

EXALTING **CHRIST** • EQUIPPING **BELIEVERS** • EVANGELIZING **THE WORLD**

# CORNERSTONE

JULY - AUG 2018

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## **Shepherd Leadership**

**Do We Care?**

**The Ministry of Song Leading**

**...and more**



**TO YOU WHO BELIEVE, THIS STONE IS PRECIOUS • 1 PETER 2:7**

# Generational Differences and a Word About Youth

# Editorial

*“One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts.”*

*Psalm 145:4*

No matter where I go, I continually hear the importance of reaching out and ministering to the younger generation. In a previous day, there was a concerted effort to do so with accounts of many young people coming to Christ by the hordes. There was Youth for Christ with Billy Graham, Torrey Johnson and Robert Cook. There was Percy Crawford's Youth on the March; Bill Bright's Campus Crusade for Christ, Jack Wyrzten's Word of Life camps, Dawson Trotman and the Navigators and Stacy Woods with Inter-Varsity and the Urbana Missions convention. These were major initiatives aimed at youth and were a major influence in American evangelicalism. Thankfully, there are still viable youth ministries taking place for which we praise the Lord.

But how do we reach the youth culture today with the life-changing message of the Cross – a culture on the skids and fixated on the macabre? If we do reach them, how do we effectively engage them and tap into their talents once they become part of a church fellowship? The opinions vary widely and run from pillar to post, ranging from the plausible to the ridiculous. At the center of the discussion is the music issue – traditional hymns versus contemporary music, a controversial topic indeed! There are definitely generational differences on this and other matters of Church practice that need to be talked out.

## **The Younger Generation**

First, let's look at the young people. They have so much to offer! They possess an abundance of energy, are willing to travel to the uttermost parts of the earth to go on an activity and can change the atmosphere of the meetings simply by being there. For the most part, they are on the cutting edge of technology and provide the technical expertise that can enhance the ministries of any local church. They are also a means for reaching others for Christ. Like Levi who invited his friends to a feast after coming to the Lord (Mark 2), young people are a potential pipeline to others. Young people are definitely a worthwhile ministry focus and a valuable investment that can pay high dividends for any fellowship that makes the effort to reach out and encourage them.

However, this is a hard sell for some. They have a tough time with the youth whose church attendance is inconsistent at best and whose casual dress and giving patterns have something to be desired. Some even feel they exhibit a disrespectful attitude toward the older generation, the result of buying into a secular culture that promulgates a message of “Question Authority.” They often think that the older generation is clueless, especially in the area of technology. That might be the case when working on an IPAD or tablet, or with emails, Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. But to be honest, in the school of God the older generation has a lot more wisdom than youth, who should be actively seeking their advice. It is to their detriment if they do not. Look at the young servant of Elisha. Instead of checking with the prophet before preparing a meal, he went out into a field and collected a lapful of poisonous gourds in a time of famine. After putting them into the stew, “death in the pot” ensued, adversely affecting the sons of the prophets, 2 Kings 4:38-41. It is a spiritual reminder that young people need to seek out godly counsel from the older generation to avoid the harmful effects of false teaching. It also should speak to the older generation to offer protective counsel in a time of spiritual famine. A similar warning comes from the life of King Rehoboam who rejected the gracious counsel of the older generation and yielded to the shortsighted perspective of the younger men around him. When he did, civil war broke out, 1 Kings 12:1-15. Young people need to know this! As the verse says, there is a generation that is lifted up and pure in their own eyes. Unfortunately, the culture can adversely affect their perspective, thus the reason to regard the godly advice of the older generation. The gray hair of older people speaks for itself - they must have done something right to get this far in life!

## **The Older Generation**

Now all this is not to say that the older generation is not without their faults. They have some issues as well. True, the “builder generation” have clearly proven their dedication to Christ over the years. They represent the faithful core. They have a commitment to the meetings of the church. They have abundantly given of their time, talents and treasures. What would we do without them! But they also need to realize that the youth today are facing monumental challenges compared to what they went through in their younger days. Youth have to be disciplined, nurtured, and trained in the ways of the Lord if a fellowship is to continue to have a vital testimony. It may be difficult for older Christians to let go of ministries they have enjoyed and been doing for years, but it must be done if future generations are to be cared for. They also need to know that in previous centuries some of the movers and shakers were of the younger generation. The life of John Darby and other notables attest to that. Consequently, the older generation has to realize that because something “has always been done this way”, does not mean that adjustments cannot be done to make outreach and ministry more effective, as long as the Word is consulted and not compromised. David learned that lesson quickly when he borrowed the idea of using a Philistine cart to transport the Ark of the Covenant rather than by God's prescribed way (2 Sam. 6). As he adjusted, obeying the Word, great progress was made, 1 Chron. 15:13-15; 26.

Which brings me to this image. What do you see? Depending on how you look at it, you will either see a very elegant woman or an older, not-so-elegant looking woman (to put it mildly). What is the difference? It simply is a matter of perspective. Similarly, some see what they do as beautiful; others see another side of things – not so beautiful. In Ezra's day, the young people rejoiced when they saw the temple restored, while the older generation wept because, it paled in comparison to the former temple from their perspective, Ezra 3:12. Another difference between the generations, for sure.

To the youth, Paul writes, “Let no man despise thy youth.” He then elaborates, “be an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity”, 1 Tim. 4:12, a challenge for young people to be above reproach. To the older generation, Paul writes “the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also”, 2 Tim. 2:2. There is a duty to invest in the next generation and equip them. For the young, be a model Christian and earn the trust of the older generation so they can confidently “pass the baton” to you. For the older, look for opportunities to invest in a young person today.



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**by Mark Kolchin**

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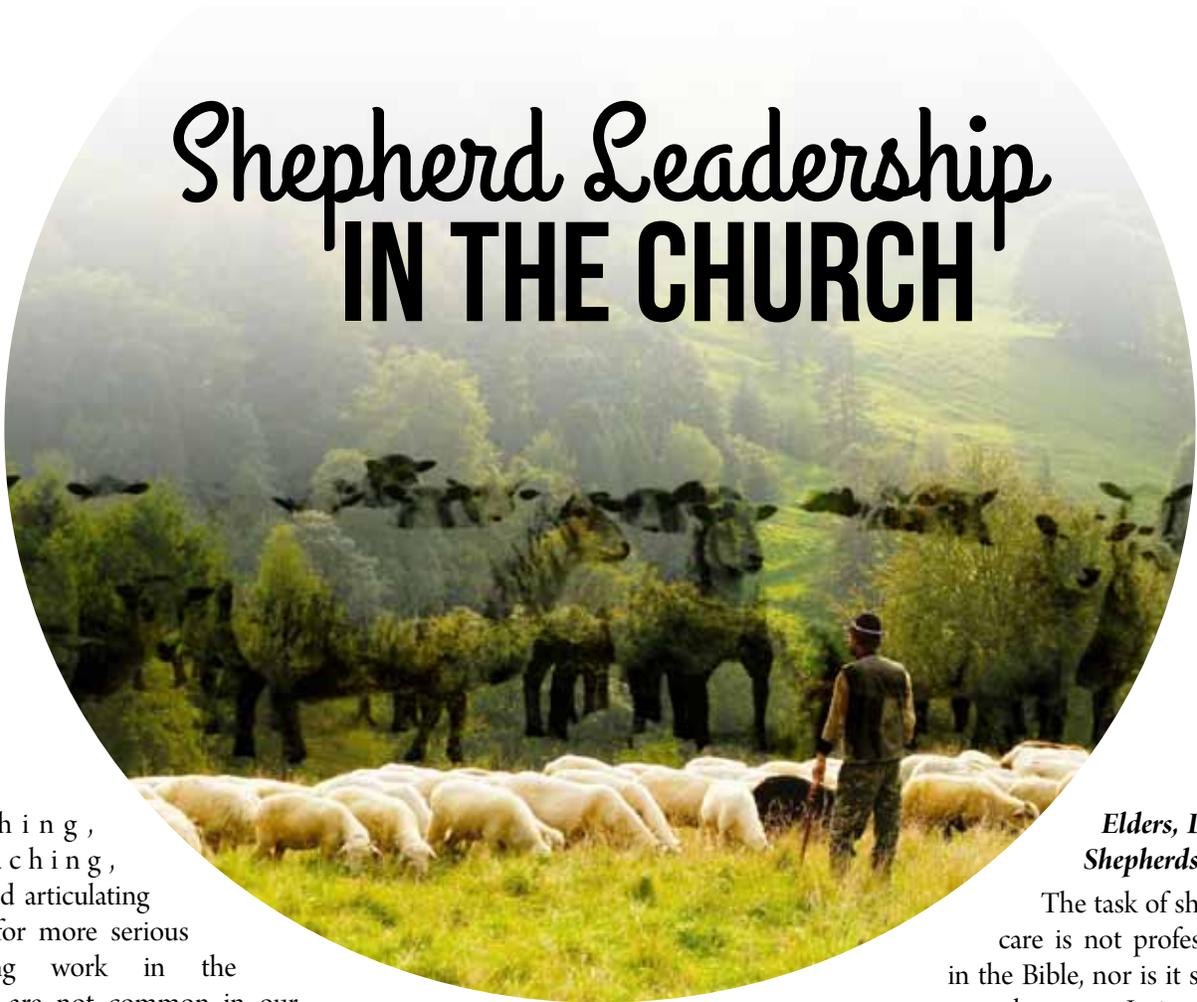
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# Shepherd Leadership IN THE CHURCH



Teaching, preaching, writing, and articulating the need for more serious shepherding work in the assemblies are not common in our time. Practical pastoral theology, relating theology to ministry is seldom discussed even among church leaders. However, postmodern times challenge us with the urgent need for a profound commitment to the biblical mandate of pastoral (shepherding) ministry in the church. It is significant that the Bible's most favorite metaphor for spiritual leadership is that of shepherd. The Lord Jesus Himself used this metaphor often to describe Himself. The spiritual leader as shepherd remains a powerful theme throughout both the Old and New Testaments. Though we frequently talk about servant leader, we often forget the imagery of shepherd leader. Both the servant leader and the shepherd leader are complementary models in the Bible. Since most denominations use the term "Pastor" as a title, we have gone to the extreme of abandoning its use even in its biblical sense, possibly to avoid unnecessary confusion. As a result, I wonder, whether we have lost the significance of the shepherd concept in eldership roles and responsibilities.

## *Elders, Dare to be Shepherds (Pastors)*

The task of shepherding care is not professionalized in the Bible, nor is it secularized as an employment. It is a ministry (service) open to all believers. But like any other ministry, those who have the gift of shepherding will be able to do it more effectively. Pastors (shepherds) are mentioned in Ephesians 4:11 as one of the equipping gifts given to the church by the resurrected, ascended, glorified Christ. In the New Testament the work of shepherds is closely related to that of elders in the local church. While the command to pastor is given only to elders (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-2), it does not mean that the shepherding care of the flock of God falls exclusively upon elders. Each individual member of the church has a personal obligation to be engaged in a shepherding ministry to others (Rom. 15:14; Gal. 6:1; 1 Th. 5:14-15). When the elders are commanded to shepherd the flock of God, it points to their corporate function rather than to an individual activity. The elders are collectively commanded to shepherd the flock with the responsibility for collective pastoral care of the assembly. The plurality of eldership is a team work. While the elders have a collective pastoral

function, it is assumed that each elder will also have a personal pastoral ministry as well. Jesus' instruction to Peter at the time of his restoration is a good example – “feed my lambs, shepherd my sheep” (Jn. 21:15-17).

Overseeing and managing are the means to the elder's goal of shepherding. Paul's exhortation to the Ephesian elders sheds much light on their collective shepherding responsibility: “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God ...” (Acts 20:28). Elders are appointed as overseers by the Holy Spirit for a specific ministry - to shepherd the flock of God. Shepherding is the sum and substance of the collective ministry of elders. Pastoral care is provided for the flock when the elders faithfully oversee, manage, feed, lead, and guide. Though “pastor” is not used in Acts 20:28, the related verb “poimaino” (to shepherd) is found in v.28. This clearly suggests that those who are “elders” (Acts 20:17) and “overseers” (Acts 20:28) are to be pastors in the church, though the gift of shepherding is not restricted to them.

Paul and Peter agree on their pastoral theology. Peter's exhortation to his fellow elders (1 Pet. 5:1-2) is not different from Paul's instruction to the Ephesian elders (Acts 20:28) – “shepherd the flock of God.” “Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight ...” (1 Pet. 5:2). Tend the flock entrusted to your care (1 Pet. 5:3). While the actual word “shepherd” is not used by Peter, the work of the shepherd is implied by the verb “poimaino” which includes all that is involved in the work of a shepherd (the same word is found in John 21:16 and Acts 20:28 referring to the entire work of a shepherd). In other words, elders are to be shepherds. This seems to be a clear job description of elders. The Lord Jesus told Peter three times to shepherd the flock (Jn. 20:15-17). The Lord Jesus and His apostles are in full agreement of the nature of pastoral ministry in the church.

Feeding, leading, guiding, providing, caring, and protecting are the major responsibilities of the shepherds. The pastoral ministry of counsel, correction, and consolation are of immense value to the flock of God. Visit the sick, support the weak, encourage the faint-hearted, console the bereaved, and instruct the ignorant are of top priority to the caring shepherd. A true shepherd always pays particular attention to the lambs. Pastors are primarily occupied with the care of souls. Every shepherd of God's flock should take heed to the soul-searching question: “Where is the flock that was given you, your beautiful sheep?” (Jer. 13:20)

### **Plural and Pastoral**

In NT assemblies, there should always be an emphasis on the plurality of elders in the church. Plurality was the uniform practice of the churches in the New Testament (Acts 20:17; Phil. 1:1; Tit. 1:5; Jas. 5:4; 1 Pet. 5:1, 2). But we must remember that plurality is not the only truth about elders. The pastoral nature of eldership is even more emphasized in the New Testament. Biblical eldership

is not only plural, it is also pastoral. This is a clear and forceful teaching in the New Testament. Forty years of full time ministry with the assemblies have convinced me that the pastoral aspect of eldership is a neglected truth or a forgotten truth that needs to be rediscovered and reinstated in the assemblies. The word “pastor” is a misused term in many denominational circles. But just because a term is misused does not mean we should not use it in the proper scriptural sense. Remember, words express concepts and without the words, sometimes the concepts are lost. Let us not run into the danger of losing the concept of elders as shepherds of the flock of God.

The role of elders can be summarized in this way: Biblical eldership is by a plurality of men of Christian character who are appointed by the Holy Spirit to provide spiritual leadership in the assembly. Their role must include gently feeding and humbly tending the flock of God in their care, as well as overseeing.

### **A Pastoral Crisis?**

Are we facing a pastoral crisis in many assemblies? Many believers and elders I have talked to agree that the single greatest issue facing the assemblies around the world is pastoral leadership. In order to minister effectively to people who go through the challenges, struggles and crises of life in a sin-trodden society, we definitely need more shepherds with “integrity of heart and skillfulness of hands” (Ps. 78:72), who have the necessary grace, knowledge, and skill in dealing with pastoral issues. This is the need of the hour. We cannot continue to ignore, deny, miss, or sidestep these vital issues any more. Let us pray earnestly that the Lord may raise up and appoint His servants in positive shepherding leadership among God's people, who can do their pastoral work as the first priority of their calling. The Lord's people should be encouraged to acknowledge, honor, and support the ministries of such men in our midst. Believers should also develop a mindset to be shepherded. Pastoral visitation, counsel, correction, and guidance should not be seen as meddling in one's life. These are real issues to work on.

May the Lord of the church, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, give us the vision to formulate a philosophy of ministry that is truly doctrinal, practical, and relevant.



Alex Kurian is a commended full time worker serving the Lord for the last forty years in itinerant ministry of evangelism, teaching, training, writing, and equipping. He and his wife Valsa fellowship at their commending assembly, Edmonds Lane Bible Chapel, Lewisville, Texas.

**by Alexander Kurian**

# Do We Care?

## An Exhortation For Each One to Reach One (and More!)

*“Do the work of an evangelist...”*

He wrote the note. He locked his door. As he walked down 14th Street, heading to the East River, he came across a small group of people gathered listening to someone painting and talking. With his interest peaked, he listened and trusted Christ. In the aftermath, he told the open-air preacher that he was on his way to commit suicide by jumping off a bridge into the East River, but “You were here!” He was saved physically and for eternity.

But a question must be asked: “Do we care?” In light of that, another question comes to mind, “What could be more important than leading someone to Christ?” Nothing!

Think about it! What if someone had not shared with you? With me? I would have killed myself long ago had it not been for two loving, caring, and selfless Christians, who shared with me the gospel. I trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour and was now saved and safe.

Here is another question: “Who can live without hope in this present world?” No one!

Who can live (and die) without Christ? All who reject Him will go to their eternal doom. Oh, they will not be wiped out. They will be first cast into hell, then hell and death will be cast into the lake of fire.

“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hades delivered up the dead that were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hades were

cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Rev. 20:11-15)

That passage alone should really bother us. If it doesn't, can we say that we believe the Bible? And if we say that we believe the Bible, can we say that we care about people, care about their souls? We must answer these questions. We cannot live our lives as if those facts do not exist.

Get these facts:

- Estimated World Birth and Death Rates (2011)
- Average life expectancy at birth is approximately 67 years. Sources: *Population Reference Bureau & The World Factbook (Central Intelligence Agency)*

It is now 2018, and the changes if any, will be greater. No one lives forever, so they say. Actually, that is not true. All will live into eternity, but what they do with the Lord Jesus Christ will determine their destiny. With Jesus – it will be heaven; without Jesus as Saviour – it is the “Lake of Fire.” In fact, did you know that Jesus spoke more on hell than He did heaven? He spoke more on hell than He did any other subject? He spoke more on hell than any other person in the New Testament. Why? To show us that He was going to save us from it.

But still, the question remains: “Do we care?”

Paul, the apostle, according to his own description was a wicked man, probably the worst. The worst? Yes, the worst! He testifies to Timothy, his son in the faith, “Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious . . .” (I Tim. 1:13a). He also says that he was the chief of sinners when he said, “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (I Tim. 1:15). This same man, who tried to establish his own righteousness through self-effort

and will power, failed. He realized that his own righteousness was as filthy rags and that he needed God's righteousness. He realized that only God could provide this righteousness and did through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sinful and unrighteousness, shocked, blinded, and in misery, he trusted the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, as his Saviour. He then yielded to the Lord everything he was and had to the service of his new Sovereign.

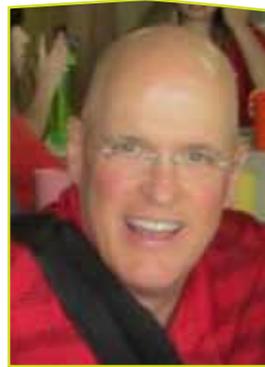
Later in his missionary travels, he journeyed to Athens. While waiting for his fellow missionaries he walked about the city. He was grieved and provoked. Idolatry was rampant and there was no truth in sight. The Greeks, especially in Athens the seat of "wisdom," were devoid of it. That fact broke Paul's heart and moved him to action. As he walked through the city, God gave him wisdom. Seeing all the monuments to their different gods, Paul saw a monument to "the unknown god". He seized on that information. He used it skillfully and wisely employed it in his conversation to the Athenians on Mars' Hill saying, "... I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you" (Acts 17:22b-23).

What Paul did was use a teaching principle called apperception, i.e. taking an individual or a group of people from what they know to what they don't know. And he did it most skillfully. As Christian witnesses, we should not only have this same burden,

a burden that only our Lord can give, but we also should employ the same tactic of apperception. Our Lord did the same with the woman at the well in John 4. But our Lord also employed the frontal, straightforward witness with Nicodemus, when He bypassed Nicodemus' conversation starting compliments with, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:3).

We should take a cue from these instances and learn the acquired and developed skill in sharing our faith. Oh, it takes work. It takes thought. It takes the Spirit's guidance. And it takes a humbled, yielded heart to grow in our witness, but God will work. We must. Lives depend on us! If we don't go, who will? By God's will, power, and enablement we can.

So, please, answer the question: "Do we care?"



Chris and his wife Barb have been in the Lord's work since 1974. They fellowship at Calvary Bible Chapel in Macomb, Michigan (the Detroit area) where Chris preaches and serves as an elder. He is Founder and President of The Ezekiel Project. Chris has a passion for souls and tries to help other believers reach the unsaved with the life-changing message of the Cross. To find out more about his ministry, go to [www.tepse.org](http://www.tepse.org).

by **Chris Schroeder**



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# The Ministry of SONG LEADING



As Richard walked into the chapel on a snowy Sunday morning, he was reminded by a brother that he was scheduled to lead the singing. “I completely forgot!” he said. He quickly sat down and thumbed through the hymnal to find a few of his favorite songs.

The piano player sat down at 11:03 and started playing the first hymn real slow. Richard sang strong to try to pick up the pace. But the soprano in the third row had a voice stronger than his, and she chose her own tempo, a full beat ahead of everyone else. The crowd didn’t know who to follow. By the third verse, more of the congregation had found their seat and things got a bit better by the final verse. After the meeting Richard thought, “I wish our singing was better.”

That afternoon at home, Richard’s Bible reading was in Nehemiah 12. He read that when the ruined walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt, and the Word of God was brought back to prominence, revival broke out. They had a joyous celebration. This resulted in a wonderful response of worship from the people with powerful, loud singing. They sang with such joy that you could hear it a long way out of town (Neh. 12:42-43).

Richard wondered, “I would love to hear that kind of singing, why don’t we sing like that?” A quick study of God’s Word will tell us that singing is an outflowing of a heart that is filled with God and His Word. But even with a full heart we still have to know how to sing.

Nehemiah also shows that something which had been lost had now been restored. It says, that they hearkened back to the days of David and Asaph when there were leaders of the singers (Neh. 12:46).

So, what is song leading? Song leading is neither picking songs nor leading worship. (The Holy Spirit leads worship

— Jn. 4:24). Instead, song leading is *leading* the singing with the goal to help people sing together. For people to sing together they need to be led because good singing doesn’t just happen automatically. Song leading encourages others to sing because if the song leader sings strongly and correctly, others will feel like they can sing too.

So, what is a song leader? A song leader is a believer, led and powered by the Holy Spirit, who serves the body of Christ by skillfully instructing and leading the believers in singing praise to His name, and proclaiming His truth in song.

A great song leader in the Old Testament was named Asaph. His name means “gatherer.” That is interesting when you consider the idea of leading songs is gathering voices together, so that we sing as one.

We read in 2 Chronicles 5:13, “It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD...” Singing is one of the things that the whole church participates in together at the same time. It’s an expression of our unity.

Here are five reminders about song leading.

First, song leading is a *service*. The song leader is a servant, serving the Lord and His people through music. So, let’s do it well (Ps. 100:2). We should prepare, using the same care and preparation for song leading that we use for speaking. We should pray, asking the Lord to direct us as we select the songs, that they would be used to glorify God and refresh the saints. We should practice, taking time to sing through the songs with the musicians. Shouldn’t our singing be excellent?

Second, good song leading is *Spirit-filled*. The Spirit is to guide all we do including song leading. It is not picking our

favorites. Paul exhorts us, "... be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:18-19). Singing is the fruit of a Spirit-filled life. When we are Spirit-filled something powerful will come out.

Third, song leading is a *school*. Not only are you teaching music; you are teaching truth. Paul writes in Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Many hymns teach truth and our hymnbook can shape our theology. Good songs should be full of good teaching. They say, "You are what you eat." It's also true, "you are what you sing." So, select songs that teach a broad range of sound doctrine. When people leave your meeting, they don't hum the sermon on the way home, they hum the hymn. The songs we sing are remembered long after the message is forgotten.

Fourth, song leading is a *stewardship*. Paul often spoke of a trust which was committed to him. He told Timothy, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust..." (1Tim. 6:20). A stewardship is a trust, something committed to you to keep and to pass on. Who else is going to preserve the hymns besides the song leader? We are in a generation where our hymnbook is shrinking, with many songs being discarded. Much of our rich heritage has been lost in the last few years. So along with the new songs we enjoy, the song leader is encouraged to be a steward of this legacy of wonderful hymns passed down to us. As song leader, you are also a steward of the clock. You are not up there to preach.

Give the preacher his full time to speak. One extra hymn can represent hours of his study time preparation.

Song leading is a *sacrifice*. To sing well takes a lot of time, preparation and practice. To train an assembly to sing in parts, to sing acappella, to sing together as one is a sacrifice. But the reward is so good. If you have the privilege to lead singing with a joyful body of believers who sing as one from their hearts to the Lord, it is out of this world!

Song leaders should seek to sing songs that unite rather than divide the church. We are not united by a style of music. The One we are singing to unites us. We are a people redeemed to God from every tribe and tongue singing sacrifices of praise.

So, let's sing better. The church needs song leaders who have been trained to know what to sing, how to sing it, and why they sing it. Let's pray for a revival among us, for whenever there was a revival, there was great singing.



Bob Upton works as a graphic designer and serves the Lord in assembly and conference ministry in teaching and songleading. He is in fellowship at Maryland Bible Chapel in St. Paul, Minnesota.

by **Bob Upton**

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# THE ROMAN GOVERNOR

## Who Fulfilled Biblical Prophecy

About twenty years or so before Pontius Pilate assumed control of Judea, a Procurator by the name of Caponius was installed by Rome. The year was 6AD. His governorship would set in motion the fulfillment of one of the most important predictions found in the Bible. To understand this, we need to go back to an event that took place 1850 years or so before the birth of Christ.

As Jacob's life was drawing to a close, he called together his twelve sons, and provided one of the most important prophecies of Scripture. As recorded in Genesis 49, the patriarch tells his sons what would befall them (or more specifically, what would happen to their descendants) as history progressed.

Each son is called out and provided with a series of benedictions and/or maledictions. These sons would be the progenitors of each of the twelve tribes of Israel. What follows in the rest of the chapter is a forecast of each tribe's future, as it would occur over the course of history.

Jacob's prediction concerning Judah becomes one of the great Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament and one of its most sophisticated:

*"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to Him shall be the obedience of the people."* (Gen. 49:10)

Jewish literature down through the ages has identified "Shiloh" as a Messianic term. Whether it is the Targums, the Talmud or the Midrash, they all associate it as a title for the Messiah.

If this is correct, and we believe it is, then Genesis 49:10 may be the first prophecy in Scripture to provide a clue as to when the Messiah would come. There's another way to order the words in this verse and yet keep its meaning fully intact. Upon doing so, a startling truth is revealed:

*"Once Shiloh (i.e., the Messiah) comes, then the scepter and the giving of laws will depart from Judah..."*

What is meant by the scepter? What is it an idiom for and what is it meant to convey?



A study of the ancient world, whether it is Egypt or the great Mesopotamian states, reveals that the scepter was to symbolize power.

One type of scepter prominent in Egypt was the "Heqa" scepter, also called the "crook". Basically, this was a cane with a hooked handle. The Egyptians were fond of plating these scepters or staffs with gold and then reinforcing them with blue copper bands. Artisans would often depict Egyptian pharaohs holding

the crook as well as another type of scepter called the "flail".<sup>1</sup>

The scepter was a baton or staff meant to symbolize a ruler's authority even over life and death for his subjects.

The superpowers that followed Egypt (such as Assyria, Babylon and even Persia) also utilized the scepter as a symbol. They retained its connotation that the holder thereof had authority over life and death. You see this in the Bible when before Queen Esther goes to visit the Persian King Ahasuerus she says:

*"All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that he be put to*

death. The only exception to this is for the king to extend the gold scepter to him and spare his life....” (Est. 4: 11).

In short, the scepter was an implement held by a ruler that symbolized their power over life and death.

Likewise, Jewish thought associated the scepter with the right to adjudicate capital offenses (or what is called in Latin the “*jus gladii*” – i.e., “the right of the sword”). Rabbinical teaching held that the scepter embodied Judah’s tribal identity and ability to apply and enforce the Mosaic Law upon its people. This included the right to administer capital punishment.

Throughout Old Testament history from the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai until the 1st Century, the Jews retained this authority over their own citizenry. Even during the 70-year captivity in Babylon, the Jews retained their own judges and sets of rules. The Book of Ezra testifies that Judah still had rulers and princes over them who were from their own number (e.g., Ezra 1: 5, 8).

The Jews would see only limited freedom for the next five centuries. Yet, through this entire time they retained the right to administer the Mosaic Law and adjudicate capital offenses.<sup>2</sup>

Enter Herod Archelaus. Born in 23BC to King Herod the Great, he was educated in Rome along with his brothers Antipas and Philip. Upon the death of his father in 4BC, Caesar Augustus named Archelaus as ‘Ethnark’ (i.e., National Leader as opposed to King) of Samaria, Judea and Idumea.<sup>3</sup>



unlikely partners in the Jews and Samaritans in unison requested that Rome depose him.

Finally in 6AD, Rome had enough and removed Archelaus from power. He was banished to Gaul (modern day France). Because of the problems experienced with the Jews and their leadership, Rome made one more move. They established Judea as a province of the Roman Empire.

Within a year, Caponius was named Procurator of Judea and assumed control of the province. With his ascension, judicial power was removed from the Jewish Sanhedrin. The 1st Century Jewish historian Josephus records the event:

*“But in the tenth year of Archelaus’ government, both his brethren, and the principal men of Judea and Samaria, not being able to bear his barbarous and tyrannical usage of them, accused him ... Caesar, upon hearing what certain accusers had to say ... both banished him, and appointed Vienna, a city of Gaul, to be the place of his habitation, and took his money away from him ... Caponius also, a man of the equestrian order, was sent ... to have the supreme power over the Jews.”* (Josephus, Antiquities – Book 17; chapter 13 and verse 2 and Book 18; chapter 1 and verse 1)<sup>4</sup>

Josephus’ choice of words is telling. To say that the Governor was given the “*supreme power over the Jews*” was to acknowledge a dramatic shift. The Jewish people and its Sanhedrin leadership had lost the ability to adjudicate capital cases.

When this event took place at 6 or 7AD, the Jews were horrified! Rabbinical teaching saw this as the scepter having departed. This quote from the Talmud bears out the significance of this change in Jewish thought:

*“Woe unto us for the scepter has departed from Judah and the Messiah has not come!”* – Babylonian Talmud, Chapter 4, folio 37<sup>5</sup>

They thought God had failed to keep His promise. What they did not know was that a young carpenter’s boy was alive and well in Galilee - indeed, “Shiloh” had come!

Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup>[www.touregypt.net/featurestories/reg.htm](http://www.touregypt.net/featurestories/reg.htm) (and also images source)

<sup>2</sup>[weeklyreflectionsofchrist.blogspot.com/2009/12/scepter-shall-not-depart-from-judah-nor.html](http://weeklyreflectionsofchrist.blogspot.com/2009/12/scepter-shall-not-depart-from-judah-nor.html)

<sup>3</sup>[www.livius.org/he-hg/herodians/herod\\_archelaus.htm](http://www.livius.org/he-hg/herodians/herod_archelaus.htm)

<sup>4</sup>[www.biblestudytools.com/history/flavius-josephus/antiquities-jews/](http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/flavius-josephus/antiquities-jews/)  
<sup>5</sup>*ibid*



Coin of Herod Archelaus

Image Source: [www.livius.org/he-hg/herodians/herod\\_archelaus.htm](http://www.livius.org/he-hg/herodians/herod_archelaus.htm)

To say that Archelaus did a poor job of ruling would be an understatement. Repeatedly there were revolts and rebellions that left thousands dead. Things got so bad under Archelaus that



Rob Sullivan is President and CEO of Believers Stewardship Services (BSS). Prior to joining BSS in 2015, Rob was an Executive Director and Information Security/Risk Officer for Morgan Stanley where he had worked since 1996. He also serves as President of the Board of Associates for Biblical Research, Board Chairman for School Ministries, Inc., and is a Trustee of the Stewards Foundation. Rob’s home fellowship is Bethany Chapel in Yonkers, NY.

by **Rob Sullivan**

# GOOD NEWS FOR *Tennessee*

It was on a naval base in California when a fellow sailor asked me if I was saved. He used terminology I had not often heard in the denomination in which I was raised. Soon after that, I received the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, was baptized, and received into fellowship at the assembly in Riverside, California. The teaching at the denominational church where I grew up made me aware that I would never be able to continue there even though my former pastor offered me one hundred dollars a month to stay in his church as youth worker. That was a lot of money for a college student in 1948, but my convictions were firm.

Upon discharge from the navy, I missed and sought the fellowship that I had experienced among the believers in Riverside. The closest assembly of believers that I knew about was in Louisville, Kentucky, 180 miles away,



and that was before interstate highways.

Worshipping with fellow believers at the Lord's Supper had been such a blessing, that I began traveling to Louisville as often as possible, sometimes by Greyhound bus.

Meeting in our home was an option after we married and studied at Emmaus Bible School, located in Chicago at that time. One of the many blessings at that time was meeting Hal and Norma Greene of Hamilton in Ontario, Canada. They moved to Nashville in 1951 with the encouragement of William MacDonald. We bought and erected a tent expecting to see the LORD do great things. Like Jonah of old, we had to learn that "salvation is of the LORD". In His own time, the LORD was pleased to save many people from the working, blue-collar neighborhood where the LORD had placed us. With the winter of 1951 approaching, and no place to meet with the new believers, we decided to winterize the tent and stay there until spring. No one told us that it could not be done, so we just did it. Since the tent was heated by a wood burning stove and a kerosene heater, we were not surprised when the fire marshal condemned the tent and rightly so. The following week

we distributed 500 handbills in the neighborhood announcing the following Sunday morning subject which Hal Greene preached, "Condemned or Not Condemned". It was during this time that we received encouragement from T. B. Gilbert, a pioneer preacher, whose work is recorded in "He Loved to Plant" by Don Norbie.

We appreciated visits by George Landis and others, including Ed McCully on his way to Ecuador where he and his missionary friends would later be martyred by the Auca Indians. Ed's dad also visited us on a Sunday morning when the fire in the warm morning heater

went out in the tent. Shivering as he left, he said, "You fellows sure have courage". He never mentioned good sense.

Even we were smart enough to know that two winters in a tent would be insanity. Our first building was on the location where the tent had been pitched. We spent countless hours in neighborhood visitation, Vacation Bible Schools (VBS), and youth efforts resulting in much

rejoicing but many heartaches. Additions to the original building were made in 1955 and 1964. It was in 1964 that the LORD led Hal and Norma Greene to Cape Girardeau, Missouri to pioneer a new

work there. A year later, I was led of the LORD to leave secular employment to give full time to His work.

In 1979, a new location on six acres in the Bellevue community, became our new home. It is called the "Lord's Work". It is much easier to start a new work than it is to maintain such a work. There is the ongoing preaching of the gospel, the discipling of new believers, teaching the Word, preaching funerals, performing weddings, counselling, radio messages, ministering to the needy, and much more. Lest I am misunderstood, over the years we have had two overall objectives: to preach the Word of God, and give pre-eminence to our Lord Jesus Christ. God's Word will not return void and He honors those who honor His Son. Proof of

*continued on page 12*

# Report: Camp Li Lo Li

Randolph, NY

The first session of Camp Li-Lo-Li commenced on July 25, 1953. However, as with all great works of God, the process of getting to that first day started many years prior.

It started with the conversion to Christ of a 13-year-old boy. He had previously heard the gospel and on at least three occasions prior to his conversion had gone forward to the altar, having made a profession of faith. But it was when he was 13, that the gospel had become real to him under the preaching of brother John Bramhall, and with his heart convicted of sin he turned to the Saviour in simple faith, believing in the finished work and redeeming blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. This young man was Mel Northrop.

Years later, now married to his wife Midge, the Lord continued to stir in Mel's heart the need for more outreach, which eventually led to the burden for camp ministry. Hearing other brothers and sisters share their positive experiences and having been impressed with the work of other camps that they were familiar with, they spoke often of the value of Bible camp ministry.

In 1951, they began to ask the Lord to make a move toward a Bible camp in the Rochester, NY area where they were now living. Several brothers, including Colin Caldwell and Stephen Smith, Mel's father-in-law, began meeting together for weekly prayer at Congress Avenue Bible Chapel (now called Cornerstone Bible Chapel), in Rochester, NY. It was these prayer meetings that fanned the fire of inspiration for camp work and a greater burden for local gospel outreach.

In the summer of 1952, Mel and Colin were preaching at a series of meetings at the assembly in Jamestown, NY. While in the area, they visited Allegany State Park having heard that the park had sites that could be rented for camp purposes. However, they soon learned that the park was so busy that people often rented their sites many years in advance and that there would be a five-year waiting list for them to get a site. However, that year by God's providence Camp No. 11 became available due to a cancellation, which made the site available for rent the next summer. They discerned that this was the Lord's will to move forward and reserve Camp No. 11 at Allegany State Park for the two weeks of July 25 to August 8, 1953.

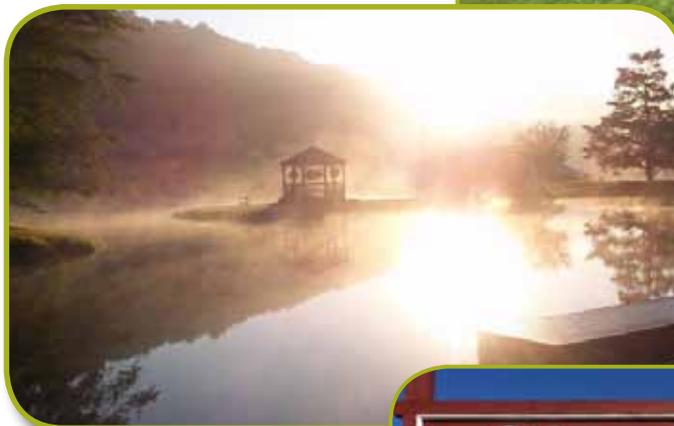
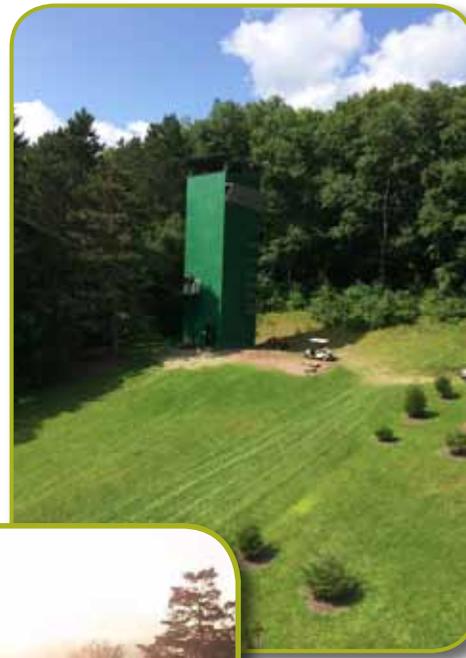
On August 9, 1952, Mel and Colin, along with the Jamestown assembly visited Camp No. 11 to have a look at the site. The Jamestown assembly was so enthralled with the camp that they

agreed to support the work of the camp ministry. Once Mel and Colin arrived home to Congress Avenue Bible Chapel, they received a similar response to support the work. On Saturday, October 4, 1952 a meeting was held with three representatives of seven assemblies (Rochester, Erie, Jamestown, Niagara Falls, three Buffalo area assemblies). All seven assemblies agreed to support the camp ministry.

On Saturday, November 1, 1952 a picnic was held at Allegany State Park in 70-degree weather, clearly a gift from the Lord for that time of year. The purpose of the picnic was to tour the campground and discuss how the buildings could be used. It was decided at this picnic and tour that Allegany State Park Bible Camp would hold its first session from July 25 - Aug 8, 1953.

What had once been a dream, had now become a reality. At a camp meeting in March, 1953, the camp name was officially approved to be Camp Li-Lo-Li. This was actually developed by Mel's 11-year-old daughter, Betty Northrop. Since that date the name has stood the test of time continuing to offer its deep meaning that we have held so dear. Though the name is so often mispronounced, it continues to embody the intention of the

camp's founding assemblies and each person that serves there. It represents sharing the Life, Love and Light of the Lord Jesus Christ.



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*continued from page 11*

In 1955, after much prayer and searching, the Lord provided the land that would be the future home of Camp Li-Lo-Li. We were able to agree on a price of \$6,800 for 296 acres that also included a farmhouse, chicken coops, schoolhouse, and two old barns. Some of this remains at camp today, including the schoolhouse and a barn.

A while later, with the Lord's provision and much labor, the lodge and several cabins for the summer sessions were built. In the summer of 1956, during our 4th year as Camp Li-Lo-Li, we hosted our camp sessions in the "Promised Land."

We have now completed our 65th year of camp ministry. It is with incredible appreciation and gratitude that we can look back and truly see "all that God hath wrought." It is a tremendous reminder to each of us that we are just pebbles in the work of Christ in building His Church. The mission of Camp Li-Lo-Li is to "Share the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the teachings of God's Word to children, youth and families in a rural camp setting." In summary, our desire is to continue to be used by Him in the process of making disciples, either preaching the gospel so that the lost can be found in Christ or teaching those who have been found the more excellent ways of Christ.

The people whose names are written in the Book of Life and that will be rewarded at the Bema for the faithful work of the ministry at Camp Li-Lo-Li are impossible to recall. Many do specifically

stick out as it is with any ministry. However, there are so many more whose names may not be remembered but will be rewarded for a work well done.

Camp Li-Lo-Li continues to serve the Lord, His people, and the lost by preaching the gospel with the goal of "Changed Lives in Jesus Christ!" We run camp sessions and guest groups throughout the year, but the primary ministry is still the summer camps, with attempts at follow-up and discipleship with campers and staff throughout the year. We run six weekly kids camps throughout the summer, as well as a Family Camp Week during the 4th of July week. We end the summer with a Family Camp session on Labor Day weekend.

It is a joy and a blessing to be involved in the work at Camp Li-Lo-Li! If you have not yet found a camp to serve at and support, we are always happy to welcome new history makers!



Jon has been serving as the Executive Director of Camp Li-Lo-Li since August, 2016. He and his wife Shona, who also serves as registrar, were commended to that work by Northgate Bible Chapel in Rochester, NY. They have four children, Will, Rebekah, Caleb and Faith.

**by Jon Benson**

*continued from page 10*

that promise is that which started out simply as a gospel outreach to a blue-collar neighborhood, is now home to believers from numerous language groups and cultures from all over the world - all in Christ.

It was in 1957 that the three assemblies in middle Tennessee - Nashville, Murfreesboro and Shelbyville - launched the Mid-South Bible Conference at Montgomery Bell State Park. For over thirty years there were thousands of believers from all over the United States who were blessed by the teaching of many of God's faithful servants. As an outgrowth of the ministry of Mid-South Bible Conference, Horton Haven Christian Camp was born. Located on 350 acres, on the banks of the Duck River near Chapel Hill, Tennessee in Marshall County, the camp ministry operates twelve months a year. It serves over 900 campers each summer, as well as our own retreats; plus, we serve many guest groups. Mid-South has now become a Labor Day weekend conference, with many enjoying the camp facility, including the modern comfortable rooms, dining hall, chapel



and much more. The annual Labor Day Family weekend continues to be a blessing to those who attend.

In addition to the chapel located in Bellevue, and the site of Horton Haven Christian Camp, a group of believers hived off in 1976, and now meet on the east side of Nashville, Christian Believers of Donelson. Over the years we have co-labored together, especially in the ongoing work of Horton Haven Christian Camp. GOD has truly done remarkable things since that question asked back in 1947, "Are you saved?"



John and his wife Mary Lou were commended to the Lord's work in 1966. They have been living by faith in their service for the Lord and His people in the Nashville and middle Tennessee area. They have been in fellowship at the Nashville Gospel Chapel since its establishment in 1952.

**by John E. Phelan Sr.**

# Report: History of the Indian Brethren Fellowship (IBF)

## Beginnings

In 1978, our late brother C.V. Baby, his son Charley, and Brother I.K.M. John attended a Christian Missions in Many Lands (CMML) conference at Greenwood Hills Camp & Conference Center in Pennsylvania. There the Lord laid on their hearts a desire to have a conference for the Indian believers living in North America. Later they shared their plans with other families and friends. Some of the brethren met in Detroit and prayerfully decided to go ahead with the plan.

As a result, the first conference took place at Greenwood Hills from Thursday June 15 to Sunday June 18, 1978. Including the children, about 100 people attended. This was the first conference of any Indian Christian community in the United States. During that conference, a meeting was held in the meeting room known as the Tabernacle to discuss future plans. The banner over the meeting room read "CHRIST PREEMINENT." There it was decided to continue this conference on a yearly basis.

One objective of the conference was to come apart from the hustle and bustle of daily life to a quiet, serene place, and spend a few days in the serious study of God's Word. A second one was to meet and have good Christian fellowship with other believers.

During the very first conference, a relationship between the conference and the local assemblies was discussed. It was decided that the conference would in no way infringe upon the autonomy of local assemblies, or interfere with other ministries' overseen by local assemblies in the USA, Canada, or India.

Over the years, many godly men have given leadership and spiritual guidance to the conference, giving their best, without seeking recognition or publicity. We thank God for all of them. We are particularly thankful to the Lord for Dr. C.V. Baby, Jacob Kaleecheel, and Kamalaker Dandaker who served on the committee for many years, and are now with the Lord.

From the beginning, this conference was organized and run by a committee consisting of several likeminded men. None of the original committee members are now on the executive committee. The Lord has brought in hardworking, gifted, dedicated and spiritual young men to step into the places vacated by the older brethren.

## Impact on the social and spiritual life of the Indian community

In the seventies, there were not many Indian brethren believers in the USA. This conference provided a venue for us to meet and know each other.

In the early years, the topics of our conversations were around our children, their education, and marriages. Later on, the grandchildren became the focal point. Now, you will hear words like arthritis, bursitis, and gastritis. Occasionally you may also hear words like stent, pacemaker and knee replacement. Still, it is always a joy to meet new families and renew old friendships. Over the years, we have come to know and love so many saints. As years went by, we realized that there were some unexpected social benefits for those who came to the conference. I was told by a number of couples that they first met their spouses at the IBF conference.

The slogan of the IBF is "God's work by God's people for God's glory." For the last forty years, our Lord helped us choose pertinent biblical topics for the theme and relevant subjects for the workshops. He also graciously provided the people to preach and to teach. We are simply amazed at His gracious provisions for His people. We are so humbled that the Lord was also pleased to save several souls at the conference. Only eternity will reveal the full impact this conference has had in the lives of those who attended.

During the course of these past forty years, we faced some major challenges. But God gave us grace to place them at His feet and look to Him for help. He never failed us, nor did he forsake us. Hitherto, the Lord has helped us. As the Psalmist says "our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth." In conclusion, "This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes."



Thomas Chacko and his wife Susan, fellowship with the believers at the North York Gospel Chapel in York, Pennsylvania. Br.Chacko has been involved with the Indian Brethren Fellowship from its inception and currently serves on their Spiritual Advisory Committee.

by **Thomas Chacko**

# SALVATION STORIES

## Michael Luna

*John 11:25 "... I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."*

I was born in Queens New York City, New York. My parents met during WWII when my father was in the Army Air Corp and was sent to Salina, Kansas where he met my mother. He then was sent to India and then China. They were married when he was discharged from the Army Air Corp after WWII. My father took my Mom to New York where they lived in a cold water flat in the basement of a small house in Richmond Hill Queens, NY. When I was two years old my parents bought a Levitt house in Westbury, NY where I grew up. My Dad was an aircraft mechanic with American Airlines and my Mom worked in the kitchen at one of the schools in the school district where I went to school. I was an only child. From eight years on I was a latch key kid. My mother had to be at work at 6 am so I had to get myself up, get my breakfast and walk about a mile to school. My mother came home after I got home from school.

I did not get in trouble in school but I had difficulty with academics because I had Attention Deficit Disorder; although they did not know about it in the 1950's. My mom thought I was being lazy and she used to berate me and become upset when I would bring home a bad report card. My self-esteem was destroyed, which made it even more difficult to do well in school. My mother compared me to my friend across the street who was an A student and later went on to Medical School and became a doctor.

I was not good in athletics and therefore was not respected in school and I was bullied constantly. My guidance counselor in the 7th grade told me I would never get into a four-year college. I graduated near the bottom of my class in high school.

My graduation was during the height of the Vietnam War. I was not in college and while my friends went to college and got student deferments I got my 1A draft classification, which meant I would be going into the Army. Since I was not athletic, I would not do well in the Army. My Dad was home when I got my draft classification. He said you're going to go down right now and enlist in the Air Force. I said why? He said we had clean sheets and decent food and we had the Army to protect us. The Army had a tough time of it and many of them were killed. So I enlisted in the Air Force. I am probably alive today because I listened to my Dad.

In basic training I had a tough time because I had difficulty keeping up with the others. I was bullied there as well. One African American guy hated white people. He went into my room and backed me to a wall. His friend guarded the door. He was a boxer and I was not a fighter. I was extremely frightened and afraid he was going to beat me up. I kept my hands at my sides because I knew that I could not defend myself. He slammed his fist into the locker next to my head and laughed at me. I guess he did not want to get into trouble, but he laughed because he was able to humiliate me.

After basic and my medics training I was sent to McGuire AFB, NJ. Because it was only 100 miles from my home I was able to go home on my weekends off. I was driving at night around my neighborhood and I was listening to the car radio and changing the channels to find something to listen to. All of a sudden I heard Billy Graham speak about the Prince of Peace. I knew that was something I did not have. That was the first time I even thought about God seriously even though my mother brought me to church. In the fall of 1969 I went to the base theater as I often did. I saw that it was "The Greatest Story Ever Told". I almost turned back, but went anyway. When it got to the raising of Lazarus I really was struck by it. Also John 11:25 "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he be dead yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." This verse made a great impression on me.

Right after this my orders were cut for the Philippines. There I took care of battle casualties from Vietnam. Also there were many born again Christians in the medic's squadron. I was with this one guy in his room. He had Bibles and commentaries on his shelf. I said, "you read the Bible?" He said, "Yes, do you want to hear about it." I said, "I've got nothing better to do." He explained the way of salvation. I came to know the Lord that night.

My whole life changed. I was able to get into college to become a nurse. From barely graduating high school, I graduated Magna Cum Laude from Adelphi University with my BSN. I met my wife Eileen at Dean Street Chapel. I began preaching the Word in 1973. I became an Elder at Village Lane Bible Chapel in 1985. I worked as a director of a dialysis program in a major medical center in NY. I got my Masters in health care administration from Long Island University and my Doctorate in nursing from Case Western Reserve University.

My wife and I ministered to the homeless at the McCauley Water Street Mission in the Bowery section of Manhattan for 20 years. We ministered to the elderly in the Sunset Manor Nursing Home in Brentwood, NY for 20 years. We organized a ministry on Great South Bay, Long Island where we rented a 250 passenger boat and had a speaker, music and food, which we did for 15 years. We organized the Bible School at Dean Street Chapel in Freeport, NY and then at Village Lane Bible Chapel in Hauppauge, NY. I also served as Sunday-School superintendent for seven years.

I have six children and almost sixteen grandchildren. My 1st wife passed from cancer in 2013; however, the Lord gave me another wonderful wife Beth (Widener) Luna in August 2015. She and I fellowship at Monterey Chapel in Leola, PA.

Life has had its difficulties but the Lord has been with me. I went from a discouraged young man to a child of The King. Praise the Lord!



# ISSUES *and* ANSWERS

*"Search The Scriptures..." John 5:39*

## *Question: Is it right for a Christian to be cremated?*

From biblical times until the middle of the 19th century, believers were typically buried after death. It was not until 1876 that the first American crematory was built in Washington, Pennsylvania<sup>1</sup> and 1901 that the first Canadian crematorium was built in Montreal, Quebec.<sup>2</sup>

Today believers' opinions vary. Those that choose cremation often cite the high cost of burials, arguing that the body will eventually decay to dust (Gen. 3:19). Those that choose burial often counter that cremation is a sanitized word for burning one's body, which historically has been a pagan practice.

While the Bible is silent on cremation, it was both God's expectation (Gen. 15:15; Deut. 34:5-8) and His people's practice in both the Old and New Testaments to bury their loved ones (Gen. 23:1-20; 35:8, 19-20; 1 Sam. 25:1, 1 Ki. 2:10; Mt. 14:12; Lk. 9:59-60; Jn. 11:17; Acts 8:2). In one example, Israel carried Joseph's bones out of Egypt, eventually bringing them to the Promised Land and burying them at Shechem, more than four hundred years after his request (Gen. 50:25; Ex. 13:19; Josh. 24:30, 32).

Normally, the burning of individuals and cities was a sign of God's punishment (Gen. 19:24; 38:24; Num. 31:10; Josh. 6:24; 7:25; 8:28; 11:11; Rev 20:15). An exception is found when Jabesh Gilead burned King Saul and his son's bodies to prevent further indignity to them. The Philistines had beheaded Saul and hung his body along with his three sons to the wall of Beth Shan. In response, courageous men from Jabesh Gilead recovered them, burned their bodies, and respectfully buried their bones at Jabesh (1 Sam. 31:8-13).

In the New Testament, the word "sleep" is used to describe those who have died in Christ and always refers to their bodies, never their spirits (1 Cor. 11:30; 15:51; 1 Th. 4:14). Their spirits are consciously with the Lord but their bodies "sleep" in the ground until resurrection (2 Cor. 5:8). Just as we go to bed at night, expecting to rise in the morning, similarly after our lifeless bodies are placed in the ground, there is a confidence that our bodies will rise again.

Let me suggest three reasons why I personally choose burial over cremation. First, we are the work of God's hands, accountable to the One who created us. God made us spirit, soul, and body, and the value of our tripartite person is highly appraised by the One who formed us and called His work good (Gen. 1:31). In reality, we are

merely stewards of our bodies and should treat them with dignity. It is God who owns them with full Creator rights (Ps. 24:1; 100:3; 1 Cor. 10:26).

Second, at Calvary Christ purchased our entire being (spirit, soul, and body) with His blood (1 Th. 5:23). Though our body's ultimate redemption is still future, the Holy Spirit is our guarantee that Christ's "purchased possession" includes our bodies' glorification (Rom. 8:30; Eph. 1:13-14). The temple of the Holy Spirit, our bodies have been bought at a price and now belong to the Lord, with full Redeemer rights (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Third, we have the symbolism of nature. In the same way a seed is planted in the ground and dies, bringing forth vegetation; in burial our bodies are planted in the ground and by Christ's power will someday be resurrected, transformed to be like His glorious body (1 Cor. 15:35-54; Phil. 3:20-21). Though cremation does not affect one's future resurrection, it is a powerful testimony watching a deceased believer lowered into ground, while proclaiming their future resurrection in a body that will never experience disease, suffering, or death.

Ultimately, after weighing all the facts, we must decide for ourselves secondary issues like this, being fully convinced in our own minds (Rom. 14:5, 23). At the same time, we must also respect others who choose differently, those who also have the liberty to make their own decision according to their convictions.

Endnotes:

1. [www.atlasobscura.com/places/lemoyne-crematory](http://www.atlasobscura.com/places/lemoyne-crematory)
2. [www.mountroyalcem.com/index.php/en/canadas-first-crematorium-sp-1386782751.html](http://www.mountroyalcem.com/index.php/en/canadas-first-crematorium-sp-1386782751.html)

***If you have a question for this column please submit it to [gferrier@cornerstonemagazine.org](mailto:gferrier@cornerstonemagazine.org)***



George Ferrier is a commended full-time worker who fellowships at Bridlewood Bible Chapel in Ottawa, ON. In addition to itinerant preaching and teaching in North America and overseas, he is a regular contributor to Choice Cleanings Calendar. He is on the board of Cornerstone Magazine Inc. and also serves as assistant editor.

**by George Ferrier**



## West Virginia Bible Conference

July 22 - 27, 2018

Bluestone Camp and Retreat near Hinton, WV

The West Virginia Bible Conference invites you to their annual family camp. Invited speakers are Keith Keyser (PA) and Tim McNeal (KY). Children's ministry and nursery are provided. Come enjoy Christian fellowship and God's Word in a beautiful mountain setting. For more information contact Brent Jones at (304) 466-4738 or [brentandhope@frontier.com](mailto:brentandhope@frontier.com).

## Lassen Pines Youth & Family Camp

July 29 - Aug 3

Northern California

Buena Park Christian Fellowship is hosting a Youth and Family Camp in Northern California from Sunday, July 29 - Friday, August 3. Join us to hear Ken Daughters and other gifted speakers teach from Hebrews 11. The speakers will discuss the lives of heroes who walked by faith and show us how to follow their example in our modern world.

Campers will also enjoy group sports, lake activities, evening sings, and a "midnight hike" in a serene environment. For more information, please visit <http://www.buenaparkcf.org/>, search for the event on Facebook, or contact Wills Osborn ([wills.osborn@gmail.com](mailto:wills.osborn@gmail.com)).

## IBF Family Conference 2018

July 4 - 8, 2018

Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, IN

The theme will be "What Manner of Persons Ought Ye to be" (2 Pet. 3:11-12). Speakers include Mike Attwood, Sajan Mathews, Nate Bramsen, George Johnson, John Jacob, and Grace Mathews. Other meetings include Evening Meeting, Men's Fellowship Meeting, Women's Fellowship Meeting, Young Children's VBS, Youth Classes (KG-3, 4-6, 7-8 and High School), Singspiration (under 21 years old) and Missionary Reports. Nursery is provided during the plenary sessions. A gymnasium and game room are other opportunities to fellowship. Online registration at [www.ibfus.org](http://www.ibfus.org) should be open by the second week of May. If you have any questions regarding the conference, please email [info@ibfus.org](mailto:info@ibfus.org). We request your earnest prayer for this conference.

## Men's Intensive Bible Study 2018

Aug 26 - 30, 2018

Greenwood Hills Camp & Conference Center  
7062 Lincoln Way E, Fayetteville, PA

This is a four day interactive and intensive Bible Study encouraging group participation in a classroom setting. Randy Amos has been teaching in this format for over 25 years and God has used it to richly bless many brethren. Now at Greenwood Hills for the first time please plan on joining likeminded brethren for serious Bible Study and great fellowship. It starts on Sunday Aug 26 at 8pm and ends on Thursday Aug 30th at 10am. This is an event you don't want to miss! For more information contact

Richie Benitez at [Royalpriest4him@yahoo.com](mailto:Royalpriest4him@yahoo.com) or (508) 265-3168.

## Camp Horizon Bible Institute 2018-19 Academic Classes

Classes Start Sept 10

Leesburg, Florida

The Camp Horizon Bible Institute (CHBI), located in Leesburg, Florida, invites students to apply for the 2018-19 academic year. Starting its second year of classes on September 10, CHBI offers courses that scripturally ground the student in doctrinal and practical areas. New Testament principles of gathering are emphasized and integrated into each course. Classes are scheduled over two days. While the program was designed to be completed in one year, students can attend one day of class per quarter and complete the program over two years, or just take a single class. For further information, contact Phil Guikema at (321) 287-8663 or [philguikema@earthlink.net](mailto:philguikema@earthlink.net) or see the CHBI website: [chbi.us](http://chbi.us).

## Know The Word: Bible Conference By The Bay

Sept 10-14, 2018

Long Beach Island, Ocean County, NJ

Enjoy an uplifting week of spiritual refreshment and renewal down by the bay... and across from the Sea at Harvey Cedars Bible Conference on Long Beach Island, Ocean County, NJ, ([www.hcbc.org](http://www.hcbc.org)). The speaker this year will be Jim Comte from Barrie, Ontario. Also, Ed Anthony (Tennessee) will lead afternoon Bible study sessions on the Book of Numbers. Robbie Youssef of Axios One Int., will also conduct a seminar on avoiding senior scams and steps to avoid online identity theft. The location is great, the food is great, the accommodations are great, and the ministry and fellowship for the week will be great. Come join us for an informative and uplifting week in the Lord! For more information, visit [www.knowtheword.com](http://www.knowtheword.com) or email [knowtheword@gmail.com](mailto:knowtheword@gmail.com). To register, go to website or send \$399 pp by Aug. 25th to: Know the Word c/o Mark Kolchin P.O. Box 305 Lanoka Harbor, NJ 08734. Conference begins with dinner on Monday night and concludes with a final meeting on Friday morning.

## Grace Gospel Chapel Conference

Sept 15, 2018

1130 Mega Lane, Gilbertsville, PA, 19525

Saturday sessions are as follows: 10-11am, 11:15-12:15, 12:30-1:30. Lunch served shortly thereafter. The invited speaker is Doug Pilgrim of Renfrew, ON. Please RSVP to Keith Keyser at [krkeyser@hotmail.com](mailto:krkeyser@hotmail.com)

## Shepherding Conference

Sept 20-22, 2018

Greenwood Hills Bible Camp,  
7062 Lincoln Way E, Fayetteville, PA

The scheduled speakers are Mike Attwood, Brian Gunning, Keith Keyser, and Mike Stoudt. It is for men of all ages who love the Lord, His Word, and His people. There will be 14 messages on encouraging, challenging, and Christ centered topics. Register at [greenwoodhills.net](http://greenwoodhills.net) or call 717-352-2150.

## Spark PA: A 44-Hour Experience to Inspire Disciple Makers

October 19 - 21, 2018

Slippery Rock, PA

Emmaus International desires believers to grow together through life and truth transference in the context of authentic relationships. Spark provides a biblical and spiritual foundation for this to occur in the lives of participants through focused worship, prayer, biblical teaching on evangelism and discipleship, and discussion groups with a local planning element, pushing participants to action. For adults 18+, college & career, church leaders and elders. The cost is \$65 (\$85 after Oct 1). Learn more and register at [www.EmmausInternational.com/SparkPA](http://www.EmmausInternational.com/SparkPA).

## Shadow of the Rock Ministries

Shadow of the Rock Ministries, Inc., a newly recognized 501 (c) 3 tax exempt organization in Honea Path, South Carolina, is now taking applications for full-time house administrators. They will manage a residential training facility for ex-offenders whose lives have been changed by the power of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and for those who sincerely desire a change of lifestyle, although not yet saved.

For more information or to request an application form, contact them at [shadowoftherock@mail.com](mailto:shadowoftherock@mail.com) or 864-934-5088. They are also on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Shadow-of-the-Rock-Ministries-102698156908665/>

## Parkside Bible Chapel

Parkside Bible Chapel is a small assembly of older believers meeting in Everett, Washington, 30 miles north of Seattle. They meet on the Lord's Day at 10 A.M. for breaking of bread, followed by a fellowship time and the Family Bible Hour. They would appreciate our prayers and would welcome any believers prompted by the Lord to come and fellowship with them in the work (Acts 16:9). For more information contact Jim Low at 425-334-5383 or Dick Rollins at 360-435-8423.

## Detroit Brethren Assembly

After much prayer and the leading of the Holy Spirit, Detroit Brethren Assembly, a new assembly testimony, has been established in the metro Detroit area. They praise God for His faithfulness and sustaining their fellowship for the past ten months. They are presently gathering at 28100 Ryan Road in Warren, MI, on the premises of Warren Community Church. They request prayer for their leadership and assembly, and welcome you to fellowship with them if you are in the area. For more information, see [www.detroitbrethrenassembly.org](http://www.detroitbrethrenassembly.org).

## Carmel Hills Retirement Community

Carmel Hills is a Christian retirement community located at 2801 Carmel Road on 15 wooded acres near downtown Charlotte. Carmel Hills was established to take care of the Lord's people as they grew older. They have 41 units for independent living and 30 units for assisted living. For more information, please contact Susanna Maske at 704-364-8302, or visit their website at [www.carmelhills.org](http://www.carmelhills.org).

## Ministry Opportunity

The elders at Grace Bible Chapel in Springfield, IL request help in making meaningful contact with university students in Springfield, Illinois at schools of higher learning. They are looking for young couples or older believers who feel led of the Lord to assist in building up the work. If interested, please contact Floyd Pierce at 3405 Old Waterworks RD, Springfield, IL 62702 or (217) 622-7419 or [fpierce@ameritech.net](mailto:fpierce@ameritech.net).

## New Assembly in Houston

We are a new assembly in the Houston area. Meetings are Breaking of Bread Sunday 9:30 am, Sunday evening service 7:00 pm, Wednesday night prayer and Bible study 7:00 pm. It is a pleasure to welcome all in fellowship with a commendation letter from the assembly you have previously been with. For more information contact E. Frank Detwiler at 979.922.3837.

## Wanted: Camp Manager

Emmanuel Bible Camp in beautiful Prince Edward Island Canada is in need of a camp manager (or a couple) for the months of July thru August for active children's ministry. Lodgings for workers is provided on site. For inquiries on further particulars, please respond to: Dan Frew [dfrew1979@gmail.com](mailto:dfrew1979@gmail.com) or 9022138487

## Discipleship Training Program

Morning Star Bible Camp, located in Kelowna, BC, will be running it's second Discipleship Training Program (DTP) throughout the summer of 2018. Applications are now being accepted from young people aged 14-18 who have a desire to grow in their walk with the Lord while serving practically in many different capacities throughout the camp. Applications can be found at [www.morningstarbiblecamp.com](http://www.morningstarbiblecamp.com). For more info, contact Joshua Caplan at (250) 718-2021 or email [info@morningstarbiblecamp.com](mailto:info@morningstarbiblecamp.com).

**If you or your assembly has a news item or event to contribute, please email George Ferrier at [gferrier@cornerstonemagazine.org](mailto:gferrier@cornerstonemagazine.org)**

## *This I Know*

I do not know what next may come  
Across my pilgrim way.  
I do not know tomorrow's road  
Nor see beyond today.  
BUT THIS I KNOW – *My Savior knows*  
*The path I cannot see,*  
And I can trust His wounded hand  
To guide and care for me

I do not know what may befall  
Of sunshine or of rain.  
I do not know what may be mine of pleasure or of pain  
BUT THIS I KNOW – *My Savior knows*  
*And whatso'er it be,*  
Still I can trust His love to give  
What will be best for me.

I do not know what still awaits  
Or what the morrow brings,  
But with the glad salute of faith  
I hail its opening wings!  
FOR THIS I KNOW – *that in my Lord*  
*Shall all my needs be met,*  
And I can trust the heart of Him  
Who has not failed me yet.

Author Unknown

*Submitted by Ross Rainey (Plymouth, Michigan)*

*"Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." John 13:7*

*"... the just shall live by his faith..." Hab. 2:4*