

CE NewsNotes



spring 2014 | Vol 30

The Ministry and Activities of **CHRISTIAN EDITION**, A Men's Chorus

Director's Message

— Calvin Knipschild



Did You Activate Your Pacemaker Today?

Two weeks ago I was admitted to the hospital and received what the doctors told me was a necessary, lifesaving operation; they inserted a pacemaker / implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD) in my chest. It automatically monitors my heart twenty-four hours a day and when it goes out of rhythm, my heart automatically receives a small electrical shock to put it back in sync. The pacemaker is so subtle that I don't even notice it.

This device also has a second and more serious function: to prevent what the doctor called "sudden death syndrome." This is when the heart stops beating, and if not electrically shocked quickly, the result is fatal. What is fascinating to me is that the device in my chest is only about two inches in diameter. The doctor says it can deliver a shock that will knock me flat on my back, but will re-start my heart and save my life.

Isn't it amazing how far medicine has come in protecting the

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Pianist Michael Spencer changes roles and directs the a capella song "Holy Ground" at the Los Alamitos SDA Church.

Shoes to Fill

— Jonathan Davidson

Calvin Knipschild is more than a director, he is a miracle worker.

Nothing else could explain how we, the men of Christian Edition, are able to sing as we do. Less than a handful of us have actually taken voice lessons. Others, including myself, wouldn't be able to tell you if a given note was a *B* or an *F* or a *G*♯.

With hard work, a lot of repetition, a dash of humor, and a bottomless well of patience, Calvin pulls from us our absolute best. And, when our best gets a much-appreciated boost from the Holy Spirit, it comes out sounding very good. Indeed, Calvin's ability to make us sound professional displays

an immense talent for directing.

So, I can only imagine the trepidation of the four men who were asked to fill Calvin's particularly large shoes during January's concert weekend.

We are fortunate to have some very talented musicians in Christian Edition and, when Calvin couldn't attend our January concerts due to some health issues, we turned to them for help. First tenors Paul Wilcox and Henry Murray, second tenor Russ Nelson and pianist Michael Spencer answered the call with only two rehearsal weekends to prepare.

Trying to direct the whole group was particularly difficult for the three singers because a singer worries only about his own part, not what the other parts are doing. As a director, he suddenly must concern himself

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Journey to Northern California

— Gary Gifford

At various times of the day on Friday, February 21, 2014, members of Christian Edition (CE), employing a range of transportation options including autos, and private and commercial aircraft, traveled the 400 to 450 miles from their homes in the greater Los Angeles area to the Holiday Inn Express Hotel and Suites in Lodi, California.

The purpose for the journey was to lead the Fairfield Community SDA, the Lodi Fairmont SDA and the Lodi Zion Reformed Church congregations in meaningful worship experiences using our God-given and God-blessed ministry resources – music, prayer, and the spoken word.

Our director, Calvin Knipschild, has had some health situations recently that have kept him from conducting CE for several months, so we were all pleased to see him at the hotel in Lodi as we arrived Friday evening. After the long drive, it was good to just relax and catch up on recent events. We have such good fun together, even when we are not singing. The camaraderie in CE is wonderful and a real blessing.

Sabbath morning, the twenty-second of February, dawned in radiant beauty. A bit before 9:00 A.M. we boarded our modes of transportation, left Lodi, and began the one-hour, 46-mile journey to the Fairfield Community SDA Church. As we drove up, the church looked inviting. As we entered, some of the church members remembered that we had been there before and said that they were “really looking forward to the worship service we would have with them today.”

At about 11:00 A.M., we entered the sanctuary and made our way to the pews at the front left of the audience. The pastor and other local members made announce-



The author's parents are very loyal to CE. So they came to the Fairfield, and both Lodi services. Gayle Craig asked if she could take a picture of the two senior Giffords and Gary. The unique thing about the picture that you may not know is that Mr. Gifford will be 95 in September and his wife will be 94 next January. Mr. Gifford says at 94 he is not getting older but he is becoming “more mature.” They have celebrated their seventy-second wedding anniversary and are continuing their senior years together in their single-family home in Galt, still independent and still in love with each other and with God. They enjoy listening to CE on CDs and in person every chance they get. So our three presentations this weekend were a real blessing to them as well.

ments, prayed, led the church in congregational hymns, and had an impressive recognition occasion for student members who had achieved outstanding levels of academic excellence. Financial remuneration was included as a part of the recognition. The pastor introduced Calvin and CE and we moved from the audience's left to the platform steps where we broke into song with our first worship service number, “Great is the Lord.” There were enthusiastic “Amen,” “Hallelujah,” and “Praise God” exclamations during and at the conclusion of each musical number and verbal presentation.

As the service came to an end, the pastor had the benediction and included a request for God to bless the food of our potluck in the fellowship hall. We exited the sanctuary down the center aisle, which allowed us to have time to greet

and chat with the worshipers as they exited the sanctuary. Many stopped at the CE table on their way to the potluck and picked up Michael Spencer's brand-new piano solo CD (just one week since duplication) with CE singing accompaniment. The CD is entitled *Simple Hope*, and it is simply beautiful. Of course, many of our other CDs were also

acquired by the congregation members, but Michael's was very much in demand. Then we went into the fellowship hall and found our food already dished up, prayed for, and ready to eat. So we did, and it was wonderful.

After the potluck we journeyed the 46 miles from Fairfield to our Lodi hotel or directly to the Fairmont SDA Church in anticipation of our worship service with them at 5:00 P.M.

Lodi has been one of CE's favorite spots over the years and we have been back many times. Beginning

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the service with the inimitable “Jesus Is Joy,” and ending with the song proclaiming the fact that “Jesus Saves,” God added what heaven has to offer so that a number of those in attendance commented on the thoughtful, meditative, and worshipful end to their week and Sabbath our program had provided. A number from CE who had friends and/or family lingered long to chat. We helped provide a worshipful melodic conclusion to a memorable Sabbath for many who attended.

Speaking personally, Lodi is dear to my own heart. I attended academy there. My wife’s grandfather, George Loewen, was pastor of the German-speaking Hilborn SDA Church which became the current Fairmont SDA Church, built while my wife’s uncle, Edward Koenig,

was the pastor. And best of all, my wife and I were married in the Fairmont church by Uncle Ed. So, standing at the front of the church to sing brought back memories of standing in the same place forty-six years ago as my bride came down the center aisle. Yes, Lodi is a favorite place.

Sunday morning we arose in time to eat, check out, and journey 3.3 miles so that we might arrive at the Zion Reformed Church in Lodi by 9:00 A.M., in anticipation of our 10:00 A.M. worship appointment with their church family and guests. After the service had begun, and it was nearing the time when the pastor would introduce CE, he said, in kind of a joking way, “With guests here to lead us in our music-filled worship hour, I didn’t want any of

you parishioners wondering what your pastor did all week since he didn’t have to prepare a sermon. So here are a few thoughts on how music, according to the Bible, is an integral and most appropriate part of worship and gospel presentation.”

Then in a most elegant and Biblical manner, he proceeded to roll out a beautiful homily and a flawless introduction to the musical worship we were about to present. God did a very good thing in the entire church service and both we in CE and the congregation knew it. After a great potluck which the church provided, we bid a fond farewell to our hosts and each other, and then headed home to our individual places of abode. It was a God-blessed journey, and we look forward to North Carolina in March! ●

MEET THE NEW MEMBER

Dennis Shogren



Starting when I was about ten years old, I accompanied my dad, an outstanding tenor, on the piano

at all the churches within half-a-day’s drive of Eugene, Oregon. Or at least that’s what it seemed like back then! I can still hear those wonderful melodies telling the story of a Savior who loves us beyond measure and wants us with him forever! The prayerful “Fill My Cup Lord,” the beautifully lyrical “I Walked Today Where Jesus Walked,” and the soul stirring “The Holy City” have never left me. I didn’t learn the gospel

from preachers; I learned the gospel from hearing my dad sing “The Wonder of It All,” “I’d Rather Have Jesus,” and “How Great Thou Art.” Thank you, Dad; I still love to hear you sing about Jesus!

Through the years I’ve done a lot of singing in church. I’ve sung at a wedding (my own) and at funerals; I’ve also sung for special music at evangelistic meetings, prayer meetings, Sabbath Schools, and Sabbath worships and vespers. I’ve sung solos and duets, with mixed groups, worship teams and choirs, and then with my first men’s chorus about fifteen years ago.

It was after a funeral where I sang “The Lord’s Prayer,” that my long-time friend Bruce Powers told me that Christian Edition was looking for a second tenor. Russ and Paulette Nelson, with whom I had sung in a praise team ten years ago,

also encouraged me to join. I knew I’d love the singing! It’s even more fun to sing for Calvin than it is to watch him direct from the audience — and that’s saying something! But the prayer ministry and the wonderful extended Christian Edition family that make it all come together has been an unexpected bonus.

Finally, this month will mark thirty-eight years of marriage to my wonderful wife, Marie. (Yes, even though I sang to her at our wedding!) She still smiles when I play at home, even after raising two wonderful children into awesome adults, living in seven states and in too many homes to count as career and opportunity knocked. Thank you, Marie, for standing with me, even when the music was drowned out. You are amazing! And thank you for going with me on this journey with Christian Edition. ●

Shoes to Fill

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with cueing all four sections while working in sync with the pianist. We singers complain about memorizing one part, often forgetting that Calvin memorizes four, works with Michael at the piano and adds interpretation and dynamics. As I said before, he's a miracle worker.

Fortunately, Paul, Henry, Russ and Michael have all directed groups in the past. But in their other groups, they had real talent to work with. Christian Edition would be both challenging and interesting.

There was an additional challenge. As anyone who has played an instrument or has sung for multiple groups knows, every director is different. Each interprets timing and rhythm in his or her own unique way, not to mention the variations in gestures like cutoffs and crescendos. As a result, while the directors were learning how to keep track of four parts at the same time, the singers also had to adapt to four new directing styles.

Despite all the challenges, rehearsals went surprisingly well. Michael directed our only *a cappella* number and the other directors split up the rest of the program. The singers, Paul, Henry and Russ, had some difficulty directing all four parts, but after the two rehearsal weekends most of the kinks had been ironed out and the directors felt more or less secure with their songs.

The true test came at the Garden Grove Church.

We took our places and Russ Nelson, brimming with energy, led us through our opening song. As usual, the joy of worshipping our Lord crowded out such trivial concerns as who was directing, and we gave ourselves over to the music and



the power of the beautiful lyrics.

and better. What an honor to have had this opportunity.”

In answer to the same question, Paul Wilcox said: “I believe I would have enjoyed it had I not been so nervous. If I practiced directing every day for twenty years I still wouldn't be able to do what Calvin does.”

Among the directors at the Garden Grove service were first tenor, Henry Murray (top), second tenor, Russ Nelson (left) and first tenor, Paul Wilcox.

Russ Nelson said: “It was a new perspective to stand in that spot. After directing groups all my life, I joined Christian Edition because it was nice to just sing and let someone else wave his arms. But to get a chance to direct Christian Edition was

enormously fun. The guys were so responsive to my directing, which made it a true pleasure.”

Henry Murray said: “When I received the call from Michael that I was on the list to be one of the directors for the group during Calvin's absence for our concert weekend, my mind suddenly screamed, No-o-o-o! No way! Then I caught myself, and quickly pulled myself together. I reasoned: this is easy, I know the songs, I know the parts and their entrances, and I've been conducting other groups for years so this should not be such a challenge. But I was wrong.

“When the moment to rehearse for the concerts came I was terrified, intimidated, and thoroughly uncomfortable. I

The directors did a fantastic job, each giving our music a fresh interpretation. Any mistakes were so subtle that I doubt the audience even noticed; once again God proved that when we give Him our best, He blesses the effort.

Our vespers program at the Los Alamitos Church went even more smoothly. Indeed, we missed Calvin and Calvin hated being unable to stand before his friends, but we had a wonderful time and we hope that those in attendance were blessed.

When asked what directing Christian Edition was like, Michael Spencer said: “It was like having the keys to the Lexus. For years I have been inspired by the vocals of the men of Christian Edition as I hear them from the piano. To stand before them was entirely different

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nearly panicked because I realized I couldn't be Calvin for the men and I was forgetting some of the entrances of each part. It was then that I realized we had a tremendous job to do. But this was the Lord's work. We needed to rise to the occasion and do what was required. So I asked the Lord to direct the group through me, if it pleased Him, so we could rightly represent our Savior with the message in songs.

"On the day of the concerts, I realized the magnitude of my responsibility. I was now standing in Calvin's stead rather than in my comfortable spot among the other singers. Because the work of the Lord must go on, I whispered a prayer in my

heart, relied on the Lord to lead, and relied on the men to do their parts as they knew them. I would simply complete the triangle in assuming my new position as a 'stand-in director' and let the Holy Spirit lead.

"My fears were gone, I was set free, my comfort level surfaced and with the singing men's confidence it was an experience filled with joy and worship. For the first time I

Los Alamitos Pastor Ruben Escalante joined with Christian Edition to sing "Gentle Like You." Ruben was a first tenor with CE for many years during the late 90s.



got to hear what Calvin so often spoke of. What a blessing it is to stand before this group of men as they sing about their Savior while being touched with their spirit-filled melodious tones, song after song. Truly, in God, all things are possible." ●

Budding artist Peter Gallagher drew a picture during the evening concert of Michael Spencer aka "the piano guy" and presented it to him following the concert.



DIRECTOR

Calvin Knipschild

ACCOMPANIST

Michael Spencer

First Tenors

Henry Murray
Rob Peterson
Paul Wilcox

Baritones

Gary Gifford
Bruce Powers
John Reader
Keith Smith
Craig Vendouris

Second Tenors

Fred Miller
Russ Nelson
Dick Sample
Dennis Shogren
Mickey Smith

Basses

Clarence Brummett
Jonathan Davidson
Leonard Fletcher
Ken Holland
Gary Mattison
Patrick Wolfe

Director's Message

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physical body as well as it does? It makes me wonder if our spiritual lives are protected as well. Do we have a spiritual pacemaker / defibrillator in our lives? Christ has promised to watch over us twenty-four hours a day, to monitor our every step, and to put us back in sync when we fall out of rhythm with Him. But first He has to be installed in our lives, and that, my friend, is a daily operation. Christ

is always there as our defibrillator to start our lives over when we feel we are spiritually dead. He may use people or circumstances to knock us flat on our backs; but it is when we are on our backs that we have to look up, get up, and start over.

Take time every morning to activate your "spiritual pacemaker." Then you can walk through each day with the confidence that when things get messed up, Christ is already installed and is doing what is needed to keep you safe and secure. ●

**CHRISTIAN
EDITION**
A MEN'S CHORUS

Calendar

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CONCERT TIMES OR LOCATIONS MAY CHANGE. PLEASE CALL AHEAD TO CONFIRM A CONCERT BEFORE TRAVELING LONG DISTANCES. (SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST HAS BEEN ABBREVIATED TO SDA.)

April

- 11 Friday 7:00 P.M. **Rehearsal**
- 12 Saturday 3:00 P.M. **Rehearsal**
- 25 Friday 7:00 P.M. **Rehearsal**
- 26 Saturday 11:00 A.M. **Concert**
Porterville SDA Church
Hwy 65 and Linda Vista Avenue
Porterville, CA 93257
(559) 784-6031
- 26 Saturday 6:45 P.M. **Concert**
Sierra Hills
2500 W. Henderson Avenue
Porterville, CA 93257
(559) 788-0311
- 27 Sunday 11:00 A.M. **Concert**
Pleasant Valley Chapel
33350 Globe Drive
Springville, CA 93265
(559) 539-3396

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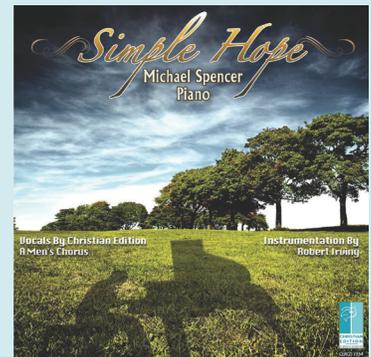
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May

- 2 Friday 7:00 P.M. **Rehearsal**
- 3 Saturday 3:00 P.M. **Rehearsal**
- 16 Friday 7:00 P.M. **Rehearsal**
- 17 Saturday 11:00 A.M. **Concert**
University SDA Church
1135 W. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90037-1809
(323) 766-9889
- 17 Saturday TBD **Concert Pending**

June

- 13 Friday 7:00 P.M. **Rehearsal**
- 14 Saturday 3:00 P.M. **Rehearsal**
- 28 Saturday 11:00 A.M. **Concert**
Mt. View Central SDA Church
1425 Springer Road
Mt. View, CA 94040
(650) 967-2189
- 28 Saturday 7:30 P.M. **Concert**
Mt. Hermon Christian
Conference Center
37 Conference Drive
Felton, CA 95018
(888) 642-2677
- 29 Sunday 11:00 A.M. **Concert**
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