**CHANCELLOR, ROYAL D. BLUE, GRADUATES TO GLORY.**

*(August 4, 1926 – Aug. 22, 2021)*

Dr. Royal Blue, whom God used to found the Northern California Bible Institute (now known as Shasta Bible College & Graduate School), peacefully transitioned to heaven, according to his wife, Linda, and family, *“with a smile on his face.”* God called His faithful servant home on Sunday, August 22, 2021, shortly after his 95th birthday, following nearly 60 years of ministry in Shasta County. Throughout his various ministries Pastor Blue was quick to emphasize that his many accomplishments were due to God’s unique blessing on his life and ministry. He was blessed not only with a shepherd’s heart, but also with the ability to inspire and excite those around him to accomplish great things for God. As a man of faith, he knew what it was to trust God to provide whatever it took to meet ministry needs. Experience had taught him *“when money is no object, faith is no factor”* and that Divine provision was God’s way of bringing glory to Himself. He often said that credit for what was accomplished under his leadership went to those whose gifts and abilities were precisely what was needed to execute the plans and projects God laid on his heart. In his mind he was merely the leader of the team God provided. In this way he modeled what the Apostle Peter teaches us in **1 Peter 4:10:** *“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.”*  As he neared the end of his life, I believe Pastor Blue could rightly echo the words of the Apostle Paul in **2 Tim.4: 7-8:** *“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Finally there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day, and not to me only but to all who have loved His appearing”*

The multi-ministry legacy he leaves behind includes the establishment and construction of North Valley Baptist Church on a 10 acre campus with 77,000 sq. ft. under roof, including a worship center, educational facilities, a youth center honoring Precious Moments artist, Sammy Butcher (who professed faith in Christ under Pastor Blue’s ministry), a full size gymnasium, athletic field, maintenance barn and Christian School facilities. He also facilitated the founding and construction of The Good News Rescue Mission, established KVIP Christian Radio (now expanded to the Pacific Cascade Communications Corporation), developed Vision Valley Youth Camp, Lassen Pines Christian Camp (with Don Lynn and Gordon Luff), and in response to the need to equip Christian leaders, began what is now Shasta Bible College & Graduate School. His fingerprints are on multiple other churches and ministries throughout the north state. Pastor Blue’s Biblical moral values and conservative political views still permeate Shasta County and beyond. He was never reluctant to stand for righteousness. His military service, his love for America and his patriotism, endeared him to veterans and their organizations throughout the area and beyond. His passion for God and country was exemplified by North Valley Baptist’s musical touring group called ***“Freedom’s Song,”*** which performed in churches and at special events throughout most of the United States.

Our beloved "Pastor Blue," was known to thousands across the north state and in fundamental/evangelical churches throughout the nation and in many parts of the world. He moved to Redding from Southern California after being invited to speak at a youth rally. Following that visit God led him to start his own church. His first service was held on July 7th of 1962 at the Shasta Christian Youth Center. But there’s an earlier phase of Royal Blue’s ministry of which many may be unaware.

Prior to arriving in Redding, Pastor Blue built a legendary youth ministry at the First Baptist Church of Van Nuys under senior pastor, Dr. Porter Barrington, who convinced him that he could be a great youth pastor. Royal had come from Indiana to BIOLA and had little or no experience in youth ministry. But, as it turned out, Dr. Barrington was right! Together, due to their leadership and organizational skills, Bible teaching and effective evangelistic outreach, Van Nuys Baptist attracted hundreds and later thousands of growing families during the 1950’s and 60’s. At the time, the population in the San Fernando Valley, northwest of Los Angeles, was rapidly expanding and the church’s mission motto, *"The Church with a Vision,"* encapsulated the kind of church that was needed. Consequently thousands came to faith in Jesus Christ during that time. Subsequently, Pastor Blue’s passion for evangelism and discipleship expanded far beyond the church. He became a popular speaker at Youth for Christ Rallies and other events.

Pastor Blue was also mentored by Dr. J. Vernon McGee, Senior Pastor at Church of the Open Door in downtown Los Angeles where as many as four to five thousand teenagers from the greater Los Angeles area would gather on Saturday nights for the weekly Youth For Christ Rally. Dr. McGee’s popular *Thru the Bible Radio* ministry was and still is heard across the nation and in many parts of the world. Because of their close relationship, Dr. McGee requested that Pastor Blue speak at his memorial service. Both Dr. McGee and Dr. Barrington were to Royal Blue what Paul was to Timothy. He was their son in the ministry, he was their Timothy.

During his ministry at Van Nuys Baptist, Pastor Blue also played a strategic role in developing the ministry of Campus Crusade (now CRU) on the UCLA campus. He impacted the life of UCLA’s All-American football player, Don Moomow, who later in the early 1970's became Ronald Reagan's pastor at Bel Air Presbyterian Church. And it was through Royal’s ministry that Los. Angeles Ram's and Baltimore Colt's celebrated linebacker, Don Shinnick (who also played for UCLA) came to faith in Jesus Christ, and went on to have a powerful testimony for Christ in the NFL. His advice and leadership played a strategic role in the development of Arrow Pines Youth Camp ministry on the shores of Lake Arrowhead as well. During Royal’s Southern California ministry days he was also widely known for his outstanding softball pitching ability. Since Pastor Blue was blessed with unusually long arms which allowed him to deliver really deceptive pitches, he led the First Baptist Van Nuys’ Softball team to numerous victorious seasons.

Following the retirement of Dr. Barrington for health reasons, First Baptist Van Nuys called Dr. Harold L. Fickett, Jr. as Senior Pastor. With the arrival of new leadership, Pastor Blue felt it was in the best interest of the church to follow God's leading and accept the challenge of establishing a rural outreach in Northern California. Dr. Fickett asked him to stay. Dr. Sam Sutherland, then Dean of BIOLA, told him that moving to Shasta County was a terrible idea and offered him a position as Dean of Students. But Royal was confident God was calling him to shepherd the small group in Redding, some of whom had moved north from Van Nuys. After moving his family to Shasta County, Royal initiated the rural outreach God had laid on his heart. Out of his small but growing church with the ministry motto *“A Church of Active Faith,”* Sunday Schools, Vacation Bible Schools and other ministries were begun throughout the rural north state area, with North Valley Baptist as the as the hub. At one point the church grew to nearly three thousand. As people were attracted to these ministries, small churches began to form and the need for pastoral leadership became evident. Youth pastors, Christian Education specialists and men who could preach and teach God's Word were desperately needed.

As news of God’s blessing on Pastor Blue and North Valley Baptist Church spread, he was invited to speak at Multnomah School of the Bible for their Spiritual Life Conference. While there Pastor Blue met with Multnomah's president, Dr. Willard Aldrich and well known Bible teacher, Dr. John G. Mitchell, and proposed establishing a Bible College extension in Redding. Drs. Aldrich and Mitchell were receptive to the idea and the Northern California Bible Institute became a reality with Pastor Royal Blue as its first President. After three years as a growing Multnomah extension, NCBI became independent in 1973. The following local Bible teaching pastors signed the original Articles of Incorporation: Cliff Farnsworth, J. Lynn Pace, Samuel Post, Lyndell Kuns, Los Lowe, David McMartin and Royal D. Blue. The institution became known as Shasta Bible College in 1984 and then as Shasta Bible College & Graduate School in 2002.

The impact and influence of Pastor Royal D. Blue was enormous. He said at the age of 90, *“I want to be active as long as God gives me strength.”* And that’s exactly what he did. May God grant Shasta Bible College & Graduate School, its faculty, students and alumni, the commitment to follow Pastor Blue’s example and carry on his legacy.

*Dr. David Nicholas, President*

Shasta Bible College & Graduate School