



Serving the suffering church around the world



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PRAISE, INC. ANNOUNCES NEW DIRECTOR

In the following article Ron Warren shares his heart for the future of Praise and the new direction that God has called him. New Director Pastor Dick Shaw introduces himself to the Praise family in the article "God's Faithfulness in the Past, and His Challenges for the Future" on page 3.

KINGS & KINGDOMS

By Rev. Ron Warren

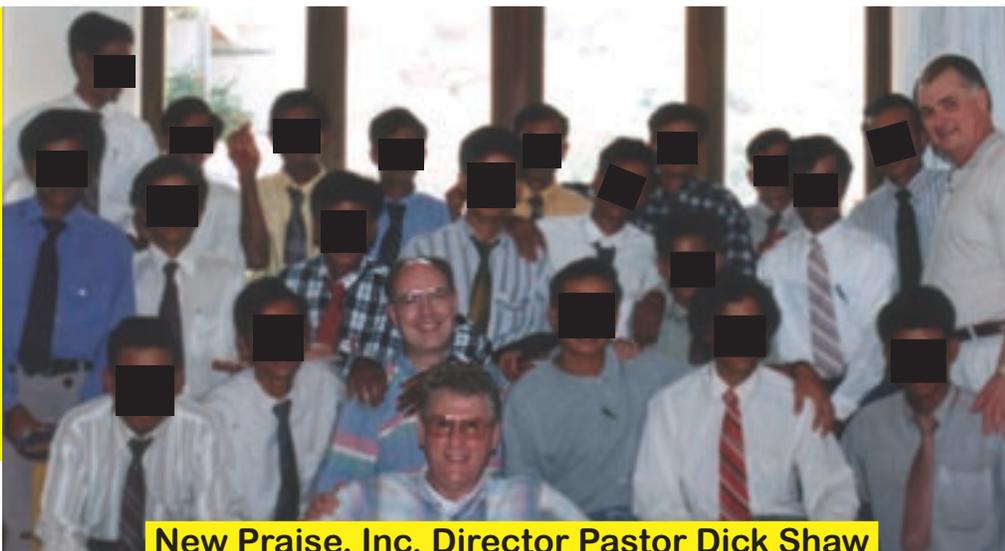
"Then he said, 'Do you understand why I came to you? But I shall now return to fight against the prince of Persia; so I am going forth, and behold, the prince of Greece is about to come. However, I will tell you what is inscribed in the writing of truth. Yet there is no one who stands firmly with me against these forces except Michael your prince.'" Dan 10:20-21

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."
Eph 6:12 NAS

While it is easy to talk about warfare and even spiritual warfare, it is far more difficult to walk through it or explain it in day to day terms. All of us have battles we go through in life and we also often fail to see the reality of the spiritual battle around us which is the real source of the physical battle. This becomes much clearer as we begin to recognize the reality of Christ, His Kingship, and His eternal Kingdom.

When the reality of that Kingdom takes place, something else occurs in our life. We realize the truth of what Paul was talking about in II Corinthians 4:18 when he said, *"...while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."*

"...while we are at home in the body we are



New Praise, Inc. Director Pastor Dick Shaw

pictured here (second row, center) with Ron Warren (standing, far right) and Pastor Floyd Seaman (front, center) with underground church leaders on a past visit to Vietnam.

absent from the Lord -- for we walk by faith, not by sight..." 5:6-7 NAS Paul's encounter with Christ made the reality of His Kingdom very clear. I would hope that you and I could learn from Paul's example and not have to be struck blind on a trip somewhere to come face to face with the reality of Christ and the Kingdom over which He reigns. Paul saw the evidence of Christ's reality in the lives of others, but he didn't know the personal reality of Christ.

The ministry of Praise came about because there was a new heart created in me that said, "I want to do something to encourage others as Christ has encouraged me." Each of us has a different encounter with Christ and each has a different walk with Him after that encounter. He didn't create walking cookies that all taste and look the same! He reconciled us to Himself because He loved us, not because we did anything to deserve Him. There is not one of us who became perfect when we began that walk and I can safely say there is not one of us who is perfect during our walk on this earth! We walk in His Grace that paves the walk in front of us with His blood. When we pass from this life to the next, only then will we know what perfection looks like!

In the meantime, we have an enemy who is doing all he can, every hour of every day, to kill and destroy us; not just collectively, but individually. He is an unrelenting enemy. In the years since this ministry began, we have seen him attempt to destroy it time

and time again. In those same years, we have seen the faithfulness of God as He has protected it, preserved it, and provided for it. In those same years, He has shown us many miracles that would seem unbelievable but for the many witnesses! His faithfulness is not given according to our worthiness. *"If we are faithless, He remains faithful..." 2 Tim 2:13 NAS*

I know personally of His faithfulness and I know nothing I hold in my hand belongs to me. Nothing He has placed around me is made by me. It is all allowed by Him. It is all temporal. He does not need me, I need Him. He does not need anything I have to offer him, except my willingness to obey Him. My need of Him is constant and there is nothing that I should attempt to do without Him. If I entrust all temporal things to Him and allow Him to use those things for His Kingdom while they are entrusted to me, He will be faithful to use them according to His purposes, not mine. Will there be battles when I don't understand what I see around me? Absolutely! He makes that clear in His Word! The prophet Daniel didn't clearly understand why the angel was speaking to him so directly about the delayed responses to his prayers. Even the angel knew the depth of God's love for Daniel, so he made clear to him the battle that was going on around Daniel, which Daniel could not see. His prayers seemed to remain unanswered, but he could not see why. The angel explained the battle that was taking place which Daniel could

not see. God wanted Daniel to know he was not forgotten in the midst of his struggles. His angels were charged with not only answering Daniel's petitions but also making sure Daniel knew what was going on in the vast realms of space around him.

God promised Joshua He would go before Him in the battles ahead and Joshua needed to be strong and courageous in facing those battles, but he would need to face them and he would have to fight them. God would give him the victory, but the battles still had to be fought. It has not changed for you and me. We still have the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with us, as surely as Joshua did! Today, we have the blood of Christ that was shed for us and when we accept that blood to cleanse us of our sins, we become joint heirs with Christ in His eternal Kingdom. He also gives 24/7 fellowship with the Holy Spirit to show us the truths of His wisdom. This fellowship and knowledge revealed by the Holy Spirit are given to walk us through the battles we will face as we live in these temporary bodies.

While the ministry of Praise, Inc. began as one to encourage members of local churches in my home area, it has grown to one that encourages hundreds of ministers in churches throughout several nations. He has allowed this ministry to become one of connecting the dots, if you will, of many of His gifted children around the world. During that time, on a personal level, He has blessed my family going in and going out. What He spoke to the children of Israel as they came to occupy the promised land applies to my family and this ministry. *"For the LORD your God has blessed you in all that you have done; He has known your wanderings through this great wilderness. These forty years the LORD your God has been with you; you have not lacked a thing."* Deut 2:7 NAS

Now, in the midst of so much blessing, it is hard to imagine why the Lord would open another door, except to see if His people would be willing to walk through it. In the above passage from Deuteronomy 2:7, He specifically mentions the blessings He has given, and yet He is setting the stage for the Israelites to cross the Jordan River into the land promised to Abraham. He assures them of their future by reminding them of their past. His Word is eternal and is unchanging through the millenniums.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever." Heb 13:8 NAS

Now the Lord has challenged my wife and me to our very core of beliefs. He has set before us an opportunity full of promise, as well as one beset with battles far beyond what we have fought so far. While we have both tasted His goodness and we know His faithfulness, the challenges He presents appear daunting. It is in knowing His faithfulness that we are willing to leave what is so familiar to us, and take up the challenges of greater battles. It is the biggest step He has ever asked us to take, but we are confident of Him being with us at every step along the way. We are equally confident of Him being faithful to what we leave behind.

For years, the ministry of Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) has been a major partner in the work we have been entrusted with. We have spent years working with other ministries but none have been like Voice of the Martyrs to work with. Their willingness to truly partner with others goes far beyond what I have seen in any other ministry. I believe it is because they truly understand the nature of both the spiritual and the temporal battle. To me, that is a very important distinction and one in which I place a lot of trust and confidence. In this partnership, some significant battles have been joined together and significant ministries have been birthed. Today, those outreaches impact literally millions of people in various nations and God has blessed those joint efforts.

In 1968 I was allowed to participate as a combatant in the Vietnam war, and during my tenure there, I observed that combat is better played as a team sport. Fight on your own for very long, and you won't be fighting for long. If you watch military units take an objective, the units interact with one another to assist each other as they advance toward a common objective. They work as a team, providing each other support as they advance. Each unit plays a distinct and necessary role in the accomplishment of the mission. This is the sort of teamwork that has marked the joint efforts of the ministries of Praise, Inc. and VOM.

Now, I believe God has made a way for my wife and me to join Voice of the Martyrs as part of their staff. Prior to joining the team at Voice of the Martyrs, we spent a good many months seeking the Lord's face and the wisdom of a multitude of counselors. We literally looked for the Lord to close the doors, but rather than closing them, He only opened more. So while the battles have not diminished for the work at Praise, Inc., our Lord and King has directed our paths to another place.

I believe that God is not interested in what is in our hands, but rather what is in our hearts. He puts something in our hands to care for during a time here on earth. He has made it clear throughout His Word that this is just a temporary body and we are in a temporary place. We don't take a single temporal thing with us to the next life we have with Him. While the kings of ancient China built thousands of life-size soldiers to guard them in the afterlife and pharaohs placed all sorts of things in their tombs to take with them to the afterlife, God allows only one thing to leave this earth – our spirits. So hanging on to something we have today will mean nothing to Him tomorrow. Today and tomorrow both are His and we have to trust Him with both.

I finally came to feel that stepping aside from my responsibility to be available to the desires of my King would be failing my King. If there is a greater part of the battle where He wishes me to be, then that is where I need to be. If I wish to simply build something to call "my ministry," then that can be gone in a day. Those who think the ministry is around the man fail to see the thousands of lives impacted by the ministry and the fact I have nothing to do with encouraging each and every minister

who is encouraged by your gifts. That is and will remain between you and the minister you partner with. So many of them have so little and yet, they do so much. What a privilege to partner with them in their harvest of eternal dividends. That is not a dividend given by man, but only by God. The smiles on their faces are because you and your ministry partner are known to each other through His grace.

Since He is forever faithful, He doesn't raise us up to simply knock us down. There is no reason for Him to be less faithful to one than He is to another. For years He has prepared another to take up the leadership of Praise, Inc. from one of the most beautiful places on earth. Pastor Dick Shaw, who has served as the Chairman of the Board of Directors for many years and was a friend of the ministry for years before that, has been elected by the Board of Directors to replace me. I believe this will be a good thing for Praise, Inc. Pastor Shaw has traveled with me to several countries over the years and to some of them more than once. He knows and understands the heartbeat of the ministry.

Now, I believe, he will be able to expand the work of the ministry in places like Africa, India, and Central America. Pastor Shaw brings with him years of experience as a senior pastor and will be able to introduce the ministry to many more than I have been able to do. I am grateful for that, and I know that you will continue to work with him in his efforts to bring hope and encouragement to many more suffering ministers around the world. In the months ahead, I would encourage you to do as you have done for me and write to him, encouraging him in the work. I can't tell you how much the letters you have sent to us over the years have meant to my wife and me. They are some of our most precious possessions. Thank you so much for taking the time to write, and please continue to offer your encouragement.

The work of helping churches and local indigenous ministers build viable businesses employing members of their own congregations will continue through World's Treasures. God is allowing us to accomplish things that will help exponentially more Christians in difficult circumstances. We will continue to need your support in this area and ask that you always take a moment to visit us before you do your gift shopping. Remember, the money you spend on a gift can bring more than just one smile!

The only thing that will change within Praise is where minister partnerships are focused. Right now, both Voice of the Martyrs and Praise work together in countries like Cuba, Vietnam, and China. It only adds to confusion for both ministries to operate in the same area doing the same thing while ministers in places like Uganda, Ivory Coast, Honduras, Guatemala, Cambodia, and Russia, to name just a few, go without the necessary help. In the weeks ahead, Voice of the Martyrs will assume the partnerships of ministers in the restricted nations while Praise will handle the partnerships in countries where poverty significantly reduces the effectiveness of

ministers working there.

Please bear with us as we make the changes within the ministry to accommodate the needs of His poorest servants around the world. We count it a blessing to know that Voice of the Martyrs has been so faithful in helping our brethren in closed and restricted nations enabling us to help others in very difficult circumstances. While the program to bring hope to ministers in restricted nations was established by seeing what was happening at Praise, Inc., the program at Voice of the Martyrs in this area is nearly six times greater than our own (VOM maintains nearly 6,000 partnerships around the world today!). Praise God that we have touched His heart by encouraging His servants on a regular basis. We did not simply pray for them, then walk away from them in their need. Pray that He will bless our continuing efforts to develop products and businesses which will bless and encourage His poorest congregations around the world.

Some of you give fixed amounts per month and we have simply divided your gift among those who have needs. That will not change. If there are changes where any portion of your gift is going, you will receive the photos and testimonies of your new partners in ministry. Thank you for your continued support in these areas.

Voice of the Martyrs recently increased their monthly support levels to \$35 a month, and the Praise Board of Directors will be looking at what \$25 bought 15 years ago vs what it is doing today, but at this point there are no immediate changes planned or anticipated.



By Dick Shaw, new Director, Praise, Inc.

I met Ron Warren for the first time when we were in high school. Over the years God has drawn us together in various ways, but particularly through the ministry of Praise, Inc. It has been my privilege to serve as chairman of the board for several years. I have rejoiced to see the ministry grow and be a blessing to so many thousands of people. The Praise Board of Directors has placed its blessings on the move that the Warrens are making to Voice of the Martyrs (VOM). Ron has served on the VOM board in the past, and the work there is an extension of his heart. I am humbled by the request the Praise board has made, asking me to take this position with Praise, Inc. and I have asked my church board and the church itself for their willingness "to share me" with Praise. We will be seeking God's leading very carefully as we chart the future.

I would like to share with you four of

our core values that have helped form the foundation of Praise, Inc. in the past, and I would like to share four large challenges for the immediate future of Praise, Inc.

The first core value is the **compassion of Jesus**. Mark 1:40-42 describes the compassion of Jesus in these words, "A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, 'If you are willing, you can make me clean.' Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!' Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured." (NIV) Imagine being that man. Not only are you suffering from this dreaded disease, but you have been cut off from human touch. The body is dying; the soul is dying as well. You are desperate. Jesus is your last hope. With one spark of faith left, you ask for help. Jesus does not respond with pity. Pity sees, and feels sorry. Jesus responds with compassion that reaches out and touches the untouchable and with words that heal the incurable.

Praise, Inc. seeks to be a champion of the compassion of Jesus. Helping you see people in great need and helping you respond out of compassion, not pity, is a key value for us. The constant appeals for help that we receive call for the compassion of Jesus to be released in our hearts.

The second core value is the **royal law**. Jesus said it was part of the Great Commandment; James uses the expression "royal law" in James 2:8 where he writes, "If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing right." (NIV) We know for sure that it is right to love others as we love ourselves.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus made it clear that our "neighbor" may be the very one who seems the most geographically, racially, culturally, or financially distanced from us. Yet, the royal law, the Great Commandment, calls us to love that person as we would love ourselves; to provide the nurture, care, and acceptance of that person as we would nurture, care, and give acceptance to ourselves as a person created in the image of God and loved by Him. Supporting a national pastor or worker and his family is an extension of the commitment to keep the Great Commandment, to obey the royal law. We are committed to that kind of obedience and to the integrity that is a part of it, both in the way we handle funds and in the kind of accountability we expect from the national leaders we work with, who help us distribute funds to the national pastors you help.

The third core value is **faith that works**. We are saved by faith alone. No effort on our part can effect our salvation.

However, true faith will be demonstrated by action. This is how James expresses it in James 2:14-17, "What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accom-

panied by action, is dead." (NIV)

True faith is not passive. It takes action. It proves itself in acts of kindness. Obviously, faith is much more than good intentions toward others that find feet in taking action, but this concept is so powerful that James uses it to make his point. True faith in Christ finds ways to express action that demonstrates that faith, making a difference in the way people live; coming along side of them, putting faith on display in the most practical ways possible. A changed heart is demonstrated in a changed life.

A fourth core value is the principle of **double honor**. Here is how Paul addresses the issue in 1 Timothy 5:17-18, "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, 'Do not muzzle the ox while it is treading out the grain,' and 'The worker deserves his wages.'"

The point of the text is that those who give time to the work of the church that they could be using to make a living, are worthy of compensation in monetary terms. His quotation from Deuteronomy 25:4 establishes this as a principle based in the Old Testament (also illustrated by the way the physical needs of the priests and Levites were provided for in the sacrificial system), and the second quotation is from the lips of Jesus in Luke 10:7. Either this saying of Jesus was well known, or Luke's gospel was well known (or both); at any rate Paul used this quote from the New Testament context to underscore his point.

Perhaps the best commentary on the Deuteronomy passage is found in 1 Corinthians 9, where Paul uses it to defend his right to receive financial help. While he turned down the right, he defended it with these words in verses 7-10, "Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk? Do I say this merely from a human point of view? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? For it is written in the Law of Moses: 'Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.' Is it about oxen that God is concerned? Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because when the ploughman ploughs and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest." (NIV)

Essentially, we have the responsibility before God to be sure that double honor is dispensed and expressed. Our goal is to come alongside congregations in the world's poorest countries and help them obey what God has commanded. We are not just helping pastors and their families, we are helping the world's poorest people obey what God has commanded. If we just come with money, we are not being good servants. We also come with the mutual commitment of prayer, with respect, and a commitment to protect personal dignity, not to make these precious servants of Christ dependent upon foreign wealth, but to give them the encouragement of love and sharing.

These are four values that have shaped

the history of Praise, Inc. and we remain committed to them in the future.

Speaking of the future, here are four large challenges before us:

First, we are committed to efficiency for the sake of the Kingdom. Ron and I came to the same conclusion separately that it would be more efficient for Praise not to be working in countries where VOM is well established so that we do not duplicate the precious resources of the Kingdom that God has provided to us as a trust.

Essentially this will mean that a good number of our pastors will transfer to the administrative responsibility of VOM. We're not sure how all the details of this will be worked out, but some of you will be affected. I will personally be affected because my wife and I support a pastor in China. Please pray with us as we make this important transition.

Next, we are eager to help pastors in areas where we don't have a strong network of national leaders established. Places like Eastern Europe, Central America, India, and many nations in Africa have hundreds of pastors who need help. We want to strengthen existing support networks in these regions and develop new networks as well. Naturally, this means finding more people whose hearts are touched by God's Spirit, and who share our core values, to come alongside these faithful servants with a monthly commitment to help them.

The third challenge is the relocation of our offices. Praise, Inc. will be looking for the most suitable location and arrangement possible. Because the present office building will be sold, it is necessary that we find just the right location for our office space. A Caldwell, Idaho location would be ideal, but we are open to consider any option the Lord might provide. Would you please pray for God's provision for this practical need?

Finally, since you are part of the Praise family, I do not hesitate to share with you that we are seeking God's help with our general fund in the face of significant need. Giving to the general fund of any ministry may not be as exciting as giving to a special project, but it supports the base and helps guarantee the ability of the ministry to do its God-given work. Thank you for praying with us about these challenges.

I look forward to getting to know you. If Praise, Inc. can minister to your church, please let me know. If you would like more information about any of our ministries, please ask us. If you would like me to come to your church, Sunday School Class, Home Bible Study Group, or other fellowship group, and share our Indigenous Ministers Assistance Program (IMAP), please call or write.

Joyfully in Christ,

Dick Shaw

Memories

By Trinia Warren

Pastor Shaw thought it would be a nice idea to share with our readers an overview of the ministry of Praise, Inc. from its inception until now. Because Ron is in China at the moment, I was asked to write this biography of Praise from my perspective.

I got out some old pictures to share some of the memories of the past, such as those who served on the original board, pictures of trips overseas with medical teams and teaching teams, pictures of those who worked on building the studio and office buildings, and Willard Waggoner, Tosh Suaratarana, Peter Cao, and Jose Hallowatay recording the Bible in our studio. There are so many memories and so many faces, all the people who have been apart of this ministry and part of our lives. I found myself sitting with all these pictures surrounding me and tears streaming down my face. It would take several books to show all the people and share all the stories of this ministry.

This ministry was founded on seeing a need and reaching out to help, helping the hands of God's people share their talents and their resources to help others. What an incredible blessing it has been for our family to be a small part of this ministry.

Praise, Inc. was founded in 1979. It was originally started to sponsor non-ticketed Christian concerts. That is where the name "Praise" came from. Praise, Inc. brought well-known Christian artists to our area and offered no-fee concerts.

A few years later Praise embarked on producing the Bible on tape at the lowest possible market price. This was not an easy endeavor, as it required producing our own recordings. That entailed getting our own reader, equipment, and studio, all which God miraculously provided. Tapes were being sent out by the thousands by volunteers. These recordings are now available on DVD and CD.

We not only produced the Bible on tape in English, but we also made our studio available for readers of other languages. We completed recordings in Thai, Vietnamese, and Spanish. Because of our relationship with Tosh Suaratarana and Peter Cao, our world was enlarged. They introduced us to the needs of our brothers and sisters in other countries. These dear ones lived in much less fortunate circumstances than ours. And as in times past, the need was presented, and helping hands reached out to meet the need. So was birthed the ministry of "Missions of Praise."

The ministry has grown considerably since those early years. As God revealed the needs, those that have been a part of this ministry

have reached out to help. There are those who sponsor indigenous ministers and their families with monthly support. Many gave to orphanages in Mexico, Zambia, Burma, and Nepal. There were those who sacrificed their time and talents and resources to go on medical teams to third world countries, and then there were those of you who chose to go and teach Bible students in Communist countries in difficult settings. Then there were those of you who faithfully gave to special funds like the Raven Fund to help with emergency needs, or digging wells in Cuba, or providing bikes or horses to pastors. The list goes on and on.

As I reflected on the years of this ministry, I realized Praise had many faces, faces like your own, faces of those of you who have given your time, finances, talents, and prayers. Because of you, countless lives have been touched with God's love. The faces of nations have even been altered. One by one we have been making a difference, as we work together.

I have seen God's hand rest on this ministry and provide in ways that have left me in total wonderment of His love and faithfulness for His people. In serving in the ministry of Praise, Inc. God has trained Ron in the area of foreign missions. As in times past, God revealed a need. Voice of the Martyrs has asked him to oversee their foreign missions. So, we are leaving Idaho to move to Oklahoma. With mixed emotions, we leave our beloved Idaho and Praise. We will be taking a few people with us to keep us company. Steve and Carrie Durham will be joining us. Steve will be overseeing the ministry in China and North Korea for Voice of the Martyrs. Steve has worked with Praise in heading up **World's Treasures**. Anne Wallace will be also joining us. Anne will take on the job of being Ron's personal assistant. She has worked at our office at Praise doing whatever task we have asked her to do, including setting up this newsletter. Pastor Rick Boswell and his wife Lynda will also be joining us. Pastor Boswell will be in charge of the PSP program for Voice of the Martyrs. Pastor Boswell served on our board for several years.

The new director of Praise, Inc. was unanimously elected by the Praise board. That person, as you have already read, is Pastor Dick Shaw and his wife Marilyn. I always include the wife, being one myself. I know it takes both a husband and wife to make a ministry team. Ron and I have total confidence in them, that they will serve the ministry well. Pastor Shaw has served on the Board of Praise for many years. He has a heart for this ministry and knows its heart as well as anyone. He is a man of integrity and vision. He hears God's voice, and will lead this ministry in the direction that God wants it to go, seeing the need and reaching out to meet it.

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