

Rafe's July 2008 Fall/Accident and Recovery

Realizing that some do (and many do not) have an interest in the details about my accident in 2008 and how the Lord has graciously worked to allow me to walk again, I am putting together this separate report, rather than include it in the body of the 2009 Refior News Bulletin.

There were contemporaneous emails created so I will assemble those to provide the information about how the Lord has immeasurably blessed us. I am still in the recovery mode with substantial pain issues, but in answer to the question, "How are you doing?" the true answer is, "I am doing well....very well indeed."

On July 24, 2008 I suffered a fall from a tall ladder down onto concrete which resulted in life-changing injuries to both legs. Many people prayed and visited and sent greetings and helped. We will always remember those blessings and we will always give thanks to the Lord for such friends. Here are the reports:

Summary of the first 6 weeks from July 24, 2008-

This is how I was injured in July, 2008. I have been the beneficiary of so much prayer for my recovery I want to express my deep and sincere THANKS to those who supported me in that way.

My main law office is in Warsaw, Indiana - where it has been since 1981. In 2006 I started developing a branch law office in Lafayette. Things progressed to the point that each week we now spend part of the week living and working in Warsaw and part of the week living and working in Lafayette. It has been fun to have two home towns, and we have grown to love it in Lafayette, as we continue to love it in Warsaw. It all works because of the wonders of today's technology.

On July 24, 2008 I was just completing the construction of a very large new room at the Lafayette law office. I have a beautiful round wood, sandblasted wall decoration (a "seal") that is 5 1/2 feet in diameter, weighing about 150 pounds. The brackets for it to hang on the wall of my Lafayette office were in place and another man and I - each on a tall ladder- were in the

process of lifting the wood "seal" up onto the brackets. I was about 12 feet up when suddenly I was falling straight down onto the concrete floor below, still holding the seal, and by feet crashed flat, resulting in a tibial explosion fracture (pylon fracture) on the left and a pulverized heel on the right (and other damage). No surgeon in Lafayette was willing to take my case so the shipped me (fully sedated) down to Indianapolis. My first surgery was on July 25, 2008 at Methodist Hospital. When I was released from the hospital I was not referred to a surgeon to do the actual reconstructive surgery – but I was simply told that I needed to locate a surgeon willing to assume my case. I finally secured the outstanding services of Dr. Jeff Anglen. At last I had a surgeon willing to take on my surgery/reconstruction. Dr. Anglen agreed to do the reconstruction in one long 6 1/2 hour surgery rather than a series of additional surgeries. So on August 8, 2008 (my birthday) I was reconstructed with metal parts and bone grafts.

The first five weeks after my release from the hospital we stayed at Warsaw, where I turned my law office library into a combination of my house (hospital bed, etc.), and my law office. But soon I was back to work. I had depositions with a table lined up by my hospital bed, as well as numerous client conferences and document signings. Now I am in a wheelchair and my hospital bed is gone. I am so thankful that I have a profession that allows me to be back to work, even though I can't walk yet. The surgeon says he expects I will be walking independently at least with crutches or a walker by February 2009. However I have a picture in my mind of ***being able to walk to the Thanksgiving dinner table***. In two weeks I will learn from my surgeon (after a new battery of X-rays) if I can begin putting some weight on one or both feet. If so, I can start therapy and rehab and perhaps start some assisted walking.

I especially thank the Lord for His perfect ways and His care and comfort. God does all things well, and He makes no mistakes. Because the new ramps to our house in Lafayette were installed, we have resumed traveling there for parts of each week.

Now here are some specific emails during that time and through January 2009:

My daughter's Email on July 25, 2008 – the day after my fall:

This is Rafe's daughter, Nikki. I am writing this e-mail to ask for all of dad's friends and family to be praying for him right now.

Yesterday afternoon dad was working to prepare his Lafayette office so that it would be complete in time for a marriage seminar that he and mom were to conduct tonight. As he was working he took a very bad fall from a 12 foot ladder. The result is that his left ankle/tibia (there's still some confusion on my part about the exact area of this injury) was shattered; his right heel was also shattered including the destruction of all soft tissue under the heel. He was transferred down to IU Med Center last night. This afternoon he had his first surgery of what now looks to be a series of surgeries. The doctor inserted pins into the left leg in order to stabilize the various bone parts so that they don't move while they wait for the swelling to go down enough for them to be able to put the leg/ankle back together. They don't seem to know what to do to the other heel at the moment and have simply put a "cold boot" on that foot.

Through all of this dad has been in an incredible amount of pain -- and anyone who knows dad understands that he is NOT the type to ever complain about pain. At present the plan is to work to get his pain under control, and have him learn to get himself in and out of bed with the new contraption on his left leg. Assuming that those are in place the doctor said that he may be released from Methodist (connected to IU Med) by Monday. They will then travel to Warsaw and begin working with surgeon(s) in Fort Wayne as soon as the swelling is down to start the series of surgeries that will be needed to repair both legs.

With this in mind I would like to ask all of you to be praying for my father.

1 - Pray that through the pain God would allow dad and mom opportunities to share God's love with the doctors, nurses and others around them now in Indianapolis and throughout the long ordeal to come.

2 - Pray that they will get to a doctor that will have the expertise to put together such shattered bones.

3 - Pray for dad to have relief from the pain.

4 - Pray for mom -- at the time of my writing, she has not yet gotten any real sleep for more than a day.

5 - Pray for wisdom in figuring out all the logistics of dealing with dad's injuries once he is released from the hospital. He will certainly be in a wheel chair with both legs so severely affected. What all that means practically still needs to be figured out. However we are praising God that the city required dad to build his Warsaw office to be handicap accessible, and that there is a first floor very comfortable bedroom and king-size bed available for him to use while he is unable to use the stairs.

6 - Finally, and I realize this is truly the most important, praise God with us for his miraculous hand. Dad could have so easily fallen on his head or back or done any number of things that would have resulted in far greater injuries than what he has in fact sustained. God is still on the throne. God never gives us more than we can handle. God gives us grace sufficient for the day. God's promises remain true. Rejoice with us in the goodness of God that is so evident even during times of great trial.

Thank you so much for your ministry to my family. I appreciate you joining us in prayer for dad. I can assure you that even in a time like this my dad continues to pray for you. The first thing he was asking for yesterday was for us to bring him his Bible and prayer notebook. (Then later he asked for legal work for him to review in the hospital :)). He understands better than most the very real value of prayer. There is nothing more important that you could do right now for my family than to take a bit of time to pray for Dad.

For the Refior family,
Nikki Lambeth

July 28, 2008 Email from my daughter, Nikki:

This is Nikki again. Well, today has been rather a whirlwind of activity. We're just now stopping long enough to send out a quick e-mail so that you know what is happening. Dad was released from Methodist today and was transported to Warsaw in an ambulance. He is set up in

a hospital bed in a downstairs room here at the Warsaw residence. He is no longer on the pain medication that "snowed" him so completely, and is only on the one that puts him to sleep. It's been nice to interact normally with him again today. He isn't talking much about the pain which means that it is finally to a level that he can deal with as long as he keeps up on his medication.

The primary prayer concern at this point is to find the right orthopedic surgeon who can deal with these injuries. There are a few possibilities that have been presented to mom and dad and they need wisdom to choose the right doctor, and for that doctor to be available and willing to take dad's case. There are still MANY unknowns about what is going to happen next. We are still expecting surgeries to happen once the swelling is completely down; and we know that the recovery will be a long process. Otherwise we just simply don't know how involved or lengthy the repair and recovery process will be.

Mom asks also that you pray for dad to get the rest he needs and to keep his feet up so that the healing can take place. We all know now that dad is in his own place that it will be a lot harder to keep him down with his feet up. But that is very important right now so that the swelling can go down and the surgeries can get underway. Pray for mom to have wisdom as she cares for him. Please pray also for mom to get good sleep. She is very clearly exhausted. She is such a giver and wants to be there to care for dad's every need -- and that is only going to intensify now that they are home and without nurses caring for him -- but Laura and I are concerned about her getting necessary rest as well.

I also want to thank the many of you who have written to express concern and communicate that you are praying for dad and our family. I have printed out all of the e-mails and mom has been reading them to dad, and saving them for him to read again. We all truly appreciate all of the words of comfort and encouragement. God is good. We're so thankful that He proves His love to us over and over again in the midst of this ever-changing saga of dad's injury. We may not know what is going to happen next, but our God certainly has a good plan laid out for each of us. It is a wonderful comfort to know that we can rest in Him knowing that He will work all things together for good.

I do want to mention that my first e-mail was sent to an old/incomplete list. I apologize to those of you I may have missed in my rush to get something out from my e-mail at home to let people know about dad's fall and injuries. If you know of someone who did not receive the update and wants to be on this list, please let me know and I'll be more than happy to update the list for dad. Thanks so much for your help.

Joyfully,
Nikki for the entire Refior family

August 1, 2008 Email:

Greetings from the Happy Refiors,

Thank you for praying. God has been so good to us. A **HUGE** answer to prayer just occurred. I was waiting to hear back from Dr. David A. Porter who specializes in ankle and foot injuries.

He is the orthopedic surgeon used by the Indianapolis Colts when one of their players has either an ankle or foot injury. Dr. Porter received and reviewed the films from the CAT Scans and x-rays of my legs, ankles, and feet and he has concluded that he would like to accept me as a patient and proceed with my surgeries and treatment. I am scheduled to be examined by Dr. Porter at 1:45 p.m. next Monday in Indianapolis with the next surgery tentatively scheduled for August 8, 2008 (my birthday). We are so delighted and thank the Lord that some pieces of the puzzle are now falling together.

A great man of God, John Dunlop, made the following statement about 30 years ago in his last public sermon while he was in the mist of excruciating pain, shortly before his death, "It is a joyful and amazing thing. I have spent my life sharing the all-sufficient Word of God with people, and knowing that because God had revealed them in His Word all of those promises are absolutely true. But when one finally has an experience in his own life when he actually *tries on God's promises personally*, he can rejoice in how **perfectly they fit**." As I pray about this I take sweet comfort in the truth about God's sovereignty, as He says in *Psalms 115:3*, "But our God is in Heaven; He does whatever He pleases." And in *Psalms 135:5*, "For I know that the Lord is great and our Lord is above all gods. Whatever the Lord pleases He does, in Heaven and in Earth, in the sea and in all the places . . ."

I say along with the Psalmist David, in *Psalms 144:15*, "HAPPY are the people whose God is the Lord!"

Earlier in *Psalms 55* we read, "Cast your burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain you . . . but I will trust in You."

Some of the people receiving this email did not receive the earlier report about my injury last Thursday, July 24. While holding a large one hundred fifty pound object on a ladder, I fell straight down to the concrete floor crushing bones and body parts on both sides. Both my "wheels" were out of commission. I had an initial surgery on Friday, July 25, 2008 in Indianapolis that placed rods through my left ankle and leg fixed to an exterior structure, and I have another device on my right ankle and foot. With bones being broken and some pulverized on both sides it will be months before I will have the privilege of walking again with a walker.

Yet we are still glowing and rejoicing from the call from Dr. Porter's office that they are taking my case and that the next steps can begin just days from now. Praise the Lord !

My hospital bed here at our place in Warsaw is next to a ten foot long picture window overlooking the lake. I simply could not do better than that ! With the benefit of some efficient procedures and equipment at my office, and the assistance of an outstanding staff, I am "back to work" and I am back on the job providing legal services to my clients. I have had the blessing of visits from dear friends and family in Lafayette and Indianapolis. Since being transported to Warsaw, numerous beloved friends have visited. Also our daughter Laura and her four kids have been here for the last couple of days. Just after they leave this morning, our daughter Nikki and grandsons David and Stephen will arrive and then Jonathan and Luke will join us Saturday evening.

I have stated many times before that, “My dear wife Pam is the sweetest person I have ever met.” That really is true, of course. However, it is brilliantly proving itself day by day as she is my hero, dealing with all of these dramatic changes in her life and lifestyle. Pam helps me with daily life and all that is entailed in caring 24/7 for a bed-ridden man. I cannot imagine being more blessed than I am. These have been intense times of basking the truths of Scripture and being engaged in significant prayer.

Today will be another “first” since my accident. I will shift from my hospital bed and onto a wheelchair, to travel two doors down the hallway to another conference room where I will meet with clients. Tonight would have been the second session of our “Marriage Tune-Up” seminars. Precious Pam and I will prayerfully and joyfully look forward to next summer when, Lord willing, we will be able to do the series. God’s ways and God’s plans are perfect. **Psalm 119:50** says, “This is my comfort in my affliction, for YOUR WORD has given me life.”

So there is the update. Thank you so much for your prayers and concerns. They mean everything to me and to pretty Pamela.

August 5, 2008 Email:

Greetings:

Below is the “long version” of my condition as learned from the examinations and additional X-rays on August 4, 2008. So that you know fully what is going on here is the picture.

I was scheduled to see Dr. David Porter at Methodist Sports Medicine in Indianapolis on August 4, 2008, at 1:45 p.m. Precious Pam and I were so excited that we finally were going to see the doctor that was going to be doing the surgery and that we would be able to learn more accurately my condition and to hopefully have a plan developed for my future treatment. But the time with Dr. Porter turned out to be much different than expected.

First, his office had messed things up so that he did not have the X-rays and CAT scans that previously we had carefully Fed Ex’ed to his office exactly according to their instructions. However, Dr. Porter said he had looked at them (but from his comments later it was clear that he did not remember what they showed).

Second, for some reason he was thinking that he was not actually going to be doing an examination that day, and so he was not prepared to do so. When I started describing the injuries to him, he was surprised, because he thought that the only thing he would be dealing with would be the two crushed heels. I had a simple question to Dr. Porter, “Why, doctor, do you think that the first surgery was done to place rods through my leg clear up in my mid-tibia as well as through my foot if there had not been problems with the tibia?” He did not have an answer to that question so he ordered an extensive set of additional X-rays. After he reviewed the X-rays, he started back pedaling as fast as the prior surgeon had back pedaled. Dr. Porter suggested that someone with more expertise in the types of very serious damage involved should do my surgery. He stated that he would be happy to and capable of performing the surgeries on the heels (calcaneous), but he would insist on a different surgeon completing the surgery that would

be involved with the tibia and the crushed bones in the ankle relating to the crushing compaction from the tibia down through the left ankle. He suggested that there were three surgeons that he felt were competent to do the surgeries involved. One of them that he mentioned was Dr. Jeff Anglen who is the head of Indiana University Medical Orthopedics. Pam and I said that we would therefore be interested to see if Dr. Anglen could pick up the case.

When Dr. Porter left to go try contact Dr. Anglen, I told Pam, “I feel like the family *fruitcake*...no one seems to really want me.” When Dr. Porter returned he stated that Dr. Anglen had agreed to examine me with the possibility of doing the surgery, but he was leaving for the day and we would not be able to get in to see him until some later date. Pam immediately begged him to call Dr. Anglen back and explain that it was an arduous 3-hour drive each way for us, in my condition, and if there were any way possible to not have to make a trip just for that initial examination and then still have another trip for the first surgery, we would greatly appreciate it.

When he came back he stated that Dr. Anglen had agreed to wait at his office that day until we arrived and he actually would see us right then, provided we could get downtown to Indiana University Medical Center immediately.

So we packed up and went down to the 1st floor to load me up into the van. When we left Warsaw I had four men to help me get up into the van from the wheelchair. We did not have any arrangement for getting me back into the van at Methodist Sports Medicine. I was under the mistaken impression that surely they would have a gurney at the clinic which could be used to wheel me out and then raise me to the proper level and then I could just slide into the van. But no such equipment was available. When we were about to exit the building there was a man who looked relatively strong, and about my age. I simply asked him if he would be willing to help lift me up into the van, and he agreed.

We analyzed the specific techniques we would use at what stage to work it out to get me up into the van. After I was in, the kind man who helped stated that he had been in a serious fall himself just six years before, and that he also had crushed both heels and had done other damage in his ankles and legs, and that he was walking pretty normally. ***Thank you Lord. That by itself was not only your amazing provision for needed help to get me into the van, but a very timely word of encouragement from this stranger who had himself gone through these surgeries and a successful recovery from similar injuries.***

We hustled downtown. It was about 5:30 p.m. so there was quite a bit of traffic. But the Lord provided so that we made pretty good time and we were able to follow the directions and get to the right place. Getting out of the van was much easier because there was gravity to help. Plus, with the Explorer van there was the level of the van floor below the seat that was wide enough for me to slip down onto as the first stage, and then from there to move down into the wheelchair. So that worked.

Pam and I wheeled down the first floor to Dr. Anglen’s office. Everyone else was gone except for his attending nurse and another assistant who had also kindly stayed over so that Dr. Anglen could see us.

Right away it was clear that there was a very upbeat and friendly atmosphere with Dr. Anglen's staff. They were absolutely wonderful. They were friendly, attentive, and pleasant to deal with. When Dr. Anglen came in we had an immediate rapport and he was blunt, but very informative. By this time he had reviewed part of the information. Then, with the wonders of technology, he was able to pull to his computer and then onto his flat TV screen, the CAT scans and X-rays.

Dr. Anglen gave the following information about my condition after reviewing all of the CAT scans and X-rays:

1. **RIGHT HEEL BONE (CALCANEOUS).** My right heel is crushed into nine pieces. He said my left heel is also damaged but suggested allowing a "natural" healing for it rather than also doing the plate and screws on the left one. Similarly, damage to the bones other than the heel on the right side would be allowed to heal while I remained non-weight-bearing for weeks, without doing the surgical intervention there, since there would be so many areas that would be operated on. Dr. Anglen stated that the normal shape of the heel bone is so that it is cupped up like a mountain. My crushed heels now are just the opposite in that they cave in downward (like a valley). Dr. Anglen went through several options, but he stated that the majority opinion of orthopedic surgeons is that for the long-term best results, to enhance the possibility of walking as normally as possible in the future, is to **do surgery to try to piece back together the various pieces of the heel bone.** He explained that the danger of this is that to complete the surgery it is necessary to remove all of the connective tissue and flesh and skin completely away from the side of the heel bone. If that would not work for some reason, e.g. an infection, then it could result in a very serious complication – no Plan B. Even with those risks, pretty Pam and I decided to go for what is the "majority opinion" seeking a better outcome. That would be for surgery on the right heel.
2. **PYLON FRACTURE.** Also called a "tibial explosion fracture." Because of the extreme compressive force that was exerted on my left leg, ankle and foot, the result was a severe breaking into several pieces of the tibia itself and (comminution) of the joint surface of the tibia. Unfortunately, the lower end of my left tibia was rather destroyed, and shattered into multiple fragments. Dr. Anglen further informed us that the joint below the tibia is fractured to the point that he will not be able to fix it so that will apparently be fused.
3. **OTHER FACTORS IN THE LEFT FOOT.** Dr. Anglen is concerned that because the severe damage to the ankle joints and the compressive blow exerted on my left ankle was so severe, that it may mean that the cartilage cannot be restored. Dr. Anglen explained that some of the bones below the tibia are less rigid and porous and therefore could be described as more spongy than some other bones. He stated that with my injury those bones were ***smashed flat*** and medical science does not have a way to restore those bones so they are no longer flattened. He stated, therefore that there will need to be **bone graphs** with some of my bone being harvested from my hip or a femur bone to place into my left ankle. He stated that without putting that substance in there along with some artificial substance where needed on both sides, my hope to walk on my left foot would be significantly diminished. All of this means

that yesterday I learned that the injuries are worse than I had previously understood them to be. There you have the news.....and much of it is not particularly good news. ***However, I have some really good news and this has encouraged my precious Pam and me very, very much.***

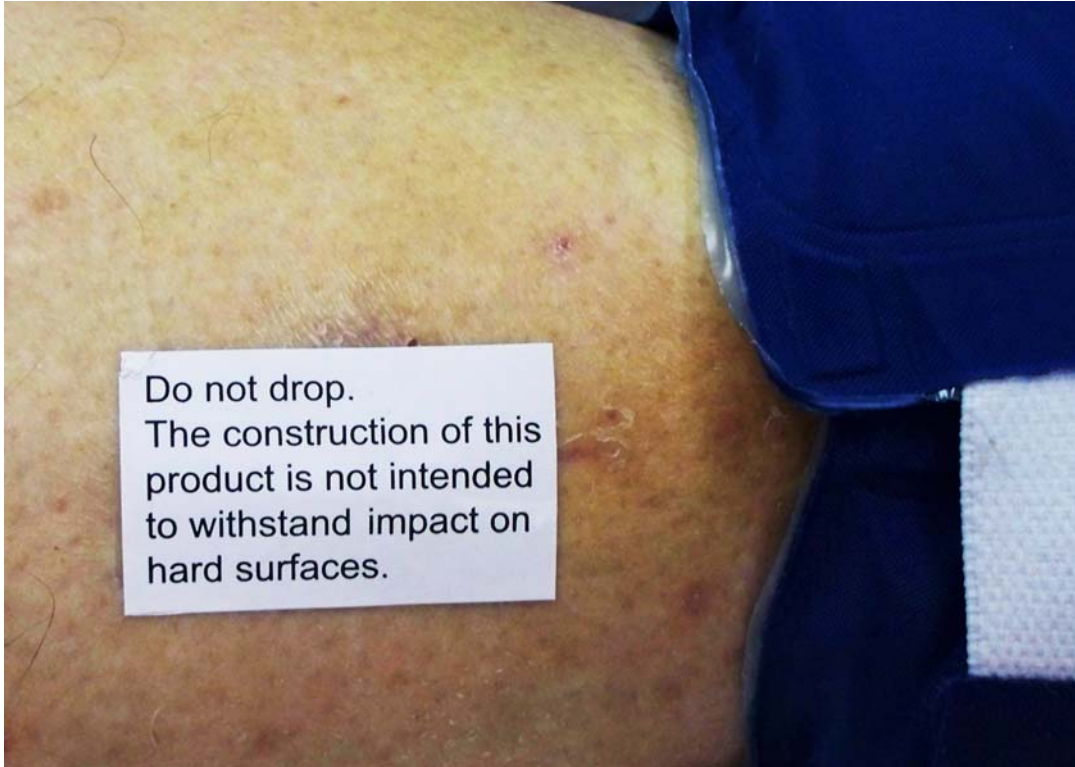
4. ***Dr. Anglen believes that he can do surgery on both of heels, and on my left tibia, and on my left ankle, and do the bone graphs, all in one (1) operation!!!*** Thank you for praying about that. That was one of our chief prayer requests and we are so very thankful to the Lord for that. God is so good!!
5. ***Scheduling for my operation.*** My surgery by Dr. Anglen will be at Methodist Hospital in Indianapolis (which is the same hospital where they did the first operation on July 24th). It is scheduled for this coming **Friday, August 8, 2008** (my birthday). I will be checking in to Methodist Hospital in downtown Indianapolis on Thursday afternoon. Dr. Anglen stated that if his examination of my lower extremities Friday leaves any question about whether my skin and body are ready for the operation, he will wait until it is ready, but that I would stay in the hospital until my skin and body are ready and then he would operate. Assuming he can operate this Friday, he believes that I might be able to be discharged to return to my hospital bed in Warsaw on Monday, August 11, 2008 (that would be the same time table as for my first surgery: surgery on Friday, and release on Monday afternoon).
6. ***Dr. Anglen's speculation about the future.*** When I asked Dr. Anglen about recovery time and when I would be able to do this or that, he, of course, had to qualify all of his answers. He stated that there were so many surgery spots that there remain a multitude of possibilities for complications or setbacks. Having made all of those disclaimers, Dr. Anglen gave us what we consider to be an encouraging timetable for recovery. I may be able to walk again (perhaps with crutches or canes) in just six months. He stated that beyond a doubt my legs will be non-weight bearing for at least 3 months after surgery. That means that any moving around will be by wheel chair. However, after 3 months I may be able to begin putting some weight on my feet (2 casts and crutches) and depending on how well I heal, I am optimistic that I may be able to be walking without crutches or canes 6 months from now [February or March, 2009] (and who knows, because I think I am a fast healer, and, of course God is the Healer, it could be a shorter time than that!). He did caution that my walking at that point will not be a normal walk yet, but that I could be doing vigorous rehabilitation designed to bring continuing improvement over the following months. He did warn me that I should not be expecting that I will ever be able to walk or do things in the way that I considered "normal", and that I probably will not gain the ability in my left foot and ankle to accommodate walking on uneven surfaces. But he did acknowledge that some patients end up with far better results than even he expects.
7. ***The wonderful additional factor which Dr. Anglen did not consider yet.*** My lovely Pam and I deeply appreciate Dr. Anglen and his thorough explanations and answers. However, it is clear that Dr. Anglen has not **yet** considered the involvement of our great God in this entire process. We are not demanding that God bring about any

particular result. However, we are invited in Scripture to let our request be made known to our Father. We are praying that God will bring about a better recovery than any doctors would predict, and that through that divine intervention by the Great Physician, God will be glorified, and there will be a powerful witness to all of the medical and non-medical people involved.

Well, that was a rather lengthy report. Like I said, most people do not have the time or desire to read that much about it. But I want to give you this information.

Praise God. Things are moving forward and we are greatly encouraged. Thanks for your prayers.





August 8, 2008 right before the surgeries:

From: Rafe
Date: 8/8/2008 6:19:05 AM
To: FRIENDS and FAMILY
Subject: Rafe goes to his surgery at 7:20 a.m. today

August 8, 2008

Good morning.

It is 6:10 am. The nurse just came in to tell us that surgery is schedule for 7:20 a.m. this morning.

The plan is to start with the Pylon fracture of the left tibia and the ankle and foot bones crushed below my left tibia. This multi-step operation will also include harvesting some of my good bone elsewhere and grafting it into my left ankle and elsewhere. Then Dr. Anglen will move to operate on and reconstruct my shattered heel bone.

Please pray that after the operation gets underway. the surgeon will still be willing to do it all today.

Precious Pam and I just committed the matter to our all-sufficient Lord and we have joy and peace. God is so good!

Have a nice day. Thanks for your prayers.

Rafe and Pam

Paul D. Refior ("Rafe")

August 8, 2008, shortly after the surgeries (Report from Nikki):

This is Nikki with an update on dad's surgery today. This morning they came right away at 7:15 to take Dad in for surgery prep. At 11:30 we received word that they had finished work on the left leg and Dad was doing well. At 2:30 Dr. Anglen came to give us a report about the surgery. He put plates and screws in the left tibia and took the external fixator off, took a bone graft from the left knee to repair some of the crushed bone, and put a splint on the leg. The right foot also has plates and screws and he needed to take a bone graft from the right knee also.

Over the next few weeks the main concern is his risks of infection. As for recovery, the next couple days they need to control his pain and show that the wounds are beginning to heal. They'll work to take the initial dressings off Sunday to check the healing. There is a possibility of him going home to Warsaw Monday assuming that everything has gone well. After that he will return to Indianapolis in 2 weeks to remove the stitches and check the healing. In 6 weeks he'll return for x-rays, and then will be down every 4 to 6 weeks after that. He will be on complete bedrest for the first 2 weeks, and may be able to get into a wheelchair after that if everything looks good on the checkup.

Thank you all for praying for Dad, and for the many notes and cards you have sent. Dad reads and keeps every one of them. When he wakes up and understands that the doctor was able to operate on both legs and that the operation went so well, he will count it as a wonderful blessing from God and a terrific birthday present. God is good and we are praising Him for so many answers to prayer today.

With grateful joy,

Nikki for Mom, Laura and the whole gang sitting here in the surgery waiting room.

August 16, 2008:

Greetings from Warsaw. I just love it when the sky is bright blue like this, because then the lake is also shining blue. With the wonders of today's technology we are able to listen to the FBC sermon's over the Internet. This week end our beloved Adult Bible Fellowship ("ABF") of Faith Baptist Church, Lafayette, will be HERE as Craig and Sue Svensson will be arriving in a couple hours to bring/share lunch with us. Thank you!

These are good days, and productive days. We return to Indianapolis this coming Thursday for the removal of stitches and an examination. I just know the surgeon is going to say that he is amazed at how well I am progressing in the healing process. We constructed a new ramp from the conference room that was transformed into my "house" and office. Yesterday precious Pam

wheeled me outside for a picnic by the water's edge. She parked my wheel chair next to a bench and we enjoyed an authentic Arby's lunch. The fresh air was delicious.

Also yesterday morning a dear friend with whom (until the Crash) I have met weekly for years for accountability/Bible study/prayer showed up at 0630 with our "usual" -Bob Evans oatmeal - and it was a sweet time indeed. By God's grace I have been able to carry on my law practice from my hospital bed -for example, this week I had two depositions (the table was set up to "T" to my bed, I conducted two court hearings (I had received permission to participate telephonically), had multiple document signings, and met with a full calendar of clients. In order to do that I have cut the amount of pain meds in half, with more in the evenings and nights, and trying to go with as little as I can during the work days.

Before the Crash, I didn't know if it was possible to love and appreciate someone more than I did my dear bride. But with her tender, longsuffering care, and her selfless ministry to me day and night after day and night, it brings tears of joy to me to just bask in the reality that precious Pam love me. I am infinitely blessed.

[Wow...I just watched two awesome swans fly two big circles right out my window, as if they were messengers from God coming over to say "howdy" from the Maker].... It remains uncertain when it will be possible to be back to Lafayette. Because both of my legs are 100% non-weight-bearing, the practical things like how to function without a hospital bed, how to deal with toilet duties, etc. are major issues. The Lord will take care of that in His time. We sure miss you all.

Thanks for your prayers.

With much Love,

Rafe and Pam

September 26, 2008:

A number of people have asked that I provide an update regarding my recovery. My September 25th visit to my surgeon was exactly two months after the first surgery (and approximately six weeks since the last surgery). I was anticipating that I would be given some considerable additional freedom concerning my legs. After spending the first month in a hospital bed and then rolling around on a wheelchair I thought that perhaps my doctor would allow me to start putting some weight at least on the ball of my right foot (my right side is doing much better then my left side). I was scheduled for new x-rays before meeting with Dr. Anglen. The comments by the x-ray technician should have given me a clue that I was not going to get close to what I was hoping for. When she saw the x-rays she said, "Your injuries sure were terrible. In fact, I have been working here for more than eight years and I have never seen a repair like that. I have never before seen hardware used throughout a heel like that before."

Next was the Doctor's examination. When he came in he asked me if I had seen the x-rays. He pulled them all up and he also said, "Your injuries sure were terrible." (I thought, "ah-oh").

Because the x-rays for my left leg and foot were on the screen I said that I had seen part of the x-rays. He then reviewed them with me. When I asked if he was satisfied of how things looked on the x-rays, he stated that he was very please and that things looked really good. (so I was again optimistic at that point) then he said “See this area up here, it is *starting* to heal.” (My thought was, “Starting. I thought I was already healed to a large degree!”) I had with me four pages of questions to ask the surgeon, but the dialog over the next twenty seconds made virtually all of my questions premature and irrelevant. I asked, “Doctor, because the ball on my right foot was not injured and it seems that things are healing well, can I start putting weight on my right side and use a crutch or something instead of the wheelchair?” Dr. Anglen is a very nice man. He was very pleasant and calm when he said matter-of-factly, “No. You will not be putting weight on your feet for another six weeks. Didn’t I tell you before that it will be at least three months after surgery before you will get out of a wheelchair?” (Neither Pam or I remembered that). There went my thought of crutches or a walker, etc. But I had to ask one more related question. “Well because my right foot is doing better, and I will be seated, would you remove your restriction from me driving?” This time Dr. Anglen did laugh. He said, “I do not let patients drive when they cannot walk.” (Doesn’t that sound rather abrupt to you?)

So the operative word is “*wait.*” Six weeks puts me into November. So my picture in my mind of walking to the Thanksgiving dinner table is still there. Even though I will become a better friend with my wheelchair than I wanted, Dr. Anglen did allow three wonderful things.

First, he gave me permission to crawl. In Warsaw our home is an oversized condo on the second and third floors. Because of my injuries I have not been able to be home there for more than two months. I now will be able to crawl up the stairs and go home! I am very, very delighted about that. Second, he gave me permission to stop wearing my big boots. So long as I am confident that I will not be rudely bumped, he is willing for me to go without those knee-high protective boots. It looks like it will be stocking feet for sometime. We went to the store to buy new shoes of a size larger than my regular shoes, but it hurt so bad just starting to put on a shoe that we realized that will not happen yet. Third, and this is also huge just like being able to crawl is huge, Dr. Anglen gave me permission to exercise in a swimming pool. He was recommending using a kickboard and kicking my feet as a way to start rebuilding my calf muscles which have suffered amazing atrophy in just two months. When I asked if I could actually (and finally) stand on the bottom of the pool. He gave me permission to do that for a bit so long as long as I am in chest-deep water. That means I will be *standing and even walking on my feet* (the first time will be today!). We plan to join a facility in Lafayette and Warsaw so that I can get to work. That is really good news.

Let me close this update by sharing with you what I studied this morning in my quiet time. Understandably, I searched out Scriptures relating to *waiting*.

Psalm 25:4-5, 21 - Show me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I *wait* all the day . . . Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I *wait* on thee.

Psalm 62:1-8 - Truly my soul *waiteth* upon God: from Him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved. How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? Ye shall be slain all of you: as a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a

tottering fence. They only consult to cast Him down from his excellency: they delight in lies: they bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly. Selah. My soul, *wait* thou only upon God; for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation: He is my defense; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God. Trust in Him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.

Psalm 130:5-6 - I *wait* for the LORD, my soul doth *wait*, and in His Word do I hope. My soul *waiteth* for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.

Psalm 37:7, 9, 34 - Rest in the LORD, and *wait patiently* for Him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass . . . For evildoers shall be cut off: but those that *wait* upon the LORD, they shall inherit the earth . . . *Wait* on the LORD, and keep His way, and He shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.

Isaiah 40:31 - But they that *wait* upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

And I love the combination of words found in *Romans 8:23, 25*, and *Philippians 3:20*, where God uses the expression of “*waiting expectedly*” I have the picture in my mind of the sixth man on a basketball team, waiting to get in the game, while he is fully engaged in the action, evaluating what needs to be done, and listening to everything his coach has to say, so when the coach says to get in there *now*, the player is on time with the coach’s time, and he is totally prepared to participate effectively. I see that as how we should be waiting on the Lord. We know that God’s time is perfect time, but we are neither sleeping nor day dreaming nor twiddling our thumbs. Our heart and our mind are studying His Word and we are preparing to serve the Lord however and whenever He calls us.

Precious Pam and I thank you for your prayers. These are good days. These are happy days.

Sincerely

Rafe

Rafe

October 27, 2008:

Update on Rafe’s recovery:

The good news that we received at our September examination with the surgeon, was that I was given *permission to walk in chest deep water and I was given the permission to crawl*. The

crawling allowed me to return to the second and third floors of our home and the walking in water allowed me to work very diligently at regaining balance and strength in my lower legs.

This past Thursday we had our scheduled appointment with Dr. Anglen. The radiologist who had been so expressive when she looked at my x-rays in September, this time had two students with her because she wanted them to see all of my unique “hardware” and for them to get practice on a person with my type of injuries. So I guess I was at least I was contributing to the education of a couple of students.

When precious Pam and I saw Dr. Anglen, he said that he was very pleased with what he saw on the x-rays. When he learned of how much I had been working in the pool he then told me what I wanted to hear: ***“You can start putting some weight on your feet. It will all depend on your pain tolerance.”*** His suggestion was to start practicing a little bit at a time and continue to work up to longer periods of time and longer distances and then eventually to start taking some steps without the walker, wheelchair or crutches. He also stated that as soon as I can walk a city block without assistance I can start driving.

I am trying to do more and more, but I have a tendency to overdo, so I have been suffering quite a bit. However, my “suffering” is with a great big smile on my face because I thank the Lord so much for allowing me to “walk” again – even though it is limited and I am using a walker, crutches or pushing my wheelchair.

From the Indiana University Center in downtown Indianapolis we traveled to Noblesville where I surprised our daughter Laura and her family when I walked using crutches (the “four-point technique”). I had not been able to go inside her house since before the accident. It was a wonderful thing to share the joy of our good news with Laura’s gang. We went out to a restaurant to celebrate Laura’s 33rd birthday, as well as her husband’s 33rd birthday. It was a delightful time. We then went to our farm in Lafayette where I practiced and continued to bask in the glory of being able to be standing up. Suddenly I got taller again! There are many aspects of life that are getting easier and easier. I am so thankful for God’s help.

This may sound strange, but there are some lessons of life, and truths from Scripture that I could not have comprehended if there had been a detour around the path the Lord has led us through this past three months. We are very thankful.

Allow me to quote some verses from Psalm 71, and perhaps you can envision how my heart applies them to our blessings and our good circumstances:

“In You, O Lord, I put my trust ... incline Your ear to me and save me. Be my strong refuge, to which I may resort continually ... You are my rock and my fortress ... for You are my hope, O Lord God; You are my trust from my youth ... You are my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled with Your praise and with Your glory all the day ... I will hope continually and I will praise You yet more and more. My mouth will tell of Your righteousness and Your salvation all the day, for I do not know their limits. I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of Your righteousness of Yours only. O God, you have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare your wondrous works.”

January, 2009:

By God's grace I am walking now without crutches or a walker or even my canes. In December, 2008 I went to my scheduled appointment with my surgeon, Dr. Anglen. He was expecting that I would come in showing off how well I can walk with crutches. Instead when Dr. Anglen opened the door to the examination room I walked over to him and shook his hand briskly. He grinned and then directed me to walk back and forth, turn around, etc. Then he vigorously manipulated both feet and ankles. Then he stopped, looked up, and smiled as he exclaimed, "***You are a miracle man!***" I was able then to testify again to Dr. Anglen about God's power and help. I do not have to go back to see the surgeon until next April. The physical therapists said that I am a full year ahead of where he would expect me to be following my serious injuries.

I have continuing pain issues. I can't walk very well on unstable surfaces or anyplace that is not flat. The doctor stated that I may never be able to walk without pain, or just how accomplished I will become. I am not presuming on God - it is His call - but I am optimistic that I will continue to recover much faster and to a far greater extent than the medical people expect. I am thankful for all that God has given us and taught us through the accident. May we be open to continue to grow and learn in the months and years ahead. I will never forget the prayers of God's people....prayers that God has magnificently answered....and all the acts of kindness and love.

As I had so wanted, on Thanksgiving Day I walked to the Thanksgiving dinner table.... Without crutches or canes!!! What a wonderful answer to prayers.

At the Thanksgiving table I answered the question about what I am thankful. I sincerely responded that I was particularly thankful for my accident. I did not request it. Many difficulties have been experienced, of course, and I do not prefer all the pain or the significant physical challenges that are still present. But I am a different person than I was before the accident. Pam is too. God has put us through a high level course, and we are infinitely better off for it. Our relationship with our heavenly Father and with each other are so very much deeper and sweeter. Precious Pam will always be my hero. Without her I would have spent a couple months in a nursing home. With her 24/7 love, care and attention, I resumed my law practice almost immediately. And I was HOME. God is so perfect and so very good.

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE PRAYED! ! ! ! ! ! !

The following are some photographs of our journey following my fall

Rafe and Pam Refior