



The Messenger

Messenger Project Newsletter

Editor's Corner

The Messenger is a monthly publication written by Lionel De Leon, president-founder of Messenger Project Corp. and founder of the Christian rock band, Messenger.

This newsletter is available in pdf format at messengerproject.com or can be delivered via email by request to lio@pacbell.net.

Upcoming Events

2003 looks to be a productive year for Messenger Project. We will host a Christian Music Showcase at Good Shepherd Chapel on Concordia University in Irvine. Concerts will be held on the last Wednesdays of the months of January through April, from 7-10 p.m. Admission is free and open to the general public.

"**Prepare the Way**" will showcase local Christian songwriters and musicians and will feature original songs from the Bible, performed by Messenger.

On January 29, 2003, **Sunday Evening** will open the series with an acoustic set at 7:00 p.m., followed by **Try 3** at 8:00 p.m. **Messenger** performs at 9:00 p.m.

Call (714) 537-8362 for more information.

Since our concert series is being held at the Good Shepherd Chapel, I did some research on sheep, shepherding and Jesus' statement, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:11).

The Good Shepherd

The first time the singular word "shepherd" is mentioned in the Bible, it refers to God. In Genesis 48:15, Israel is the first to describe God as "my shepherd" when he blesses the twelve tribes before his death. Because Israel and his sons were shepherds, they understood the analogy very well. In order for us to get a better understanding, we need to learn about sheep and the work that is required to raise them.

Sheep are the most labor intensive animals to raise, but also the most rewarding. By properly herding sheep, you can enrich the land and make it more fertile.

Sheep are nervous and suspicious animals that spook easily. A good shepherd always offers lots of affection, praise and treats to his sheep even when they are difficult, so that he may earn their trust and cooperation.

A good shepherd provides his sheep with plenty of clean, dry straw for bedding that must be changed daily. He provides a shelter that has ventilation but no direct drafts and a shaded fenced area to protect them from predators and hot weather. A good shepherd trims his sheep's hooves every 4-6 weeks to prevent hoof rot and shears their wool each spring. He provides clean, fresh water and white salt along with pastures that are cleared of poisonous plants.

A good shepherd pastures his flock at least 8 hours a day and rotates pastures to cut down on parasite problems. He knows his sheep and watches for physical and behavioral changes that indicate illness. A good shepherd watches for sheep who fall on their backs and rights them quickly to prevent bloating. He also avoids wet fields and slowly introduces his flock to new pastures, knowing that sheep have a sensitive digestive system.

In short, a good shepherd loves his flock and gains their confidence. It is no small task to get sheep to "lie down in green pastures." They must be calm and free from parasites, feel safe from predators and have trust in their shepherd. The slightest fright will make sheep scatter.

The study of sheep brings a better understanding of what it means to be a "good shepherd." A good shepherd is actively involved with his flock on a daily basis, just as God is actively involved in our daily lives.

Jesus' statement, "I am the Good Shepherd," exemplifies his selfless love for us. But his statement also is a fulfillment of Ezekiel 34:11 where God said he would shepherd his flock. Nobody dreamed that God would actually become the Good Shepherd, everyone accepted it as a figure of speech.

2002 in Review

2002 was a ground-breaking year for Messenger Project. We received a letter confirming our nonprofit status from the IRS, which opened the door for our inaugural concert in September. I would like to take this time to thank the following saints who went beyond the call of duty last year and helped Messenger Project be blessed with new hopes for 2003!

1. **Avery Burdette** from Yamaha donated a keyboard to the project at the end of 2001 which was put to good use last year.

2. **Lou Banas** from Verizon Foundation introduced me to employee incentive programs that led to our first corporate contributions.

3. **Tim Metzger** of Metzger Enterprises donated equipment and talent as sound engineer to give us a good sound at our "Prepare the Way" concert in September.

4. **Beatrice De Leon** (my mom) was the first major contributor to our nonprofit corporation when she donated \$500 at our September concert.

5. **Jonathan Perkins** attended our concert in September and recommended us to his daughter at Concordia University, which led to a gig and our upcoming concert series in 2003.

6. Artist **Lynne Cerro** donated her time and talents to improve our corporate logo (the "angel with guitar" seen above).

7. Artist **Greg Gilger** donated his time and talents to make a working rendition of our corporate seal.

8. My friends who helped at the concert and made everything run smoothly.

9. The musicians who recorded and performed with us last year.

Thank you all for making 2002 a good year and setting the stage for a better 2003!