



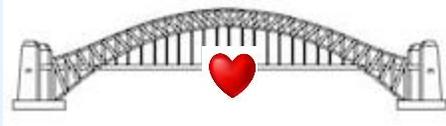
# BRIDGES OF LOVE

LOVE IS ACTION – January, 2019

**“FOR I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU.” Jeremiah 29:11a**



## CHURCH...A BRIDGE OF LOVE...COMMUNITY



Dr. Robert Lewis, author and church leader gives a fitting description for the church in his book, “The Church of Irresistible Influence.” His definition is this: *a community of people who...present living proof of a loving God to a watching world.*

“*Living Proof of a Loving Saviour*” has been Bridges of Love’s mantra since our inception over 15 years ago. Our mission has been to open windows, assisting churches in serving their communities, in relevant ways. As we provide an open window, we create a door of opportunity.

Dr. Lewis’ book written 18 years ago, shares that the church looks across a terrifying and ever widening chasm. At the bottom of the chasm rages the white water of popular sentiment, which increasingly views the church as inconsequential, a sideshow along the interstate of the world’s *real traffic*. Does this sense of isolation and powerlessness still pervade much of the contemporary church today?

Often as “engineers of churches,” pastors and lay leaders desperately desire to bridge the gap, but when measuring the gorge with the world’s mathematics, they come to believe the span is simply too vast. The sheer size of the great chasm is not only intimidating, but it also scares many church leaders into believing that the task is impossible.

Speaking to a pastor about his churches connections with the community; he said it scared him to look out into his community, as the needs were just too great, that he felt paralyzed.

**The question is simple:  
What impact is the church having on the community?**

Jesus Christ was a daring bridge builder of another kind. Against his own overwhelming odds, he imagined a bridge of unprecedented spiritual influence—one that could span a chasm roaring with skepticism, indifference, hostility, even persecution. He imagined a bridge able to connect his people—“my church,” he called them—to a disbelieving, disinterested world.

## BRIDGES OF LOVE MINISTRY

Fifteen years ago, God gave me a vision...to connect the church with the community in which it was found. The bridge to make that connection was unknown, but God opened a window with the invitation from the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada to join their National Evangelism Roundtables. That invitation created a door of opportunity, which has blossomed over the years into two very valuable bridges. The Faith Emergency Preparedness Initiative (FEPI) and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training.



We can no longer simply afford to stand on one side of the great chasm and shout to those on the other side. We must connect! Otherwise, the greatest unbridged chasm will remain the gap between the stunning vision of Jesus Christ and the ever-receding influence of the church in the world. We cannot exist for ourselves, but must embrace our highest calling: to bridge the great chasm being salt and light in a needy and searching world.

What do the words “plans to prosper” mean by today’s standards? According to Webster’s Dictionary, “prosperity” means “the condition of being successful or thriving; especially economic well-being.”

For 40 years, Jeremiah passionately and faithfully served as God’s spokesman to Judah. Consistently, he urged them to act, but nobody listened or were moved to action. Jeremiah did not achieve material wealth as he underwent extreme deprivation to deliver God’s message. Throughout his life, Jeremiah was poor and stood alone. In the eyes of the world, he was not a success.

In God’s eyes, however, Jeremiah was one of the most successful people in all of history. Success, as measured by God, involves obedience and faithfulness. Regardless of opposition and personal cost, Jeremiah courageously proclaimed the word of God. He was obedient to his calling.

These words were spoken to a displaced, defeated, depressed group of exiles. They had hung their harps on the willow trees and had lost their song. But with the Lord, things are never hopeless. For I know the plans I have for you...

This life is to be lived and enjoyed as far as we are able, but it is not the future that Jeremiah spoke about. The future God has planned for those who listen and believe is a future beyond death, where there is no pain, no sickness, no suffering, no sorrow, and no more dying. It is that life to which Jesus invites us, and for which He died, that we might live. The plan of God about Jeremiah spoke came to full fruition in Jesus Christ.