



# *By Our Love*

On the Easter Sunday evening of April 5th, 2015, NBC TV Network premiered the 12-week series, "A.D. The Bible Continues." This dramatic series was meant to portray the journey of the first followers of Jesus in the early years of Christianity. The book of Acts was the main background for this television series.

One of the songs chosen to be part of the soundtrack of the series "A.D. The Bible Continues" was the rendition "For King and Country" of the song "By Our Love", known as well as, "They'll know We are Christians by our Love". The Executive Producer of "A.D. The Bible Continues", Roma Downey said, "By Our Love" reminds us that it is through love that Jesus changed the world. ... we rejoice in how God brought His compassion for all humanity and launched a revolution of love that has transformed the lives of generations. This Easter on NBC, A.D. will tell that story again to the entire world."

The lyrics of By Our Love go,

We are one in the Spirit  
We are one in the Lord  
We are one in the Spirit  
We are one in the Lord  
And we pray that all unity will one day be restored  
And they'll know we are Christians by our love by our love  
Yes they'll know we are Christians by our love

We will walk with each other  
We will walk hand in hand  
We will walk with each other  
We will walk hand in hand  
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land  
And they'll know we are Christians by our love by our love

Yes they'll know we are Christians by our love

They'll know us by our love

They'll know us by our love

Interesting that the "By Our Love" was composed by the catholic priest Peter Scholtes, when he was serving on the South Side of Chicago in the 1960s. In the late 60s, many riots took place in Chicago and around the United States surrounding the Democratic National Convention. The Vietnam War and demands for civil rights were both at tipping points. At the time Peter Scholtes was leading a youth choir out of the church basement, and was looking for an appropriate song for a series of interracial events. When he couldn't find an appropriate song, he wrote the now-famous hymn in a single day based on Jesus' words in John 13:35. Do you know what this Bible verse talks about? Well, with those around you, read John 13:35, and discuss Jesus' plan for people getting to know Him.

### **Countdown '2 Minutes - Read: John 13:35**

Love is to be the distinguishing mark of Christ's followers. All people will know that they are Jesus' disciples if, and only if, they love one another. Therefore, the community of Christ's followers, the church, must be a community of love. Love is, and should be, the connection between you and God, and with you and those around you! Jesus said, "So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." (John 13:34-35 NLT).

We should expect no less than a loving community from the community that was born of the loving relationship and fellowship of the three co-equal Persons of the Godhead. We must keep in mind that the Church came into existence because of the dance of love by the Father, Son, and Spirit. Therefore, the Church is an expression of love, by love, for love! Don't miss the point, the church exists for love. We are here because of God's love for us, and we gather and serve out of love for Him and others. The Church exists for love. Nothing else. From our love for God, from our love for our fellow brothers and sisters, from our love for those who don't yet know the love of our God, is that the church ministers to and serves the world.

Can you imagine how the world would be impacted if the church were able to live out the loving nature that God has designed for His body? Take some time now to discuss with those around you, how different from today's reality the world would look, if the church had fully expressed the love mission bestowed upon her by God?

### **Countdown 3' Minutes - How different from today's reality would the world look if the church had fully expressed the love mission bestowed upon her by God?**

The world would be completely different if we were able to unleash the power that God has bestowed upon the church, the power of love. This same power brought the body of Christ into existence, and this love will take us home. Love has created us. Love has redeemed us. Love will take us home. I may boldly affirm that if we, the community of Christ were able to reflect God's love in a more clear, tangible, intentional and powerful way, we wouldn't be here anymore. We would be experiencing eternal life with God in a new Earth that God is so eager to provide.

One of my favourite authors, describes the power of love in the following way, "If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one." Ellen G. White

The world is sick and tired of hearing about God's love. The world is screaming to see it, to experience it. The world must see and know God.

"No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and His love is brought to full expression in us." 1 John 4:12 NLT

How can we make God known to the world? How can we make God's love a reality for those around us? How can we live out what God had in mind for the body of Christ. How can we express the divine love to others? Take time right now, and share your thoughts with those around you!

### **Countdown 3' Minutes - How can we make God's love a reality for those around us?**

I wish I could hear your thoughts, and more than that, I pray we can implement your thoughts and ideas. I pray that we will take the time to make plans for the love of God to be a reality in our community, in our family, in our workplace, in our schools and universities - so wherever we are, God's love is expressed there.

"What God the Father considers to be pure and genuine religion is this: to take care of orphans and widows in their suffering and to keep oneself from being corrupted by the world." James 1:27 TEV

One of the ways I thought about love being a reality around us was making our faith community a community of inclusion. The church has long been understood, and sometimes has acted, as a community of exclusion, where those who don't look like us, who don't believe like us or behave like us, are judged and discriminated against by us. I can tell you, exclusion hurts, and doesn't

come from love. Only love can heal the wounds of exclusion and promote inclusion. Only love can help with segregation. You see, as an expression, or even as a result of exclusion, we have experienced, and somehow promoted segregation - a system that keeps different groups separate from each other. Don't get me wrong, there is no problem with having different groups of people connected by affinity - we just like to spend time with those who are similar to us. The problem is when we judge and exclude people because they are not similar to us, when we allow the differences to keep us apart. Segregation is not an expression of love, and only love can build bridges between the differences that take us aside. Only love can help you and I love our brother and sister more than we love our own preferences and world.

Some, in the name of love, talk about integration. Integration may be a long way and a major step from exclusion or even segregation. But integration is not yet the full expression of a community of love, a community of inclusion, where we are truly known and know others, loved and love others, and served and serve others.

"All people will know that you are my followers if you love each other." John 13:35 ICB

Let's be the Church - Loving and Serving.