

REFIOR LAW OFFICE

Paul D. Refior

347 N. BUFFALO STREET
WARSAW, INDIANA 46580
(219) 269-6649

February 24, 1986

Dear Pam, Nikki and Laura,

Here in Japan it is Monday, February 17, 1986. I am standing in the hallway on the dining car of the bullet train waiting for the dining room to open. We are traveling rapidly across the countryside. We left Okayama station a short while ago. Because it is approximately 10:30 a.m. here on Monday, it is approximately 8:30 p.m. Sunday night there in Indiana. I imagine that you are already home from church and that the girls are thinking about getting ready for bed (or at least they should be).

I am on my way to Gifu-ken to greet Dave and Donna Brown and their children. I have some free time now on the bullet train so I want to write this letter to you in order to record many of the things that have happened on this trip. The Lord has certainly blessed abundantly and even far beyond expectations.

It has been ten days since I left home. Remember how we had to fight a blizzard on our way to the airport in South Bend. We were nearly blinded on the road as we tried to pass slow moving semis. When we reached the airport our time schedule was rather close, but fortunately I made the plane. During the flight to Chicago I was sitting near some other people from Kosciusko County and we had a nice chat. My lay over in Chicago was relatively uneventful and I boarded a DC-10 for Los Angeles. Unfortunately the departure for Los Angeles was considerably delayed. I had been expecting a two hour lay over in L.A. to see E.J. and Shirley, but the lay over was reduced to only about an hour. When I came off the plane there were E.J. and Shirley. It was really great to see them. They were in a very good mood. E.J. had met his deadline with the machine he was building the day before and it had worked. He seemed to be greatly relieved and quite relaxed. Unfortunately we had to go to a different terminal and we made a mistake about the northwest terminal. This meant that I was only able to spend approximately 15 minutes of quality time talking and fellowshiping with E.J. and Shirley. But it was delightful for me and I greatly appreciate the fact that they took so much time and trouble to meet me there at the airport. I was the last person on the plane and boarded the plane just before it prepared to take off.

page 2

Pam, Nikki & Laura

February 24, 1986

There were quite a few extra seats on the plane and I hoped that I would be able to stretch out on three or four seats. I was in the center section with an aisle seat. There were four seats across that section. At the aisle at the other end of the section was a real slob. His accent revealed that he was definitely from the East Coast. He was cocky and about as obnoxious a person as I have ever been around. In fact, even to be that close to him and hear him talk to people and watch his mannerisms made me literally sick to my stomach. I could see that he wanted to sort of "crowd me out" to get me to move so that he could have the entire section to lay down. However, I had already put my briefcase on the seat to my left and I sort of "protected" my territory. Two or three hours after take off he gave up his rather obvious efforts to get me to move, and he actually got up and left. That allowed me to stretch out. I lifted the arm rests and I had four seats across for my bed. I had pillows and a blanket and it really was suitable for sleeping. Unfortunately, in the seat in front of me was a little baby. I think the flight was about 12 hours to Japan and I do not believe there was one 15 minute stretch when that baby was not screaming with a blood curdling scream. I simply could not sleep under that circumstance. However, that time turned out to be very valuable. Before I left for Japan I had prepared my messages but I had not had time to produce the visual aids for a message. The tragic death of the seven astronauts on the space shuttle had just occurred in America and I was sure that the shuttle tragedy would also be big news in Japan. I was hoping that when I arrived in Japan I would be able to obtain one of the Japanese newspapers which reported the explosion of the Challenger. I used my time on the flight to draw and color in bold headlines to be taped on to various newspapers. The headlines I made were "one in heaven," "Jesus only way," "Good news! abundant life, hope, eternal life!," and "You decide!" It turned out that my messages using those visual aids were the most significant and greatly blessed messages. I used varying forms of that theme of the space shuttle news followed by the "real" news twice in Hiroshima, in Kawano City, and at the Takamatsu Christian Center Church. The Lord greatly used those messages as I will explain a little later. Also, on the plane was a retired railroad engineer. He became curious about what I was doing and finally he asked if I was an artist. That gave an opportunity to talk with him. When I explained to him what I was doing I think it surprised him but at least it was a brief opportunity to witness. The type of drawing that I was doing made it such that if the flight had been bumpy I could not have completed those visuals. I believe that was the smoothest transoceanic flight I have ever had.

page 3

Pam, Laura, Nikki
February 24, 1986

The plane arrived in Tokyo and there was a lay over there. I got off the plane and went into the airport. I had left my baggage and my boarding pass on the plane so I had to go through the trouble of getting a new boarding pass before they would let me back on the plane. That experience reminded me in a graphic way of the difference of lifestyle, procedure and thinking of the Japanese people. I had wondered if I was going to have the lingering effects of the flu I had suffered immediately before leaving for Japan. I had been so very sick, and I had received so many reports that following the worst symptoms of that type of flu, one could expect to be wiped out and without energy for approximately one week thereafter. Because of the crowded schedule on my trip to Japan I simply did not have time to be dibilitated in that way. The Lord really answered prayer in that regard and I have not felt any weakness, lack of energy, or other symptoms of having been sick. God really answered prayer in that regard.

I boarded the plane for Osaka and that flight was uneventful. By this time there were more Japanese on the plane than foreigners. There had not been very good communication concerning what to expect when I arrived in Osaka. Ralph Cox is particularly weak at being considerate of people and their individual needs. Certainly he is not malicious but he is so wrapped up in what he is doing that he is oblivious to the needs of others at times. I waited for my suitcase to appear at the baggage area but it never did. As all of the other passengers left the baggage area and went through customs, I remained behind with the task of filling out Japanese forms. You probably remember that there is no such thing as a small job or an easy task in Japan. It requires multiple steps and many people to do anything. And so there I was with the frustration of not having my luggage and trying to do my best to remain patient while waiting for the Japanese to complete a task that should have been easy but of course was not for them. After the forms were completed I went through customs. I wondered if Yuso Kurokawa would be there to greet me. He was not. I decided I must call Yuso, so I went to the hotel that was in the airport itself. When I called Yuso it was already late. He was at home and when I asked him for any advice, the best he could do was for me to find the Shinkan^{to} to Hiroshima and call him when I arrived in his city. At the desk of the hotel there was a man who could speak English and he helped me with the schedule of the trains and informed me how to get to Hiroshima's bullet train station. I walked out into the bitter cold to find the bus I had been directed to. Just as I was trying to communicate with a young woman the hotel clerk caught up with me and told me that they had given me wrong information. I greatly appreciated how he went out of his way to correct his mistake. I was able to catch the last bus of the night to the train station. At the train station I managed to get my ticket and I was on my way to Hiroshima. When I got off the bullet train at Hiroshima Yuso Kurokawa was there to greet me. That was a tremendous blessing and joy to see my dear brother Yuso. We had a very enjoyable greeting and we were both anxious to ask many questions of the other. We took a taxi to Yuso's house. I had never been in Hiroshima before and I was

page 4
Pam, Nikki & Laura
February 24, 1986

watching intently out of the window. Actually, Hiroshima did not look much different than Takamatsu or any other Japanese city to me. Once at Yuso's house I greeted Tomiko. She is about eight months pregnant and she looked absolutely great. Even though it was already past midnight we stayed up late and talked for a considerable length of time. I was very happy to be with the Kurokawas. It came time to go to bed. The Kurokawas were renting a rather large Japanese house. (They just opened the curtains and door to the dining car, so I was the first one to go in. I ordered curry rice and hot coffee since it is after 11:00 o'clock a.m. I am sitting at a table next to the window looking out at the ocean of ~~the~~ house tops as we race at high speeds along the track.)

Yuso has a guest room that he says is for his Christian friends. Apparently he provides a place for missionaries and out of town Christians to stay with some frequency. (My curry rice just came... it is delicious. I am thinking that Nikki and Laura would like very much to partake of this curry rice. You know, as I look out the window, so much of Japan is very dull and unattractive.) So much has happened here in Japan I find that I am having difficulty even remembering what all I did those first few days in Japan. I should have my prayer notebook with me where I have, as a part of recording my thanks and praise to the Lord, recorded many of the things that occurred. I set the alarm and got up early to have my quiet time. The first item on the schedule was at the new church started by Yuso Kurokawa. It was an English Bible class taught by a helping missionary named "Jan." I do not remember her last name. She seemed like a very nice young woman and had obviously tried her best to prepare a good presentation for the lesson. Next was the worship service. Yuso asked that I give my testimony of becoming a Christian in a period of about ten minutes, which I was happy to do. Then after a song I delivered the message. Yuso was my interpreter. I believe things went very well. Because my luggage had not arrived, I was speaking in the churches wearing the same red plaid shirt I had worn on the plane Friday and during all of the rest of the trip.... and of course, the same underwear and socks. To round out the dress wardrobe, I was wearing my white Addidas. After we finished with that service we traveled to the Hiroshima Christian Center Church. There I met Mr. and Mrs. Hoffman who are a retired couple. Mrs. Hoffman had been Stella Cox's roommate in college. There was a nice group there including a retired Japanese pastor, a relatively new Christian who was leading the service, two brand new Christians, and a young woman who was diligently seeking. Yuso interpreted again and I believe the Lord blessed the ministry of the Word. There was a nice opportunity to talk and have fellowship following the service. From there we went to a nearby department store and it had a section for large men. There I was able to get two pairs of socks, two pair of underwear, and a white shirt. We went directly from that store to the bullet train station to catch the train to Fukayama. I really did not know

page 5
Pam, Nikki & Laura
February 24, 1986

what type of meeting was going to be held there. We arrived early enough that Yuso and I could go to see the nearby Fukayama castle. It was very beautiful and very impressive. Then we walked to the new castle hotel which is a new and very, very elegant hotel. Shortly after we arrived at the hotel I was very surprised to see Stella Cox. I had no idea she would be at that meeting. I noticed that she was all dressed up. Next, Paul Bridgman came and he had on formal attire as well. I began to realize that I was the main speaker at a rather fancy affair. And indeed it was. The room where the meeting was held was spectacular. The waiters were all dressed in tuxedos. As the guests arrived it was obvious that this was a formal dinner meeting.... And there I was with my red plaid sport shirt, white sox and white tennis shoes. I met Paul Bridgman's new wife, Violet. She was a very nice gal. I was so pleased to watch Paul Bridgman as he led the meeting and interacted with people and with his wife. I had last seen Paul Bridgman five years before and he was at that time really a boy. Now he is a man. His wife is also blessed with musical talent and the two of them did a couple of special musical numbers which were great. I can definately see that this couple is going to be used much by the Lord in Japan. Paul Bridgman was my interpreter. He is really talented at interpretation. At the beginning of my message I broke the ice by explaining to the audience that all lawyers in America wear this type of attire when they dress up for a formal function. I pulled up my pants and showed them my striped white socks and everyone had a good laugh about that. It was very obvious that there were many people praying because the power of the Holy Spirit was evident. This was the very first meeting in Fukayama for Paul and Violet. This was the introduction of their ministry in the area and was a very significant opportunity for contacts. There were approximately thirty-five in attendance, and many were individuals of some status in the community. Most significantly, about half of the audience were men. It was clear that every person in the room was "with me" and as I spoke I sensed that I was communicating directly to the hearts of these people. Many in the room were hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ for the very first time. After the conclusion of the meeting itself, Paul and Violet Bridgman had great opportunities to mix with the people and further establish the foundation for starting a new work there in Fukayama. Yuso and I left the meeting greatly gratified and thankful to God for what he had done there. We returned to Hiroshima by bullet train. Greg Chase was at the station to pick us up. It was good to see Greg. I had not seen him for eight or ten years. He and Cindy and their kids had moved to Hiroshima less than six months before. We went to Yuso's house and had a cup of coffee. Then I gathered my belongings and Greg and I went to his house. There I greeted Cindy and we talked for some time before going to bed. That first Sunday in Japan had been miraculous and exciting. I went to bed with a very real sense that the Lord had used me and with great confirmation that this trip was of God.

page 6
Pam, Nikki and Laura
February 24, 1986

The next morning I got up early and had my quiet time. Then we had breakfast together. I met for the first time Greg and Cindy's children. I want to tell you, that place was a zoo!! Those kids are basically out of control. It was unbelievable. I learned later that the Chases are "on probation" with the mission. Apparently Greg has been very foolish in the spending of money and his is greatly in the red. Also, at the last house they had lived in they had wrecked it and it cost the mission a tremendous amount of money to clean it and fix it after the Chases moved out. They moved into a brand new house in Hiroshima and the ministry told them that if they did not keep that house in order, then they would be asked to leave the mission. Furthermore, the mission is watching very carefully concerning Greg. He has apparently developed a reputation for being lazy, sloughtful, unkempt, and basically without initiative or drive. I believe that Greg's heart is right and he seems to have good Bible knowledge. We need to pray for Greg and Cindy and the kids that the Lord will mold them into the servants he wants them to be and that they will have effective ministry there in Hiroshima. I had been planning to go to the Hiroshima Peace Park with Greg on Monday morning. We set it up to meet Yuso there. Apparently Greg had simply planned on cancelling his language lesson on that morning. However, the old Japanese pastor who is serving as his language teacher would not allow Greg's irresponsibility and demanded that he take his lesson. So Greg gave me a ride to the Peace Park and I met Yuso there. We had a very interesting time at the park which commemorates the place where the first nuclear bomb was ever dropped on civilaziation. When were were finished Yuso asked me to please tell many Americans about the horror of nuclear war and the need for peace. At the appointed time Greg Chase came to pick us up. We traveled to Chases' house. Cindy had been planning to fix lunch for us, but I said that I would take everyone out for lunch. The Chases packed all of their kids together and we went to Yuso's house (which is clear across Hiroshima, a city of more than one million people), and met Tomiko Kurokawa and their youngest child, Yuzu. We had a delightful lunch together at a restaurant that was somewhat similar to an American restaurant (like a Dennys, for example)except for the Chases' kids, they were loud, obnoxious, out of control, and neither Greg nor Cindy kept them restrained. Nonetheless, it was very nice. When it was time to go and I looked for the bill, I learned that Yuso had secretly already obtained the bill and paid for lunch. From there we went to Yuso's house and had a delightful time of fellowship. I had been planning to travel to Matsuyama Monday night, but I received a call from Ralph Cox saying that Pastor Ishikawa was now being forced to spend full time tending to his mother who was in the hospital. Apparently they did not have enough money for a nurse, so the family was left with the responsibility of caring for the relative in the hospital (very different than in the States). So it was arranged that I would stay at Chases' until the next morning when I would catch a hydrofoyle boat to Matsuyama. That gave an opportunity for a very nice meal with the Chases, Cindy fixed Japanese food and it was quite a feast. We talked until late at night and then went to bed.

page 7

Pam, Nikki & Laura

February 24, 1986

Tuesday morning I got up with the alarm clock and had my devotions. Cindy fixed Greg and me a quick breakfast. Cindy woke up the two boys to go with us down to the dock. We got into somewhat of a traffic jam, which surprised Greg because it was a national holiday. Perhaps this is one of the problems Greg has - failure to understand what needs to be done and to plan correctly. We just barely made it to the dock before the boat was going to leave. Yuso was there and very anxious that we would miss the boat. He had already purchased my ticket to Matsuyama. There was only time to have one final greeting before I had to get on the boat. The hydrofoyle ride took approximately one hour. When I arrived in Matsuyama Pastor Ishikawa, his wife and two youngest children were with him. We traveled to Matsuyama castle, which was very high and very impressive. That was nice. The Ishikawas do not speak English and I do not speak Japanese. Nonetheless, we had very effective and warm fellowship and communication. It was great to be with those fine people again. I hope that I was an encouragement to them. I took their family out to a nice restaurant for lunch. Because of their poverty, it probably had been a very long time since the family had gone out to a restaurant. (Perhaps never before had the entire family gone out to a restaurant). We had a wonderful time and I was glad to have an opportunity to do something tangible to express my love to the Ishikawas. Following lunch we went back to the Ishikawas' house where the two oldest girls were let out. We then went to a shop which sells ceramics. Apparently Matsuyama is very famous for its pottery and china. The Ishikawas gave me a small gift for each of my girls. Then we went to the train station. We arrived a few minutes before the train was scheduled to depart. It really was great to be with the Ishikawas. They came with me to the platform and saw me off on the train. I tried to get some sleep on the train to Takamatsu, but was not very successful. I did succeed in putting a very painful kink in my neck and back as I tried to get into a position that was relatively comfortable. When I arrived at Takamatsu I did not call the Coxes. I simply took a taxi to their house. I walked in unannounced and had a very warm greeting. I met the helping hand missionaries who are now working in Takamatsu. Stella had planned a supper get together to greet me. Paul and Chris Myer were there with their two little children. Paul and Chris are gigantic in size. Monique is a Philipino-American from Los Angeles. She had studied dance for ten or twelve years. She is in her mid twenties and seems like a very nice young woman. The fourth missionary was John Moore. He is also in his mid twenties, but is such a child I felt a generation gap even though I am only ten or eleven years older than he. It was wonderful to see Ralph and Stella again. We had a very delightful time of fellowship. After the helping hand missionaries left, Ralph and Stella and I continued to talk and fellowship for quite some time. I was put up in Sherry's room upstairs. It was a nice firm mattress with an electric blanket. That was nice. Japan is cold! Less than one week before traveling to Japan I made a special call to Dave

page 8
Pam, Nikki, & Laura
February 24, 1986

Brown to ask him how cold it was in Japan so that I should know what coat to bring. Dave told me that it was not really very cold and suggested that I only bring a trench coat rather than my winter coat. When I see Dave Brown today I plan to give him a kick in the pants for giving me such terrible advice. I have been frozen since being in Japan. Do you remember the piercing cold and the absence of heat in the houses? That first night at Coxes' house I could not help but observe some tremendous frustration on behalf of Chris Myer. In fact, she bluntly said that she would^{be} happy to get on the next plane back to America. Because of the obvious frustration of the Myers, I felt that I was in a unique position to talk with them. I scheduled a breakfast meeting with Paul for Tuesday morning at 7:30. We went to my old "office" - the Greenhouse restaurant. We talked for three hours. I had prayed about a number of ministries during the time in Japan, but one of the very obvious reasons that God brought me to Japan at this time was to counsel with the missionaries who are working with the Coxes. There are many parallels between our situation and that of the Myers. I sensed that the Lord used me in a good way to give guidance and advice to Paul Myer. When we finished our time he asked if it would at all be possible for me to spend some time with Chris. We arranged to have lunch together the following day. Satomi and Takow Tanaka came to Coxes at 1:30 that afternoon. I spent the afternoon talking to them until Pastor Kushida arrived. He drove me to the town of Sakai. When we were in Japan we did not really have that much contact with Pastor Kushida. He and his son showed me the construction that is going on for the new bridge that will connect SHIKOKU Island with the main island of Japan. That was impressive. Then we went to his house where he showed me albums, including many pictures of Hitomi when she was young (Hitomi is the gal who is now at Grace College and for whom we serve as American family members). Mrs. Kushida fixed a delightful Japanese dinner. I was stuffed when we finished. Then we went to a house meeting at one of the members of his church. I gave my testimony to the group and then one of the deacons gave a short Bible study. It was a nice get together. After that Pastor Kushida drove me back to Takamatsu. Again, I stayed up late talking with Ralph and Stella.

The Takamatsu Bible Church is having some very severe difficulties at this time. I had made arrangements to meet at 10:00 o'clock a.m. on Thursday with Pastor Sugihara. We had a good meeting for approximately one and one-half hours. I really believe that I was used by the Lord to give direction and encouragement to Pastor Sugihara. After that I went out to lunch with Paul and Chris Myers. They have been on such a low budget, that they had not been to a nice restaurant since coming to Japan. It was a pleasure for me to be able to treat them to a time out. We had a very significant talk. Again, I believe that the Lord used me to be a very strong encouragement to them. I was able to actually rebuke some errors of attitude and