

Making Milestones

My 12-year-old son, Chandler, recently attended his first bar mitzvah. As I explained to him what that ceremony means in the Jewish culture, I realized how few events, other than weddings and funerals, we Christians traditionally celebrate. We often fail to mark notable milestones in our lives.

Personally, I find this regrettable. So when there is an excuse to celebrate, I take it! I think it's important to reflect on God's goodness whenever we have an opportunity—and to remember “all the way He has led us” (see Deut. 8:2, KJV).

In February I had two such opportunities. One was to mark the transition of my good friend Mike Bickle from pastor of the church he founded 14 years ago, Metro Christian Fellowship in Kansas City, to head of a 24-hour-a-day prayer and intercession ministry called Friends of the Bride. Mike wanted to pass the baton quietly to the new pastor, Floyd McClung. But Floyd insisted that the church mark this milestone with a special celebration.

I flew out for the event to be with Mike and affirm our friendship. What a memorable experience to see what God has done in the church and to observe the congregation's obvious love for Mike!

Another opportunity arose on February 15 when we dedicated our new office building in Lake Mary, Florida. We built Phase I of the building five years ago but didn't want to dedicate it until we had finished the entire building. Moving in was a tremendous milestone for us—the culmination of years of planning and work.

Having a ceremony allowed us to give glory to the Lord and rededicate ourselves to fulfilling the vision He has given us

to spread the gospel around the world. We were also able to dedicate our 300-seat meeting room, officially named "Buckingham Hall," to honor the memory of Jamie Buckingham, my longtime friend and mentor, who wrote in this space for 13 years before his death in 1992. It was emotionally moving for me to recall the impact Jamie had on me personally and on our organization.

A few weeks later, in conjunction with a meeting of Christian Life Missions, we named our new board room in honor of Robert Walker, former editor of Christian Life and founder of Christian Life Missions. He was among the first evangelicals to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit back in the 1950s, and his coverage in Christian Life of the new phenomenon which later became known as the charismatic renewal was a key to the early growth of the movement. Bob remains a close friend and mentor to me and my staff.

Later this year I will have the chance to celebrate God's goodness again in a big way. August 5 marks the 25th anniversary of the day the first issue of Charisma came off the press! Though we are acknowledging this milestone all year, we purposely scheduled our annual Charisma conference to coincide with the anniversary.

But the conference isn't about Charisma or our history. It is intended to be a time for you to benefit from anointed ministry, enter into God's presence through praise and worship, and receive from God. We see it as an opportunity for us to minister to you in person in a way that is not possible in print.

Publicity for the conference won't begin until next month, but I thought you might like a sneak preview. The theme—Many Streams, One River—describes what Charisma is all about. We gladly celebrate the many streams of the body of Christ that form a single river of God's grace.

Our speakers will represent some of the different streams. Benny Hinn (who first appeared on the cover of Charisma in 1979) will preach one night. We've also invited Cindy Jacobs (who was on our cover in 1994), Jack Hayford (who was on the cover in 1985 and 1993), and Mike Bickle (who was on the cover of Ministries Today in 1990). Additional speakers are currently being confirmed.

We'd be honored to have you join us to mark an important milestone in the history of Charisma while attending a life-changing conference. Look for more information online at or call (888) 772-2223.

Come celebrate with us 25 years of Spirit-led living!

Stephen Strang is the founding editor of Charisma. Visit our Web site at .