

Dear Supporters,

I started last year's letter by stating I was just trying to catch my breath and get the letter done in time. If it tells you anything about how much 2017 got away from us, this year I did not get to this letter "in time." This means it's actually being written in 2018 in spite of being 2017's year-end letter. This also means we have had another year of running behind on a great deal of items, but there is still good news to report from 2017. Year after year this ministry continues to see growth in the number of people receiving our materials, and the fact it takes some time to get something from us has not deterred those who desire to learn the Word of God. In the end, it really does not matter so much that an issue of *Shaqah* is a bit later than we would like it to be, as long as we eventually get it into the hands of those who appreciate it. This is true of all the materials we produce and is the great blessing this ministry has. Compared to other ministries we would still be considered a very small one, but those who get our materials appreciate them very much, and there is nothing more gratifying in ministry than to receive the kind of positive responses we continue to get from all of you!

Thus, in this year's letter instead of waiting until the end to say thank you to everyone, I want to start it out that way. We get down so much of the time, and every issue of *Shaqah* I find myself asking if we are going to get through another one. Health can fail, time grows shorter and shorter, but as I sit here and write this letter I have to look back and just thank The Lord for the opportunity to do this! I have never wanted to do anything with my life but serve The Lord. I and my family do not live on much, but we get to do the greatest work life can offer, for there is nothing greater than serving God! I pray serving God is where each of you will find strength in your lives, and I want to thank all of you who have taken part in this ministry through 2017. I have to thank the hands that have done the work. I have nothing to offer other than that, but for every little thing that is done, if it is done unto The Lord, it is He who will reward you in the end. Thank you to those who have given to this ministry. We do not run on much, but like the oil and flour in Elijah's day, the resources just seem to be there as we need them. I've always believed little is much in the hands of The Lord, but it never ceases to amaze me how much this truth shows every day in this work we do!

Thank you to all those who have written words of encouragement to us about how much the materials have blessed you. We are so glad to know that they are being used and appreciated. Sometimes people find it hard to imagine a ministry where you have almost no direct contact with the people you minister to, but we know we are all connected in God's love. On that note, I know that for everyone who takes the time to write to us there are just that many more who are keeping us in their prayers, and this is most important. Prayer is what gets us through each day, month, and year. We never know what might have been around the corner that was removed by the power of prayer before we turned that corner. God so often lets us see some of those barricades, and it can be fearful, but when they are taken out of the way in time for us to keep going forward, we know it was due to those of you who pray God's will be done. Thank you for all your prayer support through this past year, and we want you to know we remember you in our prayers as well.

As for the accomplishments of 2017, there are a lot of little victories too numerous to mention. Of course, as I said there are days when just getting the next *Shaqah* out seems like a feat in and of itself. However, what continues to see amazing growth, other than just *Shaqah*, is the production of the teaching calendars. These are in such high demand, and we are doing our best to get them out to all who have requested them. We are so grateful to be a part of both groups and personal Bible studies all across the United States and in many places around the world. When we started the calendar project we wondered what we would do if it really took off and got to the numbers that are going out now. Well, we no longer have to wonder, but God has made a way and we will continue producing them as long as He does.

Of course, the big accomplishment of this year was the one many of you have been waiting for, and that is the publication of the calendar's companion book, "Counting The Days"! Since the calendar was first produced for 2009, it has always been the intent to have a companion book to go with it which would do the deeper teaching this ministry is suppose to be providing. I know this book has not answered all the questions different ones have about the feasts and other elements on the calendar, but it is a great foundation for doing that further teaching. It is always good to have that solid teaching you can put in the hands of others in order to get people started in their understanding of the subject of God's feasts, how He set up the year for the chosen nation, and what it all prophesies to us. As God gives the ability we hope to go further with this project, but for now we are just so thankful to God to see this book finally in print, not to mention very busy trying to get copies out to all who want them!

Because keeping up with the growth is what we are and have been mainly trying to do over these past couple years, that is what I will say is our goal for 2018. For that, please be in prayer with us that God might provide a way for us to have more square footage of some kind. I remember several years back when we were excited to get the office trailer we work out of, but at the rate the raw production materials have to come in for us to produce what we do, in the amounts we now do, we really could use more space. There are a couple ideas how this might happen, but we really need God to show us what the right use of our time and energy is in this matter. The older I get the more aware I am of how much every minute we spend building on the infrastructure this ministry needs is a minute I'm not getting Q&As done, writing on *Shaqah*, and working to produce new materials in general that would be of such value if we could only get them done. However, I am also aware that if we do not have the means in which to produce the end product, that writing might be in vain.

Thus, I would have to say our real goal for 2018 is to join together in prayer that God will lead us through this next year and open those doors of opportunity He wants us to take so we do not waste any precious time we may have left. We need to pray together that God will make our path smooth through the things that are just about the organizational needs so we may get materials out the door to those hungry to learn God's Word. Each year we talk about not knowing how much time we have left before the return of our Lord, but each year we know it only draws nearer. What a great day that shall be, but until that day happens, or the day comes for us as individuals to leave this world, we hope to continue in this work The Lord has given. I say "we" not just speaking of those who actually work on materials here at Living Springs, but of all of you who receive our materials, as we know the growth we are experiencing has to do with your work in sharing our materials with others. In this way, as well as the things we have been able to do in helping people know God's Word so they can better share it through their personal witness, we are truly partners together in this ministry. So now we go forward into the new year trusting God together for all we need in our personal lives as well as the ministry work God has called us to. It is our prayer each of you will experience a deeper walk with God in 2018 than you had in 2017 as that is what we should always strive to do. We should not fear what might be in front of us, for as we go forth serving God, we know God is truly The One Who goes before us. Shalom!

Sincerely,



Philip E. Busby
Executive Director
Living Springs
2017