

TrailNotes speaks to forward movement, paying attention to the “landscape” we are passing through in this trail-laced wooded hillside and valley, not to mention the world beyond. *TrailNotes* is an unfolding, ongoing journal of the people who share the trail with us and the things we’re learning and doing.

ElderTalk: **Music - an amazing gift of God!** ANDY HEININGER

It’s rare when you make an acquaintance who doesn’t like music in some form or fashion. I cannot say I have met anyone who said they didn’t like any music at all. Typically, they might not like a certain style or genre, but there is usually something in song they are drawn towards. When you think about the diversity of music and the emotional connections that are made through songs, it is stirring to see the beautiful gift it is and the way we each express our love and devotion to our Lord through this medium.

I frequently subject my children to the diverse collection of works stored on my phone blaring through the Bluetooth speaker located in our kitchen. Sara Groves, Disciple, The Gaither Vocal Band, Audio Adrenaline, Skillet, Hazakim, Reliant K, Christafari, Polarboy, Caedman’s Call and The London Philharmonic are just a few of the artists I call on to entertain me that are imprisoned in my cellular device. When I was a boy, one of my fondest memories was gathering at the piano with my mother and singing through the Gaither’s Family of God Hymnal with her. Sometimes my sister or aunt would sing along, but it was a special time for me and helped develop my love for music and love for hymns. In my mind, this was the correct way to worship our Lord and Savior. Anything else was too “worldly.”

As I became an adult and was blessed with a family of my own, I grew closer to the Lord and felt the barriers around “Godly” music to

be more fortified. Christian music must sound like the Christian music of my youth. This was right and good, and electric guitars a-screaming and drum sets a-banging were not.

One significant day, the fortification around my “Godly music” took a severe blow. I was watching the local Greensboro Christian TV station and they were broadcasting their hour of programming focusing on the “teen” audience. This meant loud music that didn’t seem to have a shred of Godliness, just worldly “noise, noise, noise” as the Grinch would say.



As I commented and criticized to Marie the heresy of this “music,” a song by the band Five Iron Frenzy came on entitled “A Flowery Song.” As I watched the obnoxious, brash, horn heavy, blasphemous video in order to compile more evidence for my case, I heard a familiar lyric through the chaos...

“Praise God from Whom all blessings flow; praise Him all creatures here below; praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost!...”

I couldn’t believe my ears. I immediately called Marie to the TV to verify what I had just heard. She confirmed it. The song I had sung every Sunday during the offering at church was being used by these teenage hooligans in their music video. But what really captured my attention was how they appeared to be having an exceptionally great time singing it. In my youth, I don’t ever remember having fun singing the Doxology. Is this permissible? How can the Doxology be fun? I immediately found it necessary to discover what other Gospel messages were hidden in this forbidden music format.

When I reached the stylings of the heavy metal group, Disciple, who literally use a blood curdling scream at the top of their lungs to proclaim, “I just know Jesus is the way! I just know Jesus is the truth! I just know Jesus is the life! I just know Jesus is my God!” I felt like my Jericho walls were completely tumbling down. I agree with these lyrics—how could I not? But moreover, I considered the verses from Romans 14:5-6: “One person considers one day more sacred than another, another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, and gives thanks to God.” Bottom line, do it unto the Lord. I grew up singing hymns as the only way to sing praises to the one and only God. Now my phone would convey a

(Continued on page 2)

Music - an amazing gift of God (cont.)

plethora of musical styles and genres “doing unto the Lord.”

As the “worship” Elder at Grace Fellowship Church, I am very thankful that we have four worship leaders and an alternate “doing unto the Lord” on their specific Sundays. The leaders bring their own talents and stylings and heart to our Sunday worship services. Each one directs us to the Father’s throne to praise our Lord using their musical giftings. We also have two very dedicated young people providing the words to every song each Sunday. We have two very capable sound men who make the worship teams, talents, stylings and heart audible and balanced. We are very blessed as a congregation to be able to come together as a family every Sunday morning and lay our praise at our Father’s feet.

I’m reminded of the November issue of *TrailNotes* where Tim Barber spoke on how King David danced in the streets unto the Lord and not to man. Let us, Grace Fellowship family, “do unto our Lord,” fully engaging our gifts and talents with all our heart, soul, mind and strength!



“THE NEW DOXOLOGY”

-Thomas Ken (1637-1711)
-Thomas H. Miller, Jr. (b. 1970)

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heavenly hosts,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Let earth and heavenly saints proclaim
The power and might of His great Name.
Let us exalt on bended knee,
Praise God, the Holy Trinity.

Chorus:

Praise God, praise God, praise God, Who saved
my soul.
Praise God, praise God, praise God from Whom
all blessings flow.

Praise to the King, His throne transcends,
His crown and Kingdom never end.
Now and throughout eternity,
I’ll praise the One Who died for me.

DECEMBER

- 2 ADVENT I:** “Anticipation.” Luke 1: 5-56. Mary’s vs. Zechariah’s response to the open door. Pastor Eric Byrom is preaching each Sunday in Advent. The honoring of Rick and Joanne Widener.
- 9 ADVENT II:** “Incarnation.” Matt. 1:18-25. Joseph’s response to the open door. Communion. 
- 16 ADVENT III:** “Adoration.” Luke 2:1-21. The shepherds vs. the innkeeper’s response to the open door. “Once in Royal David’s City” (Talia Byrom, Abby Heininger, Karis Vega. Wilma Phelps)
Teen Connect Christmas Party 12:30-3:00 pm.
- 19 GFC Christmas Party** 6:00-8:00 pm
- 23 ADVENT IV:** “Reflection.” Matt. 2:1-23. The Wisemen’s vs. Herod’s response to the open door. “Mercy Still” (Lori Barker)
Communion. 
- 24 Christmas Eve Service** 7:00-8:00 pm
- 30 Celebration Sunday with Potluck**

Jay Shifley: *More from India!*

“On our recent trip to India, Heather and I stayed in an Airbnb in New Delhi. The house was very nice and close to the Metro. We took it everywhere!”



New Delhi street vendor

“Heather and I had a couple of meetings with the local and foreign staff of Dynamic. It continues to be a light in a very dark place. Our former teammates and owners have really put their strengths into the business. Students want to be there, the local staff loves to work there, and there is a sense of community that is unique to the area. In a place where hope is really hard to find, Dynamic is offering it freely to the Muslim community. People are finding Jesus.

“The challenge these days is making enough money to sustain Dynamic in the eyes of the government. We discussed ways to do this with the staff and I think they all are good possibilities. Please be praying as we work through these issues, trying to find new revenue streams.”

You may support the ministry of the Shifleys’ through Frontiers USA. P.O. Box 60730, Phoenix, AZ 85082-0730 using account #008400.

Ray Nethery: My Mentor and Friend

KEVIN N. SPRINGER

Ed's Note: Kevin Springer has been a friend of Grace Haven since he lived here almost 50 yrs. ago. He was a church planter, pastor (most recently in Palm Desert, CA) and author of six books, including prize winning Power Evangelism.

Kevin and his wife Suzanne have been married 49 years and are the parents of three grown children. We print this tribute to say "Happy Birthday, Ray. We love you!"

It all began at the University of Southern California. I was a student leader of the local campus Christian group, and Ray—who had recently left Campus Crusade staff—took me and my future wife Suzanne under his wing. He was also involved with the JC Light & Power House, a student discipleship center in Los Angeles. This was 1968!

From the first day I knew there was something special about Ray, something that made me want to follow him. He had integrity. In his quiet, consistent way Ray called me on to follow Christ, wherever that might lead.

Well, at first it led my new wife Suzanne and me to Eastport, Maine, the eastern-most city in the nation. We taught for one year, thawed out, and then planned to head home to California. Or so we thought.

We only had enough money to make it to Mansfield, Ohio, where Ray had recently moved to lead a LAbri-inspired ministry center called Grace Haven. I wasn't about to ask my parents or Suzanne's parents for any help. So we sublet an

apartment and I got a job in town. By the time we could head out again for the West Coast, Ray had convinced us to join the Grace Haven staff as "householders," staff members who hosted students and provided the common meal every third night. We wouldn't return home to California until 1984!

Our years at Grace Haven were a baptism of ministry, with all the ups and downs a young pastor faces when he's called by God to serve. It was the height of the Jesus People movement, and we had Jesus People coming out of our ears, which made for some crazy times. It seemed like everyone was getting high on Jesus, and a few were getting high on other things.

Ray was with us all the way—coaching, correcting, encouraging, challenging...even forgiving. He also humbled me. My first official job as an intern pastor at Grace Haven was to tend my own flock, a literal flock of 100 chickens. It was humorous, really—though I failed to see much humor in it back then—but it also had a serious point: leaders must serve, so this was a test. I actually grew to love those chickens!

Ray also encouraged me to enroll in seminary, which changed my life. Between my Francis Schaeffer LAbri studies and Ashland Theological Seminary, God built a theological and philosophical base in my life that has sustained me through the past 35 years of joyful and sometimes stormy ministry.

My Mansfield years were about more than studying. Ray would take me with him on his famous ministry trips all over the country. Unless

you've travelled with Ray, you would not understand how unique these trips could be. Ray is a big man—six feet, five inches tall. He's also a very strong man. When he traveled, he never stopped, day and night. His days started with an early breakfast and ended with late-night coffee; in between were more meetings and travel. After my first road trip with Ray to the East Coast, I got sick and slept for three days!

In addition to working hard, I learned about being people-focused. Ray does that best. When you are talking with Ray you feel like you are the most important person in the world. He taught me the value of valuing people, of being a good listener, of caring about what they care about.

He even taught me, over a piece of strawberry pie at the L&K restaurant, how to enter a room and honor the people who were there. He bought me that pie, which I loved, and as I was finishing up, he pointed out some flaw in my character that needed to be corrected. Ouch! Then he coached me on how to change it and modeled it for me. To this day whenever I eat a piece of fresh strawberry pie, I think of those life-changing conversations in an L&K booth with Ray.

No testimony about Ray would be complete without a good Eunice Nethery story or two. After all, she, with the help of the Holy Spirit, made Ray the man he is today. Eunice profoundly influenced my wife. She still liberally quotes Eunice's aphorisms on motherhood and what it means to be a Christian woman to younger women.

(continued on page 4)

Ray Nethery - My Mentor...(cont.)

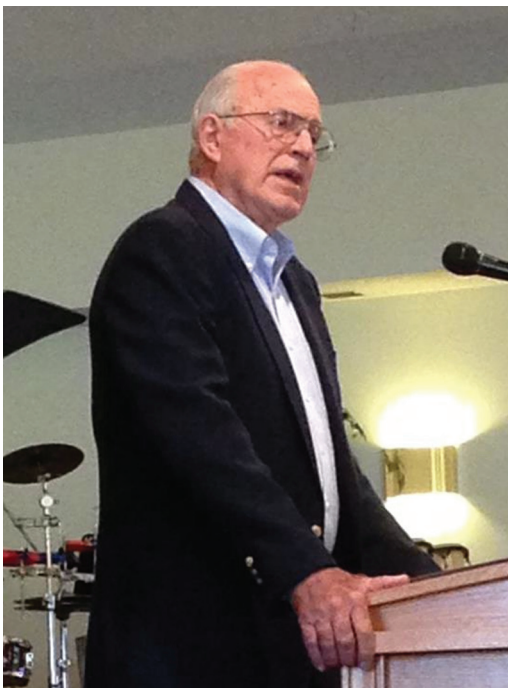
And when I need a word of wisdom, encouragement, or just a listening ear, I know I can call 419-526-0251 and Eunice will pick up with an engaging ear and encouraging words. I've been doing it for almost 50 years. And many, many other people have been doing it too.

I moved away from Mansfield to pursue my calling, but Ray never left me. We've remained close as I made a stop in Michigan to plant my first church and then returned home to California where I've been a pastor and writer.

Along the way, Ray has heard it all—the victories, discouragements, defeats, and miracles. Every step of the way he's pointed me to Christ, to faith, to consistency, to integrity. And he's done it with words, but more importantly, he's done it with actions. Ray is my integrity standard.

"Keep on keeping on," he told me when I was a pup pastor. "Finish well." I've held on to those words, and at times they've held me back from doing something foolish or impulsive or immature.

"If you do the right thing, and by that I mean what God wants you to do, and it costs you everything, DO IT ANYWAY! That's maturity; that's the life of Christ in you. That's a Ray Nethery!"



Ray Nethery at GFC in October 2014 - photo by Fred Linger

It's almost Christmas! LAURA BYROM

I have asked my Dad and Steve Phillips to help me create the Christmas stage decorations this year. We found some old wood pallets behind the local car wash/tire place. The owners said we could have the pallets if we could get them from behind a pile of tires! Well, the guys jumped in as you can see, and even Tom Nichols joined in the fun! My Dad ended up riding in the back of the van with the pallets when the seats were put down. We had a blast and the group wanted to document it with pictures for *TrailNotes*! Hopefully we will have some really cool Christmas trees for the stage built out of the pallet wood. We'll see how they turn out! To be continued...after Dec. 1st.



At left: Tom Nichols, Steve Phillips, and John Caldwell. Lower photo: John Caldwell.



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Eric Byrom Presiding Elder/ Pastor
Jadaé Fox Elder
Andy Heininger Elder
Robert Key Elder
Jon Vega Elder

(A complete list of church functionaries will return next month)