**Blessings from ‘Blessings’**

# Have you encountered a YouTube video described as The UK Blessing? If you haven’t, I would urge you watch it. It may not be your kind of music but do try and listen to it all the way through, so you catch the gathering excitement of the song. It has, in my opinion, been a marvel of the lockdown.

# As far as I can tell the song was launched just ahead of the lockdown. In early March a video called ‘The Blessing’ appeared on YouTube by Kari Jobe & Cody Carnes of Elevation Worship, Ballantyne (which I take to be Ballantyne in North Carolina). By the time of writing this (21st July), that video had attracted more than 21 million viewings. And more than that, it had given rise to an amazing number of ‘split screen’ performances of the song where singers recorded from their own homes or in a remote location of their choice and the individual singers’ and musicians’ offerings were cleverly spliced together to make impressive complete videos.

The UK version involves more than 60 churches in the UK. A write up about it says, **‘**If you’re looking for something to lift your spirits, look no further…’ You can find it at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtll3mNj5U>

If you do decide to listen, I hope it will, indeed lift your spirits - but there’s much more. A collaboration between 60 churches is impressive but other versions, mentioned below, involve even more churches of a wide range of persuasions, far beyond any inter-church co-operative initiative I have ever been aware of.

Once you have watched the UK version, YouTube will very probably direct you to another version and there are lots of them. There are at least the following: Australia (336,000 views), South Africa, Canada, Channel Islands, Qatar, Mauritius, The Arab World (106,000), Egypt and all nations, Zimbabwe, Malaysia, South Korea, Indonesia, Passion City Atlanta, Sweden, Latin America, Ireland, Bolivia, Brazil: there are versions in Dutch (150,000), French (231,000), Spanish, Hebrew. And by the time you read this, there will, I imagine be several more.

Whilst having many similarities, every version is distinctive in its presentation: The Singaporean version has some spectacular views of the City: the Malaysian version has a number of singers in what I take to be exquisite contemporary versions of national costumes: the Zimbabwean version shows an aspect of that country which I could never have imagined. There are now Spanish, French, and Swedish language versions among several others, effectively showing the international breadth of Christianity.

As you can see, a number of these are in major languages and several of the other versions incorporate lesser known languages spoken within the ‘host’ country. Quite amazing! I’ve really enjoyed watching many of these, reflecting again on the story of Pentecost (Acts 2. 4) when the Apostles spoke in tongues which were understandable to everyone present. In our contemporary setting, the multiplicity of the languages used feels an amazing testimony to the global reach of the Gospel message.

As I have watched these various videos, they have provoked yet more ideas and thoughts.

* Every one of them is full of joy and energy and harmony (both literally and metaphorically).
* All of them feature a majority of young people, which is not a pattern in many of our more traditional ‘mainstream’ churches: so, perhaps those who think of church as only for the older or the more staid, might hopefully be encouraged by these initiatives of the younger generations.
* Also, they demonstrate to the world that there are large numbers of churches which are ‘IT savvy’ and able to build rapidly on the amazing opportunities that arise from that awareness. In business, I think this would be approvingly called, ‘being fleet of foot’

For these reasons, they are, in my view, initiatives that demonstrate an amazingly positive display of world-wide Christian endeavour - and for this reason I have felt confident to suggest to some of our friends and family they might also like to watch. There are opportunities to guide them to a version that is in some way particularly relevant to them. An early conversation was with an Irish friend who was thrilled by the Irish version, said it had given her ‘goosebumps’ and had also moved her daughter.

Within a very short time, one of our next generation relatives had responded using exactly the same expression. As this has for me, maybe also for you it could, offer a gentle form of outreach to someone you have found it hard to talk of the Good News we share. I’m sure the inventive minds of many writers could find links between at least one of the countries represented and their friends or family members.

So, finally, very many thanks to Elevation Worship.