



**AUGUST
2025**



Reflections from Cru25

If Bev and I could sum up the Cru25 staff conference, it would be with the very words our new president, David Robbins, shared on opening night: “Do not leave your first love.” The moment felt deeply rooted in our spiritual heritage—almost like something Bill Bright, the founder of Cru and a man known for his unwavering focus on intimacy with Christ, might have said himself. With that theme in our hearts, we entered the rest of the conference.

Session One: David Robbins reminded us that ministry isn’t simply about being servants of God—it’s about being lovers of God. Everything flows from that love.

Session Two: Eric Rivera, author of *Unexpected Jesus*, stirred our hearts with a message on letting the mercy of Jesus reignite wonder in our walk with Him.

One quote especially stayed with us: “Entitlement can sabotage thankfulness because it causes us to overlook God’s goodness.” That challenged us to let gratitude overflow into praise.

Session Three: Crawford Loritts—once one of FamilyLife’s most beloved *Weekend to Remember* speakers—shared that holiness isn’t a spiritual tool; it’s an identity to be embraced. He called us to approach God with a posture of contrition and permanent neediness, a humility that welcomes transformation.

Session Four: Darryl Smith, Director of Oneness & Diversity, brought a timely reminder: “When we spend time with Jesus, we’re disciplined by the Word. When we don’t, we’re disciplined by the world.” He emphasized that revival isn’t the product of strategic planning—it springs from brokenness before God. It begins when men and women humbly admit we haven’t loved as He calls us to love.

Session Five: Mark Gauthier, Vice President of Cru, captured our hearts with this powerful reminder: “Love Jesus and love people. It’s not just our core strategy; it’s our way of life.” He shared that Jesus has called us to this ministry for a purpose, and we can confidently follow His lead because we know He goes with us. A transformed life is the prerequisite for a transformed world. The context for revival is always renewal in our own hearts.

Closing Session: David Robbins returned to close out the conference by encouraging us to remember all God has done in this ministry and through us. His final prayer stayed with us: “May our future be defined as a movement of people who keep falling in love with Jesus.”

As Bev and I move forward, the charge to keep falling in love with Jesus remains front and center in our hearts. We’re profoundly grateful for the way you’ve

walked with us—through your prayers, your giving, and your unwavering support. Because of you, we're able to pursue this calling with renewed passion. We believe God's not finished yet, and it's a privilege to continue this journey together.

Legacy Track: Honoring the Journey Before the Conference Began

Before the larger Cru25 staff conference officially began, Bev and I had the privilege of participating in something truly meaningful: the Legacy Track—a special three-day gathering designed for staff members who are 60 years of age and older.

This time was set aside to honor those who have served faithfully over decades and to offer space for reflection, renewal, and connection. It was more than just a lead-in to the conference—it felt like a family reunion. We gathered with fellow staff who have walked similar paths in ministry, shared decades of memories, and embraced the depth of wisdom that comes only with time. One staff member attending had served with Cru for 62 years!

We heard from seasoned Cru leaders whose stories reminded us of where we've been—and how God has continued to work through every season. We sang well-loved worship songs from earlier decades, and you could feel the emotion as voices blended across generations. These were songs that shaped our own spiritual journeys—and singing them again brought back so many memories.

Bev and I came into those days with gratitude—and left with even greater anticipation for what God would do through the Cru25 conference. The Legacy Track didn't just prepare us logistically; it prepared our hearts.

*With hearts full of
gratitude for the journey,*

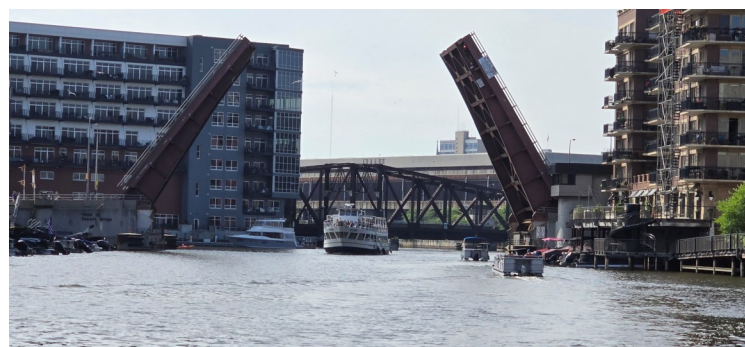
John & Bev



Snapped a picture during *Heritage Night* with our new Cru President David Robbins and his wife, Meg.



During one of our free-times, we visited the St. Joan of Arc Chapel, originally built in France in the 15th century but now rebuilt with the original stones on the campus of Marquette University.



The Milwaukee river winds gracefully through downtown, spanned by 16 unique bridges each add to the city's character. On both sides of the river, scenic pedestrian walkways invite locals and visitors alike to stroll, explore, and take in Milwaukee's vibrant waterfront charm.



And...we can't forget Milwaukee is famous for their cheese curds!