

December 1999

Remember when a year was a really, really, really long time (back when we were kids)? Now the years seem to rush by so quickly. With each passing year, I'm more aware of how rich God's blessing to us has been. The last book of the Bible describes a sort of song that God's people sing to him at the close of human history that expresses our gratitude:

*“Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty
Just and true are all your ways, King of the ages.
Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name?
For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you
for your righteous acts have been revealed..” Revelation 15:3-4*

With that introduction, it seems only appropriate that we tell you what we're thankful for. How much time do you have? I'll try to be brief...

- My business has undergone explosive growth this year. We're up to 31 employees as of December first, with several more starting by January. We have closed deals with Wal-Mart (we'll be powering their new travel web site due to launch in February), and Air Canada, and we have several more very close to closing. We were ranked number 351 on the list of the nation's 500 fastest growing technology companies. It doesn't seem possible.
- I was invited to speak at the International Air Transport Association conference in Monaco in March. Roseanne and I were able to spend just about a week in this tiny nation on the south coast of France. It was a beautiful place—but garrishly wealthy. Nowhere else have I seen so many dogs wearing diamond-studded collars and so many GIANT yachts. It was fun, and the beaches were beautiful, but the conspicuous wealth is sad in a world with so much poverty.
- In April, our church ran its third “Date with Dad” event, where Dad's take their daughters to a fancy dinner. We made a special deal with one of the local companies that runs tour boats on the river, and had a wonderful afternoon lunch cruise with about 100 dads and daughters.
- In June, we celebrated the end of the school year with a long weekend camping trip at a reservoir just about two hours south of Portland. We brought one of Jessica's friends and we all had a great time.
- Roseanne's family on her Dad's side had a reunion in Arkansas in July. Roseanne and her sister flew to Arkansas (while Mark and the girls went to our church family camp). Mark even managed to pull a few strings at American Airlines and get Roseanne and her sister upgraded to first class for the flight! She had a great time, and while I wish I could have gone with Roseanne, the girls really enjoyed the church family camp.
- Roseanne has more family than some cities have residents. So, never running short of family to “reunite with”, she had another reunion in August—this time on her mother's side. We had planned to go to the reunion, and leave directly from there for a week of family camping in Northern Idaho. However, when we stopped for gas after the family reunion, we discovered gas pouring out from under the motorhome. It turned out that the gas fill hose had sawed through. Fortunately, we had enough gas to drive home on (about 2 hours). We drove home, and I had to spend the next day trying to repair the hose (which was, of course, nearly impossible to reach). My patience wore thin more than once during this task...
- After the repair was complete, we took off for Northern Idaho. We spent a wonderful week at Farragut State Park on the shores of Lake Pend Orielle in northern Idaho. One of the days while we were there, we went by boat to a town at the far end of the lake. We spent the day wandering around the town, and headed back in the late afternoon. On the way back, we

stopped at a wonderful floating restaurant on the lake and had dinner. We left about sunset. Shortly after we left, the sky turned black and the thunder clouds rolled in. We ended up riding home through a mountain thunderstorm on the dark lake. That proved to be rather exciting!

- At the end of that week, we had to get home because Jessica and Katie were going to our church's water ski camp. They were both very excited. Roseanne and I were also excited, because we had a week to ourselves. We took off again and went up to a lake in Northern Washington called Lake Chelan. The lake was really nice, but the campground was one of the worst I've ever seen, with camping spots wedged together so close that you were practically right on top of your neighbor. Nancy and John and their boys came up and Mom and Dad came by for one day, so we had a great time with family. The kids came home from Water Ski camp so excited with so many stories to tell that it took most of the next day to hear all their stories.
- Katie is in the 7th grade this year, and Jessica is a freshman in the high school that's practically in our back yard. They're both doing well in school—though if they were a little less social, I think they could do even better. Both are boy crazy.
- Jessica has joined a synchronized swimming team. She practices 2-3 three times a week and is in much better shape as a result. I'm really amazed at what she can do, even after only a few months of practice.
- I've been doing a lot of travel with the business this year. In October, I was invited to speak about our technology at two conferences—one in Dallas and another one in Dublin, Ireland. This time, I couldn't talk Roseanne into going, so it ended up being a "solo" trip, and I was gone about 10 days between the two. I only had a little bit of free time to wander around in Dublin, but it was a really interesting city. Maybe next time I can talk Roseanne into coming...
- We celebrated my father's 77th birthday in November by getting together for a brunch at Skamania lodge—a really beautiful lodge on the Washington side of the Columbia river, about an hour east of Portland. We met Dad and Mom, and Nancy and John, and we had a fun, but brief time together. Mom is still doing OK, though she doesn't seem to recognize any of us. Dad is doing an excellent job of caring for her at home and getting some help one day a week. Nancy has also gone up and helped several times.
- That brings us to December. Roseanne and Jessica are busy getting ready for a Christmas drama presentation. Katie is really active in the Jr. High Youth Group, I'm teaching a college-age class at church, and working on the church's web site.
- Stay tuned for next year, as it looks like Roseanne and Jessica will be going to Russia for about 10 days with a group from our church. We've "adopted" a small church in Russia, and Roseanne and Jessica will be going over to do some drama.

I promised to keep it brief. OK...I stretched "brief" a bit. As you can see, we have a great deal to be thankful for. We've been pretty busy. Our family sometimes reminds me of the famous statement that Mario Andretti once made: "if you're always in control, you're not going fast enough." Hmm... I hope that's not true of us.

One of the things I most look forward to about the holidays is a little time off to relax, slow down, and enjoy time with my family. I hope you'll take some time as well. In fact, while you're sitting there just relaxing, why don't you drop us a note! We're "wired" so you can send us email, and we even have POTS (Plain Old Telephone Service). Give us a call, or drop by!

In the Love of our Lord Jesus,