

A PRAYER AS WE BEGIN OUR 23RD YEAR TOGETHER

Everyone has a 'crisis' moment in life that goes deep in the soul and memory. For me one of those moments was September 29, 1985. That's the evening I received the phone call telling me that I had been appointed Superintendent in Washington Pacific District. I asked for some time to pray before accepting. I was 'Pastor' for 25 years and enjoyed the discipline and rewards of that calling. During 36 hours of Prayer & Fasting I revisited other crises moments in my journey – The night I accepted Christ as my personal Savior – and the water baptism that followed shortly thereafter (July, 1955); the in-depth relationship called entire sanctification came during East Tennessee Senior-High Camp in August, 1958; the calling to be a Nazarene Pastor; subsequent education at Trevecca & Nazarene Theological Seminary – it was YES-BY-YES with Jesus.

Miriam & I were married on August 10, 1962. Miriam has been a part of every important decision in my life since January 1960 (when we started dating). These 'crisis' moments were only a few that I revisited during the 36 hour prayer vigil. During those hours God seemed to bond my heart to the Washington Pacific District Church Family – most that I had not yet met. I did meet WAPAC Pastors and Spouses at Rosario on October 2, 1985 and felt 'at home' among you. Miriam & I entered your lives with a definite 'call' to be here! The official date of my beginning in this office was November 1, 1985 – but deep in my being I believe it to be at least a month earlier. The bonding of hearts has been unwavering on my part – even when calls to be elsewhere appeared.

O Lord,

THANK YOU for Your loving-kindness from one moment to the next, from one day to the next, from one year to the next. You are with us!

You are FOR us – never against us.

The moments, days and years have been varied and brought special challenges but YOUR PRESENCE has gone before us – leading, encouraging, helping, sometimes even chastening, but always providing direction and vision.

THANK YOU for making us co-creators with You.

THANK YOU for placing effective people in our pathway, people that MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

THANK YOU for the rich blessings of seeing folks come to faith in Jesus! THANK YOU for witnessing the multitude of baptisms.

THANK YOU for the growing number witnessing to the experience of HEART HOLINESS and the in-depth relationship in the Holy Spirit.

THANK YOU that there is a growing FAITH among Pastors and laity.

THANK YOU for a FELLOWSHIP OF INTERCESSORS that talk about prayer, but also practice the presence of prayer.

THANK YOU for Your protection and mercy.

THANK YOU for the difficult place, which serves to humble us – as we can't 'fix' it, BUT YOU CAN!

THANK YOU for effective teachers and leaders that faithfully proclaim the Word daily and from house-to-house.

THANK YOU for faithful Pastors that keep their hands to the plow in Your Vineyard.

As we begin 23 years together, may Your blessings be abundant in every area of the District and beyond our borders.

Make us to continually walk in step with Your purpose and will.

Keep us from fear of risk – never attempting anything new

and different to reach younger people.
Make us even more bold in our witness.
Help us to be loving and kind in dealing with folks that might not see things as we do.
Make us to be Christ-like in ALL our ways.
THANK YOU for permitting me to be Superintendent of the BEST DISTRICT in our Zion.
Help us to proceed STRAIGHT AHEAD FOR JESUS!
May we be consumed with bringing others to You.

And, Lord, ONE final thing - Help us not to seek credit for the good things that happen along the journey.

In Jesus' Name, Amen

Hugh L. Smith