



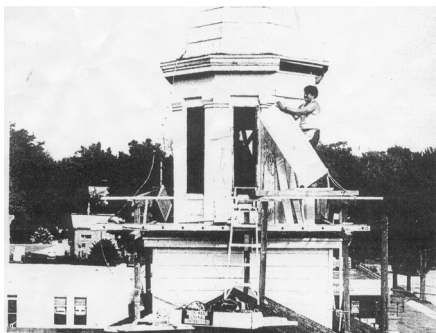
THE HUMBLEHEART MESSENGER

Contending For The
Christian Faith
(Jude 1:3)



2024

"SAY IT IN A SONG"



Rick Maas removes a wooden vent from the south side of the First Baptist Church steeple. Maas is restoring the steeple of the landmark downtown church.

Years ago I remember listening to a song by the late Jim Croce, *"I'll Have To Say I Love You In a Song."* Although it is a simple song with a simple message it spoke to me personally because I used to struggle with finding the right words to express myself. That's probably why I started writing words for songs or even a few poems and over time it seemed natural.

I was blessed with opportunities to sing, play drums and guitar in various local bands. It was fun and I learned a lot of different songs. I loved music and would dabble with writing some songs when I found the time. As a building contractor life was busy with work and a family. Then everything changed when I found the real Jesus Christ while working on a church steeple.

Church Steeple Restored

by Roger Coda

There's a lot of building restoration activity underway at the First Baptist Church, but it's not happening inside the walls of the landmark South Lake Street church.

It's on the roof.

The distinctive steeple, positioned above the main church entrance, is being carefully restored by veteran contractor Rick Maas. The custom-built scaffolding, wrapped around the steeple, has become a familiar sight on South Lake Street during the past two weeks, attracting plenty of interest from passersby.

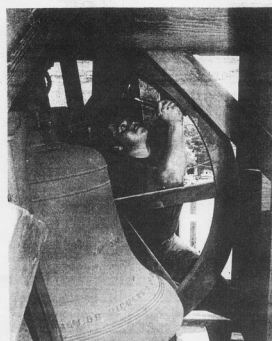
Initially, the church had planned to paint the steeple. However, closer examination revealed a strong need for an extensive repair project. The church was dedicated in 1960, meaning that the steeple has survived 126 brisk North East winters.

Instead of covering the eight-sided steeple with vinyl aluminum, church trustees decided to retain the original wood column look of the church's facade. "Restoring the steeple, with its pillars and molding, is in keeping with the architectural integrity of the church," explains Adah Schriever, a member of the church's building committee.

And by retaining the steeple's character, the church is also continuing the downtown restoration movement which has rejuvenated many nearby commercial buildings, added Rev. J. R. Elliot.

Returning the steeple to its original appearance has turned in to a major challenge for the contractor. Scaffolding had to be erected to allow direct access to all sides of the octagon. Much of the wood, including the batten or vents, had deteriorated badly and needed to be replaced. That meant cutting new support beams and outside trim pieces to duplicate the structure.

"It was really well built," Maas



Perched near the church bell, Rick Maas secures a new support beam in the steeple of the First Baptist Church in North East.

explained, "there's no beam in that that's less than eight by 10 inches." Old-fashioned wooden dowels, used to secure the support beams, are still in good shape. Larger pieces of wood had to be purchased and trimmed to match the size of the original beams. A small floor above the bell also had to be replaced.

Steel cables were added to help give stability to the steeple and its 24-foot cone. A telescopic extension roller was used to paint the shingles on the cone.

Maas has had to work around several obstacles. The church bell, which is lodged in a wooden wheel so it can be easily rung, occupies much of the inside space. Wags, who have made nests there, have to be avoided. "I've had no problem with them," Maas says. "As long as I don't bother them, they don't bother me. I kind of work around them."

Completion of the project is expected this week.



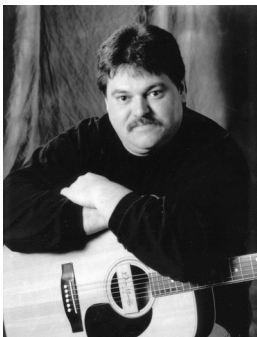
The local newspaper didn't realize that more than the church steeple was "restored." As a new believer I was filled with The Holy Spirit and I hungered for the Word of God. I went to the Christian Book Store and purchased a jumbo print Bible for \$22.00. It was one of the best investments I ever made. I immersed myself in the Scriptures and developed a desire to share my faith with others.

1 Peter 3:15 reads: *"Set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."* With the Lord's leading I was able to present the message in a humble and reverent way through words and music. In other words I was able to "say it in a song." Soon I was ministering somewhere nearly every week totally by following Peter's words making myself available *"to everyone who asks."* In about four years time my old jumbo print Bible fell apart, disintegrated, but I didn't.

Another pivotal point in my life in ministry came by surprise one evening at the dinner table with my wife and our two daughters. I believe it was winter 1990. It was an emergency phone call asking me to come and fill in for the popular Christian artist Steven Curtis Chapman because he was delayed by a snowstorm at the Philadelphia airport. His concert was scheduled for 8:00 PM at a local high school auditorium sponsored by area Christian bookstores and radio stations. I grabbed my two guitars and took our oldest daughter along with me. I performed my original songs and shared the inspiration for the lyrics and my story about being saved while working on a church steeple. Steven arrived while I was playing my last song. We met backstage where he was tuning his guitar and he thanked me for filling in.

(I doubt he would remember me) It was after 9:00 PM so I had to leave to get my daughter home. As we were leaving he was playing his song "My Turn Now." He won the Gospel Music Association Dove Award that year and I founded Humbleheart Ministries.

It was the following two weeks after that concert that I received phone calls from the bookstores and a radio station looking for my albums. I had no albums! Apparently after the concert people were looking for my albums of the original songs I played. I was encouraged to pursue recording them. After much prayer, research and demos God brought John McInane and I together in Atlanta Georgia to record my first album in February 1992. John is actually a native of our hometown here on the shores of Lake Erie, Pennsylvania and he is the engineer, producer and a lead musician of all our albums. He is also a good friend. It's hard to believe it's been more than thirty years since the first album.



While putting together several items for our new website I was considering the inclusion of hundreds of publications like newsletters, articles and sermons over the past 30 years. I came to the conclusion it would be best to keep it simple and easy to understand the message of a life's journey in ministry giving Christ the glory for every step along the way. The words and music in every album have helped me "say it in a song." It is my prayer that those songs continue to touch the hearts of many by leading them to Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. I am always humbled by the words of Jesus when He said, *"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing."* (John 15:5) NASB

Announcing Our New Website! Humbleheartministries.net

For those who have a computer, smart phone or other devices with access to the Internet you can go online to check out the website. You can also find all albums on **Spotify, You Tube, Apple, Amazon, Pandora** for streaming and downloads.



Humbleheart Ministries Inc.

11883 Findley Lake Road
North East, PA 16428
(814) 725-1229
Hefrees@aol.com

Website: Humbleheartministries.net

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Original Christian Music By Rick Maas



*Teaching, Training, Research,
Evangelism, Christian Apologetics*
Rick Maas Pastor & Evangelist

Although we have albums on CDs in stock for shipping when requested, I've had to learn to roll with the changes in technology where CD players are becoming a thing of the past. My first album was recorded on reel-to-reel tape and manufactured on cassette tapes. Imagine that! We have several boxes of unopened cassette albums for those who still listen to music with cassette players in vehicles or on home stereo systems. Those cassettes are of the first three albums 1992-2000.

The frequently asked questions concerning our music ministry and how it all began has prompted me to write this article. Especially with new listeners and songs being more available online. While digging through the archives of Humbleheart Ministries going back three decades I found myself experiencing a sense of both gratefulness and embarrassment. I was thankful for the blessings I was reminded of, but embarrassed for the things I had forgotten. There are so many great memories, the stories from people and events tucked away deep in my heart. I came across a quote from someone I considered a spiritual father to me, Rev. John R. Elliott (Randy) *"The depth of your ministry is up to you, the width and breadth is up to God."* He is now gone home to glory with the Lord, but I still treasure his guidance and encouragement from so many years ago. He was an example of what it means to have a "passion" for preaching the Word of God.

I have been asked by several people if I have ever considered writing a book. I think about that when I go through old files and calendars where I have kept somewhat of a diary of events. However, anytime I've made an effort to start compiling what I would put into book form I always struggle with what I should include and for what purpose. As I go back and forth in my mind I realize in the end I've already written what I wanted to say. It may not be in a book, but it is told in every single song on each album. I can tell you what was going on in my life and ministry when I wrote the lyrics and the source of inspiration. So for now I'll just "say it in a song." ☐ MARANATHA!