

*I hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and New Years.
2003 will be an exciting year!*

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The New Look of the Newsletter

As you have noticed, my newsletter has a new look about it. It is time to move up a notch. Thanks to the help of Pamala Smith in Phoenix, Arizona. The newsletter will be much easier to read. I will continue to write it; but Pamala will proof it, edit, and format it for me. It will now have a distinct look with the pictures and graphics all placed in one Adobe Acrobat document.

The Weather

The Flood — Then the Snow

Thanks to those of you who e-mailed your concern to me after seeing the news reports about the Rhein River flooding a few weeks ago. Without a doubt this gives new meaning to water-front property.

The locals tell me that normally spring is the "official" time for flooding. But for some reason, we had an unusual amount of rain to the south near Frankfurt and warming temperatures that started an early snow melt.

In my apartment building, the water only leaked in the basement from small cracks in the foundation and the rising ground water but the pumping system seemed to handle it. Having not lived through this before, I took my stuff out of the basement and moved it to my living room. It was probably a little premature on my part. But the next day, other residents were doing the same thing. A positive result of the move was being able to rearrange and clean out my storage area since it all had to be moved anyway.

No sooner had the rising water stopped short of what was expected, it began to snow. The temperature dropped and we got three or four inches of snow. It was quite beautiful. But it was a little unique to look out my front window and see the flood waters still up on the lawn and the snow coming down, blanketing everything.

Please see more pictures of the flood on the next page.



Above: Beer Garden and kid's swing set.
My front yard is to the right of the hedge.



Right: The view from my balcony.



*Snow with receding waters.
The water is normally 7 feet below
the short stone wall in the distance.*

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More Pictures...Results of the Flood



Dry Dock?
Oberwinter Harbor — just a ½ mile south of my apartment.



Bike path and utility road to Beer Garden on right and river cruise boats loading ramps in the distance. This is next door to me. The water is still rising.



The bike path — 24 hours later.



Foot bridge from the little apartment building just left and next to the Beer Garden path.



Boats with wheels? Yep, those clever Germans have thought of everything. If the water continues to rise, these boats which belong to the apartments are used to move the tenants from the front steps across the street to the train station. The wheels are located right where it looks like the boat has two dark holes.

Upcoming Ministry

France

In March, I will be taking a short trip to France to visit some long-time missionary friends. They have been missionaries for years in Youth With A Mission (YWAM). It has been nearly three years since I have seen them and I look forward to spending some quality time with them. We will, of course, talk with them about how to become even more effective in ministry.

Brussels

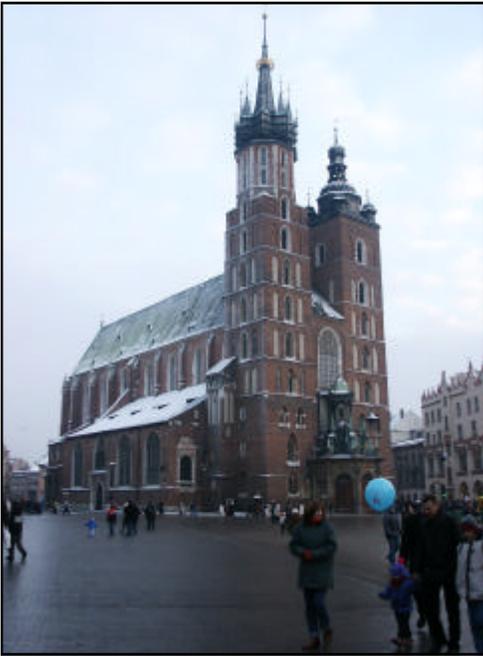
— *European Union Information* —
A new door has recently opened. On my way to France in March, I will be spending time with a pastor in Brussels, Belgium. We will be getting together to discuss specifically his ministry, which includes incredible insights and behind the scenes information about the European Union role in the Anti-Christ scenario sited in the Book of Revelation.

Many top-level Christian ministries throughout the world consider this Belgium pastor to be the leading source of the most accurate and balanced information on the growing European Union and its impact in the world's future events. He was openly excited about FSM's vision to help churches and ministries to learn to plan and strategize their futures. He offered to assist me in any way and personally introduce me to any number of churches and ministries in Western and Eastern Europe. All I need to do is tell him when and where I believe the Holy Spirit is leading me.

It has been difficult at times for me to "sit still" for nearly a year before really going out to actively minister. It really does seem like it was God's plan to get me settled in and ready — spiritually, mentally and physically.

*I am excited
about the prospects
of the upcoming year!*

The Trip to Poland — Excellent Contacts Developed in Krakow



Krakow City Square Church

Although a long trip by travel time (17 hours of train travel each way), it was a very short trip in actual time there. Maximum use of time was the order of the day.

We arrived the day before the conference was to begin. The weather was clear and cold; the highs were around 26 degrees and the overnight lows about 14–16 degrees. Krakow looked beautiful in a one inch blanket of snow that had fallen the week before.

This was my first time in Poland and it was interesting to see the dramatic visual difference between Germany and Poland. Poland has progressed nicely during its first ten-plus years of freedom from communism, but it still has a long way to go. When we crossed over the border, the change was dramatic. In Germany, everything is painted. In Poland, there seems to be a noticeable lack of color on the buildings and generally throughout the cities and country. (This was also something that I noticed last year in Moscow.) Things are just a bland

gray and in some cases, just not painted. The beauty of Krakow comes from the ancient architectural design and of course, the people.

During the Pastor's Leadership Conference, I had the opportunity to make some new friends. Also, I had the pleasure of reestablishing and renewing the friendship of a couple that I knew during my Bible school days at Rhema Bible School in Tulsa. For the last few years, they have been running a Bible school and a church near Gadansk, Poland. I didn't know that the husband was going to attend the Leadership conference and it was great to see him again.

Other contacts were made with local pastors and businessmen in Poland and an American missionary couple located on the eastern side of the Czech Republic. It looks like the Lord is opening doors for future ministry.



Wouldn't you know it — the only time I find an actual Mexican food restaurant and we don't have time to stop. Pastor Ken Westerman from West Virginia agrees, "Yes, it is as cold as it looks." At 4:00 p.m., it is pitch black and 26 degrees without the wind chill factor.

One-On-One Ministry

I have been involved in a lot of personal one-on-one ministry these last few months. In some cases, these contacts are through my local church; in some they are from friends in my language school classes. Intercessory prayer requests seem to be on the increase right now.

Praise Reports of "Unexplainable" Healing

One example of intercessory prayer comes from Lisa (a friend that works at the U.N.). Some months ago, she asked me to pray for her mother, whose heart was failing. Her mother lives in the Toronto, Canada area. The doctors had recently diagnosed even more heart problems and failure. But, it seems that The Lord had another perspective.

Her last tests indicated to the doctors that "something" positive had happened since her last appointment. In fact, they are not sure what happened; however, they are seeing an unexplainable increase in heart function. Now, there is a need to reduce her medications instead of increasing them, as planned. My friend reports that even her mother's conversations have changed to being positive and looking forward to the future. ***Glory!***

(continued on page 4)

Praise Reports of “Unexplainable” Healing (continued from page 3)

There is one more intercessory prayer request and that I would like to report. It just so happens, this one also comes from Lisa. Apparently, she and her sister were discussing their mother's healing. The sister told Lisa of a tragic story of her friend named Jamie. Lisa called me late one night to ask if I would pray for Jamie and add her to any other prayer chain I knew of. I said that I would and that was about four weeks ago.

Jamie is a young wife and mother of two little boys — one a toddler and the other an eight-week old newborn. When Jamie delivered the baby, the doctors noticed that she lost a lot more blood than normal. They ran some tests and found out that she is in Stage Four of terminal cancer of the liver, bones and lymph nodes. Jamie had no symptoms of any kind before or during the pregnancy.

A few days ago, Lisa called with a praise report. For some “unknown” reason, the doctors report that her liver is showing signs of healing and/or a reversal. Swelling in the liver and lymph nodes are down dramatically. With the reduction of swelling, she no longer has the constant pain in her back from her shoulders down her back. Tingling in her spine had caused concern but doctors confirm that it is not a problem; but a sign of healing in her bones. Treatment was postponed earlier in the week due to her white count being down. But, just three days later, her white count increased enough to allow another treatment.

So, to those who have joined with me in believing God for Jamie's total healing for God's Glory, keep on praying. Two little boys and a loving husband will be thankful to have a healthy mom and wife. I will keep you posted.

***There is nothing
impossible for God!***

On The Home Front — The Kitchen And My Upcoming Visit

My Refrigerator

I can't tell you what a blessing it is to actually have room to store and save stuff in my new huge refrigerator. Just the savings of money alone by not having food spoil is blessing enough. It is terrific. But I have to share with you that my German friends don't understand why a single guy needs a refrigerator that is taller than he is. They just kind of shake their heads and mumble something about, “He's still an American.”

The funny thing is that the new frig with the new electronic cooling system is twice as energy efficient at three times the size than my old one, which leaked cool air and ran half the day while working hard to keep food (at best) 52 degrees. Oh, by the way, yes I do confirm that I am still an American and love to have ice cubes in my drinks. Don't expect it at their house; but at mine, yes — not two tiny half inch cubes but real ice cubes that fill up a glass.

My Kitchen

With the holidays done and all that goes with that, it is time to put in a more convenient kitchen. The temporary one has been a blessing; but some counter space and real cabinets will be great. I sat down a few weeks ago and played with graph paper and model cut-outs of various counters and cabinets to see what would fit. Finally, a decision was made and pricing complete, so now the work begins.

A couple of buddies from church will come over on a future Saturday and pull out the temporary sink, stove and utility shelves. We will then build up the more permanent version. The temporary stove and sink will be given away to anyone that has a need. It has been a blessing for me and got me settled down enough to figure out what I needed on a more permanent basis.

Since I have been in Germany, I have entertained more at my apartment in the last few months, than I have done in twenty years. God has blessed me with a wonderful place to have Bible studies, prayer meetings, and fellowship. So the “spirit of hospitality” seems to be on me and it is nice to be able to share the story of how God provided the apartment and continues to provide supernaturally for all my needs.

“Thank you...” to the family that made my new kitchen possible. “...*film at 10:00.*” Well, not really; but “before” and “after” pictures will be in the next newsletter.

Upcoming Visit to the States

I will be leaving to visit the States around the 8th of April and plan on being on that side of the world until late May. I am looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible. Sometime during that time, I will be visiting my two sons, Shawn and William, and granddaughter Antonella in Florida. It will be fun and I am looking forward to seeing them. It will have been just over a year since my last visit. This has been the longest time we have been separated; so it will be good to have some long talks without paying a long distance phone bill for it.

On My Heart

By Larry Blakeslee

Peter Walks On The Water

— Matthew 14:25-33

We all know the account of Peter getting out of the boat and walking on the water. But, I feel compelled to share my thoughts regarding it with you. It might speak to someone right now...today.

If that event would have happened now instead of then, maybe some of the conversations and discussions among the men in the boat would have sounded like this:

There would always be Mister Enthusiasm exclaimed, "Wow! Glory to God. Did you see that? That was AMAZING!" After it had already been done, "Jesus, I want to do that."

Then there is of course the doubting Thomas type that would discount what they saw. "After all, everyone knows that it is not possible. It is water. Besides, it is dark and it only looked like he was walking on the water. Maybe there was a submerged island that only Peter and Jesus knew about."

Another said under his breath, "Well, Peter is just a show-off. Doesn't he think HE is special."

The judgmental one would have said, "That is fine for now and just for Peter. It certainly isn't for future generations."

The "burned out from ministry" disciple said, "Will you please hold it down, I am trying to get some sleep. I have been working all day."

Finally, the always "missed the joke" or "late to the party" disciple wakes up and says, "Hey, what's going on? What did I miss? He did WHAT? He did NOT. Get OUT."

Are you one of these? Take a minute to read the actual account found in the Bible. Think about what you would do or think if you just happened to be in the boat to experience this actual miracle first hand.

Matthew 14:25-33 (NIV)

"During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. 'It's a ghost,' they said, and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them: 'Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.'

"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

"Come," he said.

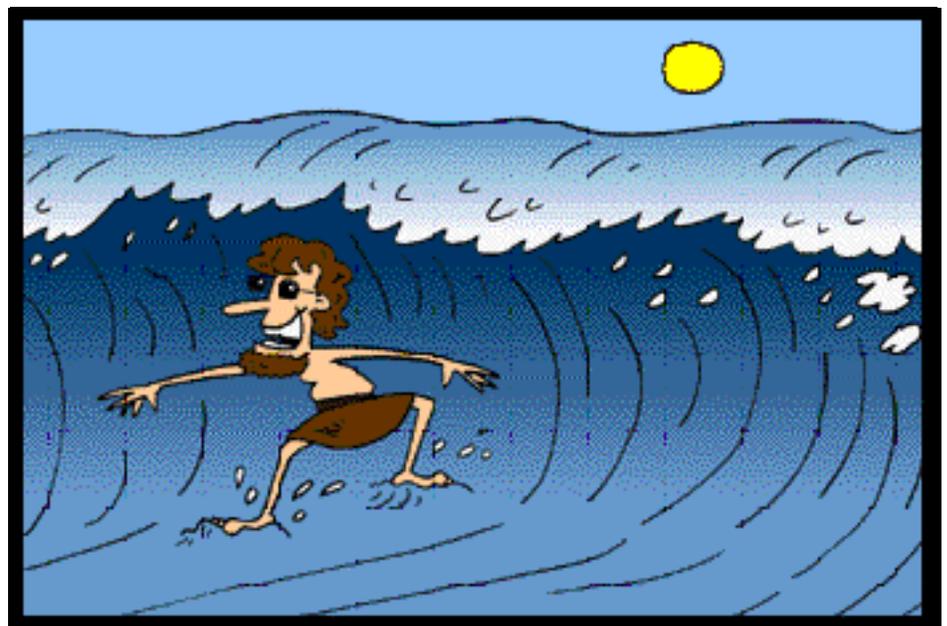
Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But, when he saw the wind, he was afraid and beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "Why did you doubt?"

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Literally, only God knows what prompted Peter to have the guts to ask Jesus to reconfirm it was him and then to ask, "If that is you, tell me to come to you on the water." Just seconds earlier he heard Jesus calm the fears of men in the boat by telling them specifically that it was him and not a ghost.

But, Peter had an idea and wanted to get a second confirmation of the will of God for that moment. He wanted to make sure that it was Jesus who was really out there. Jesus confirmed by telling him, "Come."



**Peter (not needing a board)
could surf anytime there were Richter waves!**

If we have a moment of doubt, the Holy Spirit will confirm to us, “Yes, this is my desire for you.” What literally happened was since Jesus is the Word, The Word spoke back to him.’

John 1:14 (NIV)

“The Word (Jesus) became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

You may not need to literally walk on water. You may need a financial miracle, a family miracle or healing in your body. Go to Bible — the Word, Jesus, our Savior — and find a scripture that addresses your need. Believe it and stand on it in faith. Jesus will answer you back to confirm whether it *IS* His desire for you to receive what you have asked for in faith based on His Word.

When Peter stepped out of the boat, he took the first step of faith and it worked. Imagine that?

Everyone knows the laws of physics; people do not walk on water. Yet, Peter (the gutsy one), some how had quickly convinced himself, that if it was Jesus that told him that he could do it, this could be done. Can you imagine the talk what was going on in the boat? What was he thinking?

Jesus said, “Come.” Just one word from Jesus was all that Peter needed. That word from Jesus to you might be “Just Believe” or “Have Faith. Put one foot over the side of the boat and stand up.”

Think about the time of night and the environment when this was happening. Everyone on the boat heard this dialogue between Peter and Jesus. I can't imagine Peter being the quiet one of the disciples. It isn't very likely that he whispered to Jesus or had a silent moment of unspoken prayer

hoping that Jesus would hear him. The natural surroundings were not favorable for the laws of physics to allow the transmission of sound over water since there was a storm going on.

This was not in the middle of a bright sunny day. It was the middle of the night. An oil lantern was the brightest light available; not a search light or flood lights. The water was deep enough to float a boat. They were in the process of crossing to the other side and had been sailing since late afternoon. We know that they were not in shallow water or near the shore; he could not walk back to safety.

Peter was not wearing a life vest or personal floatation device with reflective tape or water proof strobes so he could be seen in the middle of the night. There was no Coast Guard to send out a helicopter or a Cutter to mount a search and rescue mission. He didn't tie himself to the boat, so they could drag him back on board if it didn't work. In this case, it was a case of either walk or swim — assuming Peter could swim.

He simply got out of the boat on Jesus' assurance and command. Jesus had said, “Come.” But, like many of us, after we are in the process of a huge step of faith, we sometimes allow the enemy to distract or defocus us just for a moment.

In this case, the enemy for some reason became or is represented by the wind. Peter saw the wind and was distracted from the Word Jesus gave him to “Come.” It is also interesting that the Bible doesn't say why Peter became concerned about the wind after he had already stepped out of the boat. It had been apparently blowing hard since they all left the shore hours before.

We all know and the Bible speaks that we can not actually see the wind. However, we see the results of wind, that is, blowing dust, leaves or moving branches, and so forth. In Peter's case, what he saw

were the waves — maybe even with whitecaps.

Peter was already in the middle of “walking out a miracle”. He had already defied the laws of nature and overcome his own “knowledge” of water. But for some reason, the fact that the water was about to or had become rougher distracted him. He was already out of the boat. He was a walking miracle.

Peter became afraid...afraid of what? Did he just wake up from sleep walking? Shouldn't he have been afraid when he stepped over the side of the boat? Did logic and intellect step in and now say “You are in big trouble. You can't do this.” Could Peter have been the first to demonstrate a fear of success? If there is such a thing?

No matter what the reason, in the middle of the miracle, Peter now finds that he needs help. No matter why he needs it or why he began to doubt, he now needs it and God provided Peter with the help immediately. Yes, immediately! Jesus reached out and took Peter's hand.

Even in Peter's doubt, it was still no less a miracle. At least Peter got out of the boat and when he needed help, Jesus reached out and gave it to him and they walked back to the boat. Jesus didn't say to Peter, “Climb up on my shoulders and I will carry you back.” Jesus didn't say, “Hold on to my hand and I will drag you through the water back to the boat.” They walked back together.

Jesus did have a couple of correcting words for Peter. The Book of Matthew says in verse 31, *“Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. ‘You of little faith,’ he said, ‘why did you doubt?’”* Jesus pegged it. “Why did you doubt?” That wasn't very “politically correct” of Jesus. He could have hurt Peter's

self esteem. Sometimes it takes a good friend to call us on something. But still, Ouch!

In today's terms, I think the conversation between Jesus and Peter went more like this. Jesus said, "Peter, you big lug, you already had it in the bag, dude. You were out of the boat doing the impossible...focus...focus...focus." Or, in biblical words. "Don't doubt... don't doubt...don't doubt."

Today, Peter may have responded like this, "Yeah, but... did you see those waves and whitecaps coming? We know that is trouble even for a boat. Not just some big barefoot Dude, hangin' ten, on the water without my 'floaties' on or Boogie board, to paddle back with. Come on Jesus, cut me some slack."

Jesus might have replied, "Well, look back at the boat, see anybody else following you? NO. I am still proud of you. You had more faith than all those other guys." Jesus might have given Peter a big slap on the back and manly side hug and said, "Love you man. You don't realize it now, but you did win big."

Jesus may have continued, "You will show up in my Word for millions of people for thousands of years, to read about. You won't understand this, but this is way bigger than being in the Guinness World Book of Records. Trust me."

How About You?

Need a miracle? At a dead end? Got a big step of faith to take or need to? Know that it is your Heavenly Father's will and desire for you to succeed. Find a scripture to stand on. Confirm it. Do it. And do it focused without allowing doubt or fear to enter in. Remember even in the middle of it, if you need help, don't be afraid to ask. God will provide. He already told you that He wanted you

to do it or receive it, when you entered into the Blood Covenant with Him.

Possible Dialogue in Heaven

Just remember when you stand before Jesus on Judgment Day, He may ask you why you doubted. Or, better yet Jesus will say, "Remember in 2003 when you asked for the impossible and did not doubt. Way to go Dude or ...Dudette."

He probably won't speak in that jargon; but the admiration will be the same.

I am not off the hook either. Jesus will probably say something to me like, "What were you thinking when you were paraphrasing My Word in your newsletter. Well, at least you were trying...sometimes very trying. But I love you."

Then Jesus will say just as I am turning around to leave, "Oh Larry, remember asking me for a mansion with waterfront property in heaven? Well, Peter is waiting at Heaven's dock in your new thirty foot Sea Ray boat to take you over to your own dock in front of your house."

Jesus will continue, "Peter read your newsletter, too. He wants to talk to you about it. He said something about the 'floaties' comment. I told him to take it easy on you. After all, you both made it to here. When you see how big he is, you'll be glad I asked or that you are both in heaven."

"Oh by the way," Jesus would conclude, "The fishing is always good here. Just say what kind of fish you want to catch, how big, and how many. It will there. If you prefer to have the same type of fishing like on earth, don't say anything. But they will test your patience. By the way, we do practice 'catch and release' just for the principle of it."



Think about it — do you just need a miracle?

Don't argue or try to reason with anybody as to why it can't happen. Just ask and step out of the boat. What have you got to lose? You need a miracle! Besides, even if you are just willing to try, I know someone that will hold out His hand for you to grab even if you doubt. He is always there and in every circumstance.