

REFLECTIONS

June 18, 2006

**In this way the word of the Lord spread
widely and grew in power.**

Acts 19:20

The Steeple's Skin

For almost 50 years the steeple claimed its throne atop my hometown church. It stood tall above the buildings and the trees as a landmark of a small town. Sheets of copper that formed the steeple's skin were darkened by time adding dignity to its regal presence as it seemed to continuously beam the message of Jesus Christ

The years finally took their toll on the stately spire. A weakened and leaky roof made it financially unfeasible for the steeple to preserve its splendorous spot, so it had to be removed from its rooftop home. But the life of the steeple was not over yet.

Looking upon the fallen spire, a dedicated and innovative member of the congregation had an idea. He would salvage the darkened copper skin and use the material to make small crosses to sell and provide funds to the church. The project enjoyed success especially from those with sentimental affection to the memories of the church steeple. But another member, a truck driver by trade, took the idea a step further.

This member, a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ, frequently stopped to render aid to people as he drove his eighteen wheeler throughout North America. He requested five or six of the crosses to use when he witnessed to those he helped along his route. But it was not long before he returned asking for more—50 or 60 more.

As he uses them, the truck driver places a mark on a map to designate the spot each cross was given away. The marks for the crosses are now sprinkled all across the map of North America, north, south, east and west. Though the steeple no longer sits in its original place on the rooftop, the steeple's skin continues to beam the message of Jesus Christ. Though it no longer enjoys its stately place, its signal is even more powerful and reaches farther than anyone could have ever imagined.

We all mourned when the steeple was removed from its throne. But now we can see that what seemed like an end was really a beginning. As one mission concluded, a new mission began. We could not see what God was doing at the time, but we learned that it was "in this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power."

God brings changes to our lives in this way also. We mourn the change because we cannot see what God is doing at the time. But as one mission ends a new one lies ahead, one that will spread the word of the Lord even more powerfully. And like the steeple's skin, it will reach farther than we ever imagined.

"You are the light of the world."

Richard +