

Trip to Canada and USA: March 2003

Plans

Having visited USA with Jim Ford in 1999 and again with my family in 2001 it was great to receive the invitation to minister alongside Jim again this year on the west coast of Canada and America.

Leaving Home

Unlike my trip to Singapore in November last year, I travelled without the family this time. This is always difficult and a little more tense during the period of the war in Iraq.

Having left Manchester and battled through the Security in Chicago, Jim and I arrived safe, if a little dishevelled in Seattle where we were taken to our overnight stay with Jeff and Barb Boetcher in Monroe prior to our transport to Canada the following morning.



A surprise photo found on my camera when I arrived in the US. Plus a great view out of the Boetchers french windows in Monroe.



Border Blessing

We'd been warned that, due to the World tension and other border issues, we might take some time to get across the border. Whilst others seemed to be getting the third degree, we had three questions were stamped and processed!!!

Cloverdale

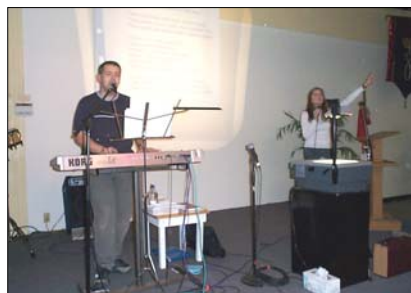
We arrived at Cloverdale Christian Fellowship in Surrey B.C. Just over the border and met our hosts at the Church which was undergoing a major move around in terms of layout PA etc... We had a great opportunity to meet some folks and begin to establish what were to be very special relationships. I particularly was blessed by the practical care and support of Karen and Brian Batke and family who's home I stayed at. They were such a blessing with no matter too small for them. Even 'beans on toast!!!'

Jim and I ministered on the Sunday, through to the Wednesday helping to guide and direct the worship team and congregation into new levels of Intimacy with Jesus, new ways of working together musically and practically.

Our time together concluded in a very special evening where, after worshipping together, all the elders and other members of the church were called to gather around Randy and Chris Emerson, the very special, enormous hearted and generous pastors of the church.

We all felt that God had done something very significant over the few days we'd spent together. He'd taught us all something new and begun a new chapter in the life of the Cloverdale folk, we believe.

This was a church, completely open to the community, including many whom some of us would find a real challenging to deal with. God is using this church to be His voice and His hands to a people in need.



Paul and Alicia , Karen and Brian Batke's daughter (amazing voice and gift) leading worship at Cloverdale with Jim preaching during what were powerful and moving times of challenge and development for us all.



IFM

Next, Straight into the 3 day International Federation of Ministers conference where Pastors / leaders from across the region and the world came together for what became a very practical and inspiring conference.

I was responsible for worship each day and evening, whilst Jim delivered an honest seminar called 'Surviving the Church!'

This was a great time to network with new folks and to meet up with old friends too. God made this time special for me by confirming a number of things that had been on my heart.



A significant opportunity for God to impart practical application of ministry to us all



The Person of the Holy Spirit

After a welcome opportunity to rest for a couple of days staying with our great hosts 'The Roddams' and 'The McIntyres'. Jim and I ministered at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Seattle for one evening and day where Jim shared about the importance of getting to know the Holy Spirit as well as His power. A really practical time, with opportunity for intimate worship.

Circle of Worship

This ministry time ended with the privilege of working again with Steve Hampton (extremely talented and prophetic worship leader) A wonderful time of new songs, new sounds and significant prayer for Jim and I. **After about 4 hours worship, I needed it!**



Jim delivering his message of personal Holy Spirit encounter and Paul with the Circle of worship band.



Final Sunday

After what had been an excellent time working with many new and old friends in this part of the world Jim and I were asked on our final day in the States to be involved in the Sunday Morning service at Seattle Revival Center. From being involved by way of singing a couple of songs and Jim giving testimony, we ended up with Jim preaching and me fronting the worship leading with the 3rd new band of the trip. God obviously wanted to get the most from us while we were still around!

At a time when the war with Iraq had just begun, the Lord allowed us to move into an intimate time of fellowship and worship with a focus on the blessings we often take for granted.

The leadership and congregation of this church are looking for God to break into the church and out to the nation/s. It was good to be a part of their journey together and to be honoured by them in allowing us to lead.



Entering into another time of unifying 'church' in worship, whilst Jim gave his normal 'down to earth' delivery of God's word to us all.



Another Chapter

This has been, for me, another chapter in the book of my Christian walk which I'm trying to let God write. I'm so aware that it's easy to make our own way and I often fall into the trap of trying to make things happen. However, my heart is to do those 'good works' He has planned for me to do and I felt that this trip was one of those pages He's written and allowed me to read.

My thanks to all who so lovingly took care of me, prayed for me, prophesied over me and were involved in the musical and practical aspects of this special time. Praise God for the love we share and the glory that goes to Him as we minister together in His name.

*God Bless
Paul*