

Promises, Promises

Twenty

years! Actually it started 23 years ago. It was in October of 1987 to be exact. For some very strong, but unexplainable reason, I had just told my employer that I would be leaving my position. I wasn't sure where I would be going or what I would be doing, but I knew without a doubt that I was leaving my job. The only thing I really knew was that I was about to explode with something going on inside my heart. During that same month, a friend of Jane's called and told her that during one of her prayer times she had seen my face, and that I needed to read Hebrews 10: 25-36. ("Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward, for you have need of endurance so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised") That had 1983 all over it! You see, in 1983 God, and I say this with all the respect to the Word and Spirit of God, spoke to me. I can't say that about everything that I feel or anticipate, but in this case I can really say it was an unmistakable moment. It made no sense at the time. It was a promise that seemed could never take place in my life.

From 1983

through 1987, I made no attempt to fulfill or perform that promise. To be perfectly honest, I felt kind of weird about it. Then in October '87 things began to happen. You know things! What had been penned up on the inside, things that only I was aware of, started coming to the outside. I was really being pursued by that promise rather than pursuing it. I'd have to say that I was being pulled along rather than pushing anything. Because I was aware of all the changes going on in my life I almost did something foolish-something in my own ability. I recall walking down the hall to my employer's office to resign. Just as I raised my hand to knock on the door, I immediately knew I could not go in. I went back to my office, closed the door and prayed. Prayed for a very short time but all the time remembering endurance...so that you will receive the promise.

On January

14th, 1988, a man walked into my office and asked "have you ever thought about doing a Christian radio station?" Well the answer to that was absolutely not. The idea did not appeal to me at all. Too much debt, not enough security, no background in radio, I mean, I have a wife and three girls to think about! Not interested! Then amazingly, two weeks later someone handed me \$5000 with no strings attached. Two days later the other fella was back in my office, asking again "have you ever thought about going into Christian radio?" Amazingly, by the 15th day of March, 1987, we had an appointment to sign a contract for the purchase of an existing AM radio station. Like some crazy people, Jane and I had borrowed \$140,000 and were ready to do something we had no idea about, had no interest in, just three months before. Just as amazingly, that very day the other party pulled out of the sale. They just "pulled the rug out from under us." Everything that had "pulled us along", all the miracles of the past 90 days, just disappeared from our hands and also our hearts. Everything seemed to be going the

other way. I had a loan and no radio station available for purchase. I was unemployed with three daughters and a wife. Was it the devil or the Father? Were we being attacked or preserved? There were a few tears and some amount of nerves. We became very quiet in our hearts. We listened. We waited for some direction in our lives.

Then, through a very unusual set of circumstances, six months later, on August 25th, 1988, we filed with the Federal Communications Commission for a new FM license. They told us it would be December 1989 before the ruling would be decided. Then just as suddenly we were being pulled along again, on April 21st, 1989, we had a construction permit. On January 8th, 1990, WBVN signed on the air!

That pulling along continues today. We still see things happen to us that just leave us amazed. The right things, the right people come along just at the right time to help keep this ministry going. We've seen so much happen that's above our ability. We're probably the last people you would choose to start a radio station. Weak in every way I can imagine for such a task. Yet here we are starting our 21st year on January 8th, 2010. People still financially give without any skill on our part to raise funds. Artists still line up for a chance to minister in front of WBVN listeners. We still believe the Spirit of God guides us along. Not everyone understands why we do what we do, or can see the vision the way we believe we were given it for this ministry. But God continues to deliver His 'promise.' We just completed our 40th fundraiser and in it, in these very tough economic times, our listeners broke five Celebration records for a Fall Celebration. While we have had our average gift amount reduced this year, we have had four exceptional gifts come to the station since May to pick up all the necessary budget needs so far this fall.

Just like the first day, we still rely on Contemporary Christian Music to encourage. We understood that to be our first mission twenty years ago and still believe it's our first mission today. For us, it's about God's Grace, Love and Mercy. That was our initial emphasis and it's still our understanding of what we have been given to share and guard as our purpose. By the end of 2009, we will have produced 128 concert events, closing in on 100,000 attendees over that period of time.

Now that's a long story to tell. Twenty years into it I wish I had kept a daily journal to record all the miracles for us. Many of your names would be in that journal. Much of it has been so profound. We have always believed that the testimony of this ministry is 'you.' Your support, prayers, thoughtfulness and kindnesses have been the underlining to our story. It has been so interesting and pleasing to have been here for twenty. The friends we have formed, the relationships with our listeners, the worship we share at the concert events mean so much to

us. Our weaknesses have been graciously received by so many of you. It's been good, very, very good.

Now, we

pause. I've been telling my friends for a few weeks that I feel like we are to listen for awhile. There are new things that we will be doing to serve our community of believers. We are listening to what touches our hearts. As I write this letter, we are preparing for our 5th free listener appreciation concert. We have given away all the tickets for Margaret Becker and we expect a wonderful night of praise and gathering of believers to take place.

Every age group will be represented, many different denominations will be present and we will all enter into one heart of worship. That was the promise heard in 1983. I have never shared this with anyone before, but

the promise was that I would gather believers together like a shepherd gathers his sheep. For me coming together each day, all of us listening to the Gospel of Christ in song each day, and gathering together in those 128 concerts, are very much like a shepherd gathering sheep to green pastures. That promise came true when I couldn't have gathered two believers together let alone the thousands that have met with one heart just this week at FM 104.5. A promise from The Promise.