled to Weyburn and Swift Current to share with people what is going on in our lives. We are exhausted. But it does help us sleep well.

You should see our house. We have gotten rid of everything in our sale.

We now have no chairs or tables; it is fun to eat on the floor though I'm not fond of eating off the floor. Perhaps that will come with time. It's a good thing Colleen and I enjoy adventure or this would be a terrible experience. And to top it all off we have no place to live once we leave our house on the 20th! Good thing we have friends and family who actually like us. We'll try not to stay with any of them too long so they will still like us.

I have to admit it is a strange feeling going through this current transition. I am leaving a ministry I really love to do, a ministry I really love. The last few weeks have been emotionally draining but also exciting as we walk through the various activities we have to do to get ourselves ready for the move to Panama. While we are sad in leaving Saskatchewan we are so thrilled with the move to Panama that we want to go now! But, of course, we have to finish our responsibilities at the District first then enter into full-time fund-raising for a few months before we "touch down" in Panama. Do you know why we chose Panama? We felt it was central to the region, a nice place to live and with easy airport facilities. Given how often we are going to be flying this was essential.

Tonight we have supper with our son Joshua and daughter-in-law Tyla. They are going to be presenting us with our first grandchild in November! We are very pleased with this bit of news.

We'll talk again.