

July 2010 Branson GMC Program & Print Edition

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Sponsorship: **A Dream come True**

Five-year-old Evelin Perez loves to sing. When she has free time, she likes to play with dolls or join her friends in hide and seek. In short, Evelin likes to do the kind of things most five-year-olds enjoy. But her life is extremely different than the lives of the five-year-olds you likely know.

Evelin lives with her parents and younger brother in a poor community near the city of Sonsonate, El Salvador. The family originally lived in a small adobe house but, like so many Salvadoran families, their home was destroyed in the earthquakes that devastated much of the country in 2001.

On the site where their house stood, they now dwell in a makeshift structure of wood, tin, cardboard and other materials they were able to obtain at little or no cost. Since Evelin's mother, Martha, stays home with her young children, the family's only source of income is the small salary her husband, Oscar, makes as an automotive mechanic's apprentice.

Martha explains the challenges of the family's living situation: "When it rains, we usually get wet," she says, "and we have problems with getting drinking water here." These circumstances leave the family vulnerable to sickness and disease.

Evelin's situation is challenging. But fortunately she is registered at Compassion El Salvador's Heraldos del Rey Child Development Center (ES-743). And thanks to a young woman named Amy who lives in Florida, Evelin's

circumstances are not hopeless. Amy is a Compassion sponsor. Evelin's presence at the center is possible because Amy in Florida sends a monthly sponsorship contribution especially for the little girl.

At Heraldos del Rey, Evelin — along with close to 200 other impoverished children — receives life-changing care and opportunities. Offering instruction, guidance and the love of God to the children who attend the center, the dedicated staff is making every effort to release them from the spiritual, economic, social and physical poverty that plagues their lives. These workers are the hands and feet for people like Amy who want to make it possible for children in need to break free from poverty's vicious cycle and dream of the future. Martha Perez talks about how she felt when Evelin was registered into Compassion's program and received Amy as her sponsor. "I thanked God," she says. "I felt very happy when I realized that someone was interested in helping and loving my daughter."

Because of the health concerns she has for her family, Martha is especially grateful that Evelin's sponsorship provides her with an affordable way to receive medical care. She is also hopeful as she considers all the possibilities for her daughter's future. "When she grows up, there are a number of things I envision



for Evelin. Number one, I want her to be a good Christian and I would love to see her doing ministry somewhere. I also hope she might have a professional career. But most of all, I want her to still be following God when she's grown."

Evelin is just one child out of more than 13,500 children Compassion serves in El Salvador and there are over 500,000 others around the world — not to mention millions more that Compassion has not reached yet. Watching Evelin play outside the structure she calls home, you can see she is an important reminder of the incredible need for Compassion's ministry to children. But her mother believes she is also a reason to not lose faith and to anticipate the future. "I know that God certainly will help us through Compassion," Martha says. "This is a dream come true for our lives."

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July 2010

Branson Gospel Music Convention Edition



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SGN Scoops exists to showcase what is distinguished, intriguing, and real about southern & country gospel music. We seek with our stories to shed light on people fulfilling a call to minister - to make or support the making of music that excites an audience and glorifies God. And we seek to do it interactively.

Professional writers, singers, speakers, publicists, and ministers comprise the SGN SCOOPS staff. Please visit their websites for more about them. | CONTRIBUTORS this issue



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Find this issue and our archive online at www.sgnscoops.com
Next issue: Monday, August 2, 2010

WELCOME TO BRANSON GOSPEL MUSIC CONVENTION

Among the many things that it's hard for us to believe today, it's that just a year ago, we'd never been to Branson, Missouri...because

this year, our calendar is filled with the words "leave for Branson" and as you read this, we've spent half our month here, working, making new friends, and enjoying so many great places to worship, network, eat, and be entertained.

Many things have changed in all of our lives since the debut of Branson Gospel Music Convention. We and the town are no longer strangers to each other. In fact, it feels like another home to us. This year, Branson GMC is blessed and fortunate to have been embraced by its host city and the entertainers, business owners, and government officials who call it home. You can feel it in the air, here: Branson is a great place for families...and a great place for Christians! We have attended countless meetings with our children in tow, and in many of them have been inspired by the mutual prayers of others that God's work would be done in all of our efforts.

What has not changed about Branson GMC is a heart for sincerity and excellence in bringing you a first-class gospel music event and a safe place to minister and fellowship. Our prayer this year is that seeds of revival will be planted and seeds of salvation will be sewn.

Once again, this event would be impossible without the guidance and assistance of many faithful friends, family members, and like-minded colleagues. We thank each of you for adopting us and supporting our vision.

We welcome you to the 2nd annual Branson Gospel Music Convention; the light is shining brightly on the message of Jesus Christ, and we hope you feel His love in the music and atmosphere here all week long!

By His grace,

Rod & Kelly Burton

Owners & Hosts of Branson GMC



Above: Rod & Kelly at Bud & Lynda Lynn's Chapel Woods in Branson; Miranda, Paige & Kaity Burton - our trusted assistants.

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Lynda & Bud with Gregg Busch honor the Purple Heart Recipients at Branson's Chateau on the Lake. Branson cares for our Veterans. May 1, 2010, Lynda & Bud performed Lynda's song *One Voice* at the Missouri state capital in Jefferson City, Missouri.

Photo George Kurlin

Frequent television guests, **Lynda & Bud Lynn** are Country Gospel Music Association's International Media Personalities of the Year for 3 consecutive years.



Dr. Lynda Lynn is a 13 time ASCAP award winning songwriter.

She has released a new CD, ***Reach Out For Him***, featuring 16 Branson artists and 19 songs. Barbara Fairchild, Randy Brooks, Andrea Blackwood Carter, Glory-Anne Prophet and more.

Gene Higgins' Powersource Magazine, Nashville, lists "Little Boys & Little Toys" by Barbara Fairchild in the top 40.



Chapelwoods at Lynnwood Estates was built to make a difference as Rod Burton stated. Rod chose this as an image for the front cover of his new CD titled *The Difference*.

Come see and pray. God will "God Zap" you as you enter through the door of this quaint little chapel.

Lynda has co-authored a book with her son Rory titled, ***The Turning Point, A Teenager's Rebellion***.

The book focuses on trusting God to bring families with troubled teens through rebellious times allowing family restoration.



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redefinition

There are two words that have constantly changed meaning for me in my adulthood. One is **family**. The other one is **dreams**. In the past year, both have exploded into brand new territory in our lives.

Family, well, I know my experience there is not uncommon. As time has passed, I have lost family I thought I'd always have, and I've gained friends who have filled familial voids I didn't know existed.

Family is about a whole lot more than the commonality of names and relatives. I have come to find family in those who don't ask why but just show up on Skype at 11pm when we could use a prayer. I have found it in people who will grace my kitchen with pies and playmates for the kids when I am at my wit's end or way past deadline. I have found it in my very loyal and dedicated Mom and Dad, who mean more to me with each passing day. I have found it in my hometown friends who don't really pretend to understand the dreams we are chasing, but ask questions and

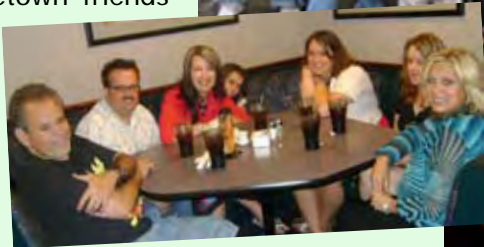
offer support and cheer very enthusiastically while we run after them.

Chasing dreams is a cliché larger than the national debt, and yet, just a year ago, it was reintroduced to me by friends who told me that we are chasing God... and HIS dreams for us are unimaginable and amazing. When my friends told me this, I laughed and accepted it and believed it was true. And within two weeks, my husband received a call into full-time ministry that was as clear as God's hand writing on the wall... and Rob Patz asked me to edit this magazine, a dream job of mine since I was a teenager (longer ago than you might think or I care to remember!)

This issue of *SGN Scoops* is all about family and

dreams for me. It is the culmination of so many pieces of life and faith and work and relationships. It is, in part, a tangible image of my own calling and purpose. How blessed I feel to be able to see what the Lord has done!

How blessed I feel to be able to SEE what the Lord has done!



Clockwise from top: My 'mommy friends,' our 10 little ones, & a backyard Easter egg hunt; with my 'BFF' Jen; Our girls with Papa & Gramma; Rod, Paige, and I celebrate Branson GMC 2009 with some gospel family.



God's message to shine through. And for what it is worth in our little world, we are thankful for the chance to, by grace, achieve those goals!

Thank you SO MUCH to all the writers and artists who contributed to this very special issue, and thank you to those special friends—family of mine who aided in specific, non-glamorous ways so that it could be completed on time!

— Love, Kel



KELLY CAPRIOTTI BURTON,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

greenish me

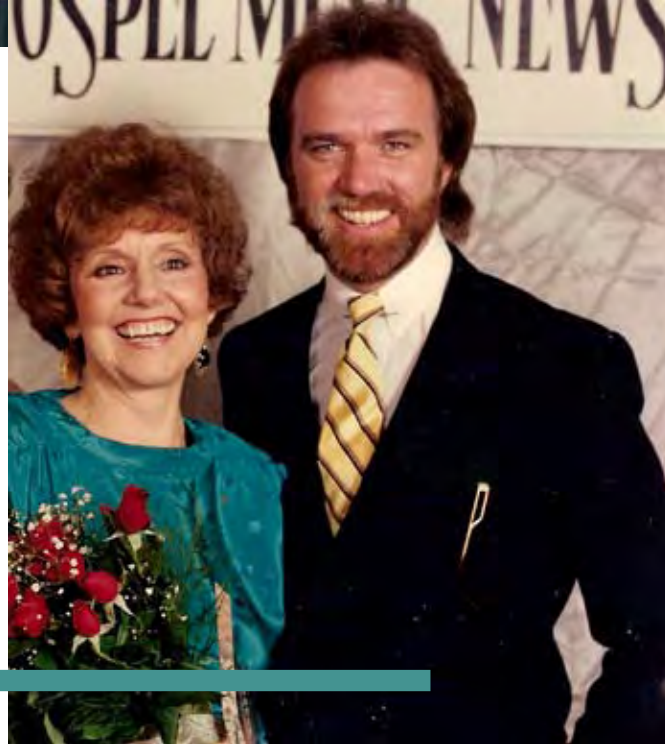
Writing has been my "thing" since I was a kid...I have used it in every stage of my life, whether to write fictional stories, school essays, procedural documents, greeting cards, or, quite surprisingly to me, non-fiction materials for gospel music publications. I had dreams of where I would see my writing, where I might take it, but God had other plans for my life.

And here He has taken me... to Branson, Missouri...to gospel music...to people I barely knew a year ago who are now my family... to a dream I could not have conceived on my most creative day. This week, in Branson, Missouri, the dream God gave me and my husband – the Branson Gospel Music Convention – joins with the dream I longed for, *SGN Scoops*. It is no understatement for me to say I am honored and thrilled to have a part in presenting them both to you. I can say that both were crafted with a goal of excellence and a heart for



Ms. Lou's Legacy

Our honored columnist reflects on rewarding those who work to make a difference



Above: Ed Leonard, President of Daywind Music Group, and Ed Harper, President of Harper Agency, recipients of the 2004 "Lou Hildreth Award." Left: Lou receiving the first "Lou Hildreth Award" in 1986, named for her and presented by Record Executive Bill Traylor.

One of the highlights for our fabulous week at the 2010 BRANSON GOSPEL MUSIC CONVENTION will be presenting the "Lou Hildreth Award" on Thursday night, July 1st, at the DIAMOND AWARDS, given in recognition for service by a "behind-the-scenes" Christian music industry leader who has contributed significantly to the expansion of Southern gospel music.

A little history---the first LOU HILDRETH AWARD was named for me and presented to me in 1986 by Record executive Bill Traylor on behalf of the owner of a Nashville publi-

It is my heart's desire that the "Lou Hildreth Award" will encourage and inspire young men and women to choose a career in Christian music and serve the industry with passion to the glory of God!

cation who had asked him for the name of a person on Music Row who was "making a difference" in Southern Gospel Music. I was surprised and truly humbled to receive this honor. In 1987, I presented the award to industry executive JOE MOSCHEO, Chairman of the Board GMA. Some time elapsed before it was given to anyone else, but the award was revived at the request of Gary Cohn, Editor of Gospel Voice. We presented it at the National Quartet Convention for several years. Some of the gospel music entrepreneurs who have received the "Lou Hildreth Award" are DOTTIE LEONARD MILLER (Founder Daywind Music Group), FAY SHEDD (Owner, Artist Direction Agency) BECKIE SIMMONS (Owner, Beckie Simmons Agency) CLARKE BEASLEY (Executive Director & V-President, National Quartet Convention) JUDY NELON (President, Southern Gospel Music Guild) PAUL BODEN (Publisher, U. S. Gospel News) ED LEONARD (President, Daywind Music Group) ED HARPER (President, Harper Agency) JIM BLACK (pioneer radio and TV host) BRIAN HUDSON (Showcase Management, Ernie Haase & Signature Sound) DR. ALLEN SMITH (founder of Scoops Magazine) and FAMILY FRIENDLY ENTERTAINMENT NETWORK (Southern Gospel music television 24/7)

We began presenting this "recognition of service" at the DIAMOND AWARDS a few years ago, at the request of Dr. Allen Smith. We are thankful for the current opportunity to work with Rob Patz, Rod Burton, Kelly Burton, and the committee of dedicated workers, as we enjoy the fellowship and excitement at the BRANSON GOSPEL MUSIC CONVENTION and the DIAMOND AWARDS. It is my heart's desire that the "Lou Hildreth Award" will encourage and inspire young men and women to choose a career in Christian music and serve the industry with passion to the glory of God!

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The Williamson's



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Jesus Doesn't Just Love You - He Likes You

Is it just me, or does it seem like pastors have forgotten how to be positive?

Perhaps this isn't the case for you, but I can't remember the last sermon I heard anywhere that had anything positive to say about any of the people who go there. They spend week after week telling their parishioners how disappointed God is in them, and how they can't do anything right.

Where did all this negativity come from? I have a guess: Oprah Winfrey.

Not just Oprah, though. Dr. Phil and Lisa Raye and the other talking heads on the TV are all part of the problem. They're not doing it on purpose, mind you. But they each spend many of their shows encouraging people to have self-worth. On the surface, what they're doing can be viewed as noble. Unfortunately, the self-worth that they teach is a secular humanist version. Without Christ, "self-worth" can turn quickly into narcissism.

However, the negativity associated with "self-love" has pushed many pastors in the opposite direction. Hoping to cure their parishioners of egomania, they spend week after week trying to teach their flocks how to feel bad about themselves.

No matter who I'm listening to, I'm constantly being reminded that I have no worth, and that if I do something good, then God did it in me, but if I do something wrong, it's all my fault. I come in from a week of being battered by the world, hoping for some encouragement, only to routinely hear how disappointed God is in me.

I once commented to a friend that I wondered why I never heard a single sermon on Christian self-worth. He said, "Don't take this the wrong way, but I don't think there is any such thing as Christian self-worth." And herein lies the problem. We in the church hear "self-worth" and immediately translate that in our minds to "narcissism."

Can I just say that if God loves us so much, maybe we should stop doubting Him and questioning His decision making?

The "angry God" pastors also seem to continually push their congregation to get involved in ministries to avoid even more of God's wrath. To the pastors' surprise (but not mine), no one new ever gets involved with

minis-

tries. Why should

they? Who would want to work

for a God like that? Just punch your spiritual time card on Sunday, then get out as fast as you can before God asks you to do something else.

For years, I tried really hard to be down on myself, thinking that such an attitude would help me to obey. In fact, both self-hatred and self-love are points on the same continuum. They're both just different forms of self-obsession. If we felt confidence in God's love, we could forget about it and move on and actually accomplish something for Him, if we didn't have to spend all our time licking our wounds.

So consider this a wake-up call – a splash of cold water on the face, for anyone who has enough trouble with one's own self-image without getting beaten down by the church.

Jesus loves you. He's crazy about you. If no one other than you had sinned, He would have gone to the cross just for you. And it's not just a case of loving you because now you're clean; He loved you and died for you while you were lost in sin. And He isn't looking to yank your salvation away from you if you mess up. Despite what Jonathan Edwards says, we are not sinners in the hands of an angry God. We're children loved by a God who promises that no one and nothing can snatch us out of His hand.

Here's the really surprising thing, the thing that I still have to re-learn from time to time: Jesus doesn't only love you; He likes you.

Ordinarily "like" is considered to be less than "love." We like a good burger; we love our kids or nephews and nieces. But I think it's worth dwelling on this point for a minute. A person can "love" Muslims in a generic sense but still not really care for Osama bin Laden.

In theory, God could "love" all people in a generic sense but want to push some of us off to the side so He doesn't have to deal with us.

But that's not the way God loves us at all. He likes us, the way we like our best friends. He wants to spend time with us. He wants to hear about our crappy days at work. He thinks

By Tom Holste





He loved you and died for you while you were lost in sin. And He isn't looking to yank your salvation away from you if you mess up.

our corny jokes are hilarious—He's the one who gave us our sense of humor. The things about yourself that you think are the most quirky, the things that you try to hide from other people, are His favorite things about you.

He knows that you don't feel like you've accomplished much in life. He doesn't care. He knows that you think that you're not very attractive, that you're too fat, or old, or that your hair never comes out right. He knows you think that way, but He doesn't think that way. He can't get enough of you, just the way you are. He's heartbroken when you don't spend enough time with Him, and He lights up when you call on His name. He just can't wait to find out what you're going to tell Him next.

Isn't that a God that you would like to see more than once a week? Isn't that a God who you would like to help out by signing up for ministries at church, as opposed to the "angry God"?

So be blessed today, and remember that we do have worth, but it's not because of our flesh. It's because we are fearfully and wonderfully made in God's image, and He thinks the world of us. Isn't that a more important opinion than what some pastors—and Oprah—think? 🇺🇸




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II Corinthians 5:17

**"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;
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Rhonda Frye's Faith Boost >>

Blood and Independence

When I mention barbeques, homemade ice cream, watermelons, pools, parades, fireworks or red, white and blue- you think Independence Day! Families and friends will fellowship together, across the nation, as they celebrate freedom on this Fourth of July. My family will enjoy patriotic festivities as well. America will celebrate, but my heart longs for everyone to understand true liberty found in Christ.

Although I am patriotic with the intention of never taking my freedom for granted, I'm coming to realize most Americans celebrating freedom are not free in the least bit! I came to that conclusion by being observant at the fireworks show we attended last year. By listening to those around me, watching behavior and using God's word as the standard, I quickly realized those around me were slaves! We are blessed to live in a free country, but if we haven't surrendered our lives to Christ, there is no real freedom. As everyone kept looking upward waiting for the fireworks to begin, I wondered how many people were aware Jesus could have stepped out on a cloud at any second. As everyone cheered over the flickering fires in the sky, I thought to myself, the best show man could do just disappeared in smoke- but yet the beautiful moon and stars were still in their places as beautiful as ever. No one seemed to be mesmerized at the spectacular sky that evening or impressed that it had been faithfully displayed. The crowd gathered to celebrate freedom, but many walked away oblivious to their condition as hopeless prisoners condemned to death.

The good news is: These prisoners don't have to be hopeless; instead they could be prisoners of hope! Zechariah 9:11-12 says: "Because of the covenant I made with you, sealed with blood, I will free your prisoners from death in a waterless dungeon. Come back to the place of safety all you prisoners who still have hope! I promise this very day that I will repay two blessings for each of your troubles." Recently, I ran across a sermon by Charles Spurgeon from the 1800's, loved his explanation and will paraphrase a few of his comments about this verse. The "Prisoner of Hope" has hope because wherever the gospel is preached, there is hope for sinners and whoever hears it may take heart of hope. Spurgeon explains "the dungeon" (pit) is where we all were "spiritually speaking" once. In the East, they didn't always take time to build prisons, but an empty well could serve for a prison. The prisoner was lowered down by ropes and the mouth of the pit was covered with a big stone leaving the prisoner to die. I don't know about you, but I certainly remember being in the pit! There was no escape, no comfort, no water until by the blood of the covenant, I was freed! We must never stop giving the prisoners around us hope. They need to hear about the blood of Jesus. (Ref Spurgeon: <http://www.apibs.org/chs/3106.pdf>)

If anyone has been around a good Bible believing church for any length of time, the blood of Christ is preached. I've heard about it all of my life, but until recently I didn't really understand the significance of the blood. I used to not understand why Jesus had to shed His blood in order to forgive sins. I had accepted God's requirement "by faith", but wasn't really sure

how it all worked because I take everything very literally. When I was 11, my best friend and I baked our first batch of brownies. After adding the ingredients, the instructions read: "Stir 50 strokes by hand" and that's exactly what I did. Yes, I stuck my little hand into the gritty mix, eggs, oil and water and made 50 complete laps round and around the bowl! Yes, I take things literally! So, when I read Jesus' blood washes away sins, I want to know how that works. Jesus isn't still on the cross and His blood has been cleaned up by now. Since the blood is gone, how does it save today? Since His blood has power to heal, save and sanctify, then why didn't the soldiers become new creatures when Jesus' blood splattered on them? I've accepted by faith the natural blood that was in Jesus' body isn't what cleanses sin, but His natural blood had to be shed in order for us to receive His needed blood in a spiritual sense. After refreshing my memory concerning the function of physical blood, I have now made the connection to the spiritual blood through symbolism. I am not an expert, but will share the information I gathered from internet resources and my friend Randall Lechner.

Blood is complex! There is life in the blood. As blood flows through the lungs, it picks up oxygen. It delivers its nutrients, and then it returns to the lungs for a fresh supply. Air is a symbol for the spirit of God. We can survive without food for several days, but only 3 or 4 minutes without oxygen. If we become disconnected from Holy Spirit, we become weak. Also, the blood is responsible for carrying all nutrition. Spiritually, the nutrients



America will celebrate, but my heart longs for everyone to understand true liberty found in Christ.

in the blood of Christ are the fruits of the Spirit. The blood is healing, it clots! When we get cut, we bleed but the body sends clotting agents to stop the bleeding. When our hearts gets injured, Christ's blood wants to heal! Glory! The physical blood defends the body, cleans impurities, keeps temperature normal, gives energy and keeps each cell in proper atmosphere. Spiritually, the blood of Jesus keeps us from spiritual harm, cleanses sin, keeps our hearts from growing cold, brings holiness and energy and keeps our spirits in unity with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Clearly, we need our physical blood to live, but to possess blood simply isn't enough.

If our blood doesn't flow, we die. Just as our blood has to circulate in our physical bodies we have to understand if the blood of Jesus flows into us but doesn't flow out of us by reaching others, we will die spiritually.

This Independence Day, I want to encourage everyone to not shy away from preaching or teaching about the blood of Christ. The story of the cross is not a pretty one, but it's our only hope of true freedom! Ephesians 1: 7 says: "He is so rich in kindness and grace that He purchased our freedom with the blood of His son and forgave our sins." John the Revelator describes all heaven joining in a chorus of praise to Jesus in heaven. Revelation 5:9 "And they sang a new song with these words: You are worthy to take the scroll and break its seals and open it. For You were slaughtered, and your blood has ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation." Friends, let's not wait until we get to heaven to sing about the blood. Let's sing its message to the prisoners, for those who hear it have hope! Prisoners need to know: "There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's veins and sinners plunged beneath the blood lose all their guilty stains!" (William Cowper 1771) Thank you, Jesus for cleansing "ALL" not some guilty stains. Amen! 🇺🇸

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Bryan Walker: From Southern Gospel to Police Officer to American Idol

Growing up around Southern Gospel

music, Bryan Walker saw the good, the bad and the ugly. His dad, David Walker, sang with several groups including The Singing Americans and The Dixie Melody Boys. Bryan learned to love the music as a child and that love contin-

ues today. During **Dee Ann Bailey's** recent conversation with him, here is what he had to say.

Scoops: You grew up around SGM. Is that what planted the seed for singing it or did it actually cause you to think hard before you considered it?

BRYAN: Growing up with a dad who sang full time, the seed was definitely planted in me from an early age. I've always loved and WILL always love Southern Gospel Music. It is my foundation; no doubt about it.

Scoops: Singer to cop... we have seen that trend before but it seems a bit unusual to me...

BRYAN: A singer because that is what I am; I grew up as one and will always be a singer. Cop, because I've always had a ton of respect for civil servants. I've also always had a heart to help people, so the job made sense for me to do.

Scoops: SGM to American Idol, some call that a leap. THow did you come about your decision to do Idol?

BRYAN: Well, I have been an avid AI viewer for several seasons. During my time away from gospel music I had a lot of people encouraging me to continue to sing. While I sang at my church, I still had a lot of my friends and family encourage me to go out for the show. After much prayer and thought I definitely felt led to the show. I recognize that God used me to plant some spiritual seeds in a few people while I was in Hollywood which made it worth the trip.

I honestly didn't expect to have as much impact as I did and still do, especially with teenagers. It's funny because people look at me differently now. I try my hardest to show people that I'm just a regular guy but sometimes it's to no avail.

Scoops: Can you share more of the 'seeds' you were able to plant?

BRYAN: During Hollywood week, I was able to get to share my faith with a few folks. In one of the many "waiting around" times of the audition process, I got to sit down and talk with Lilly Scott. Some avid Idol watchers may remember her from this season's top 24 contestants. She had platinum hair and played the guitar. She and I were sitting together

just chit chatting about our lives, and we got on the topic of religion. After we had discussed a few different religions, she asked me what I believed in. It was as if the Lord laid it out for me on a silver platter to witness to this girl. I got to look her dead in the face and said, "I believe in a Man named Jesus Christ, and He is the reason why I exist. He is the reason I sing." Our conversation went on for a solid 20 minutes, and throughout the entire Hollywood week I could see her watching me and how I behaved.

Scoops: What doors has Idol opened for you?

BRYAN: Fortunately, I haven't seen any negative impact as of yet. The only negative thing so far has been that I sometimes have a hard time working like I used to be able to. People recognize me now and don't care what I'm doing. If they recognize me, they are going to tell me they do!

I've had a chance to sing places I may never have been invited. I had doors open to allow me to see the opportunities in other styles of music.

Scoops: Tell us about your Idol experience.

BRYAN: The Idol experience was incredible. I learned so much about the Lord and myself throughout the entire process. I think the biggest lesson I learned was how to deal with rejection on such a huge scale. That was truly a learning experience.

Scoops: What impact did your AI experience have in your police job?

BRYAN: My fellow officers were extremely supportive of me! I know they got tired of the question "Do

you know the American Idol cop?" - because literally all of them have told me so! A couple of guys I work with kind of look like me, so they've had a lot of fun with it! I actually heard a story the other day of a Sevierville citizen who was traveling in Georgia and got pulled over. When the Georgia officer recognized where he was from, the officer LET HIM OUT OF THE TICKET! I couldn't believe it!

Scoops: What is next for you? Any short term or long term you would like to share with us?

BRYAN- TO KEEP SINGING! Seriously, over the recent years I've had folks to suggest I try different types of music. I've had them tell me what they thought I'd be good at and I've considered those things. But as the months have unfolded one thing is very clear- I LOVE SOUTHERN GOSPEL MUSIC! That

is what I want to sing.

I'm ready if a position comes open with a group or I'd be willing to fill in if a group needs someone. But it would have to be where God wanted me; I'd have to have peace about it. I love being a police officer but my heart is in Southern Gospel Music and that is truly the desire of my heart. I know that God promises if we delight in the Lord, He will give us the desires of our heart. He knows that is my desire, I just need to delight in Him until the time is right. I may have taken the long route to get there but I know that my road ahead is with Southern Gospel.

Since the Idol experience, the Lord has revealed some things to me. He showed me that He always faithful, even in the highest of highs, and the lowest of lows. He also showed me that my basis and reason for singing was because of my relationship with Him. I was fortunate enough to be asked to perform on a stage with Vanilla Ice a short time after I returned home from Hollywood (yes, he's still performing). Through that very "unique" experience, I came to realize that my place in the music world would always be singing music to lift up my Savior Jesus Christ. I admit that I tried to "make it" in secular music, but I now know that that scene just is not for me. I believe in the sovereignty of God. I believe that He used the whole experience to grow me in my faith and to show me my place in His Kingdom work. I believe in my heart that I am to be singing gospel music. As long as the Lord has me here in Sevierville with the police department I will serve Him faithfully. But He has placed a desire in me to get back out on the road full time. So be on the lookout! 🇺🇸

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Dino & His 24 Karrot Café Where the treats are made of gold.

Dino Kartonakis is known the world over for his piano artistry and ministry, and now he and wife Cheryl are synonymous with Branson - and the town's most famous cakes.



Last month in SGN Scoops, Stephanie Kelley explored Dino's home, business, and ministry in Branson. This month, **Jerry Tinkle** looks at the road that led Dino there.

With over 40 recorded albums, one Grammy, eight GMA Dove awards, and thousands of concerts held worldwide, not to mention countless TV appearances and videos, the name Dino Kartsonakis is synonymous with exceptional piano playing. He also hosts a TV show on the sixth largest network in the world, TBN, with The Dino Show, and performs his 'live' piano music worldwide, to audiences that total well over 100,000 people.

He has also taken his marketing wizardry to QVC, the home shopping network, where over 70 million people have been exposed to the music of Dino.

Dino Kartonakis is known for his awesome prowess at the keyboards, but, as we will learn, there is much more to him than his piano playing.

When reflecting on his past, Dino starts where another famous musician did...the very beginning, as it is a very good place to start:

"I started playing the piano at the age of three. My first piano was an old upright piano given to us by a Greek relative. One day I came home from church with my parents and walked up to the piano and began to pick out a melody I had heard in service, "At The Cross." Every Sunday I'd come home playing a new Gospel song. My mother knew that someday God would be using my talent. Mom approached a lady in our church who taught piano about possibly teaching me lessons..

That teacher, Miss Smith, would not accept Dino at such a young

age, stating he'd have to wait until his fifth birthday. Dino laughs, "To this day I say that she should have accepted me at the age of three because by the time I was five who needed Miss Smith?"

Jokes aside, he continues, "I played by ear until Miss Smith accepted me. She then taught me how to read notes, which expanded my scope of music - from sacred to classical."

And then there was time spent at Julliard, the prestigious art school in New York, as well as King's College and studies overseas in France and Germany as well.

No doubt the pedigree and skill Dino possesses could have led him in many different directions, but he states, "When I accepted Jesus into my heart at the age of seven, there was no doubt in my mind that I would be playing the piano in ministering the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others."

Many people have compared Dino's style to that of the late, great Liberace. As Liberace did, Dino occasionally uses a candelabra on his piano, and sometimes wears rings on his fingers and performs in a tuxedo. Even his pianos on stage have similarities to Liberace's, but Dino himself denies any connection to Liberace, saying only, "There was never a time I thought I was emulating Liberace even though I considered him a great entertainer. My thoughts were mostly on how to communicate the message best at the piano. People do call me an entertainer, and that's fine. But I am first a Christian, and I will take every opportunity in sharing the Gospel through the piano."

Branson, Missouri was just a little Midwestern burg that was beginning to show signs of becoming something special when Dino arrived. So what was the attraction

in coming to this town, to begin performing there, and to continue living and doing business there? Dino has travelled the world over, performing thousands of concerts in every conceivable venue one can imagine, but is adamant that Branson is home:

"Nineteen years ago my manager, Jim Halsey, introduced me to this little town in Missouri called Branson," he recalls. "Cheryl and I presented a Christmas show that the community loved and the rest is history."

"Branson is no longer a little town- it is now one of the most popular tourist destinations in America. God has blessed Branson because of its values in good family entertainment," he concludes. Indeed! Dino's Christmas Spectacular is one show that caravans of coaches travel hundreds of miles to see each Christmas season. His wife Cheryl, along with 24 professional dancers, a complete light show, and costuming, add to the extravaganza, second to none and arguably the reason many people come to Branson during the holiday season.

Piano playing prowess is now only one part of Dino Kartsonakis' legacy. Until recently, his cooking ability was only famous to his family. "My dad was a wonderful chef in New York City and I learned how to cook and bake by just observing him."

Dino now owns and manages the 24 Karrot Cake Cafe, and also the 24 Karrot Cake Company, where Dino's cake baking abilities are being showcased not only just in Branson, but on Facebook and throughout the world. "One day I decided to bake a carrot cake and it turned out to be quite good. I would invite my celebrity friends over after shows and treat them to a slice of cake and the comments were, 'Dino, you need to market this cake someday.'"

Those positive reviews were the starter ingredient to a new Branson mainstay: Dino and Cheryl bought a bakery and turned it into 24Karrot Cake Company. They also own the 24Karrot Cafe in downtown Branson.

Dino's special "24 Karrot" cakes are true works of art, and are a welcome part of many a bride's wedding plans. At the cafe, one can enjoy a favorite sandwich, as well as a cup of coffee or cappuccino or visit the gift shoppe after dining.

Patrons can also participate in Bible study there. Dino says, "Cheryl's brother, Gary McSpadden, pastors in Bran-

continues>

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son and we've invited him to have his Bible Studies at our Cafe every Tuesday evening." Gary McSpadden once sang in the Bill Gaither Trio with Bill and Gloria Gaither. He is a feature performer at Silver Dollar City in Branson, and has appeared on many TV shows and videos for his music. But his heart is pastoring the Faith and Wisdom Center, which holds Sunday morning services every week at Branson's Grand Country Square Theater.

Dino travels all over the world to perform his special brand of piano music. But, there are times when the travel ministry calls for even more than usual. One such time, which took place near Fort Hood in Houston, Texas, site of the brutal murder of two members of a family. Dino recalls it as "a wonderful opportunity to be able to play a concert for the Pastor

who lost his wife and daughter in a tragic family murder, which left four beautiful grandchildren without a grandmother, mother or father - the father is in prison for the crime. God gave us just the right words and music to bring peace and love to these precious ones."

When the Branson Gospel Music Convention premiered last year, Dino, along with wife Cheryl, welcomed the audiences to Branson by personally stepping on stage on opening night one year ago. "He reached out to us upon our arrival," says Kelly Burton, co-owner of the convention with her husband Rod (*and editor of SGN Scoops*). "We were nervous newcomers, and he and Cheryl made us and our audience feel at home. And...have you tried the carrot cake?"

Dino adds, "We were so pleased to have the First Annual Branson Gospel Music Convention in Branson last year. We opened our 24Karrot Cafe after hours to accommodate those who attended. We made great friends."

Dino's participation will be much broader this year, as Dino will perform on stage during the convention as a special highlight during the week's festivities. "I was honored to be invited," he says. "Once again this year everyone is invited to come to our cafe for great fellowship...and the most delicious cakes in the world."



"I try to select the songs that people recognize so as I play they can hear the words. In my concerts I play from Classical to Sacred - something for everyone. I always ask the Holy Spirit to anoint as I play so that hearts will be touched to feel the love that Jesus can give to those that are hurting."

-Dino on ministry through piano music

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Reaching out to South Asia with a vision to help a suffering church

By Jimmy McMillan

As Christians we should always be looking for new ways to help and support the family of God. This month we take a look at a ministry that truly deserves both. Many ministries have an amazing impact, yet we never hear their names. Let us introduce you to the New Creations Ministry and the South Asia Council for Community and Children in Crisis or SAC-CCC.

SAC-CCC was established in 1992 in with the goal of caring for orphans, disabled and deprived children. To assist communities in need to attain a safe and reasonable level of living regardless of race, religion, or nationality. The list of ministries and assistance programs provided by SAC-CCC is far too long to cover here but here are a few examples.

Children: Orphans, HIV/AIDS victims, remote tribal children, working and enslaved children and the disabled. SAC-CCC has twenty seven children's homes throughout their ministry region.

Women: equipping them with the knowledge and tools needed to escape and recover from lives of deprivation.

Health Care: Through volunteer medical professionals and supply donations, SAC-CCC provides medical care and supplies to people in both rural and inner city communities.

Occupational Training: SAC-CCC works to teach people skills in various fields to equip them with the ability to support themselves and their families.

"We feed over sixteen hundred children that we are feeding, clothing and educating on a daily basis, with over 27 children's homes spread throughout southern India." states Eddie Lofton, president of both New Creations Ministries and SACCCC. "We believe this is a work that is definitely worthy of acknowledgement and the support."

The list of outreaches goes on and on but the fact is SAC-CCC is a Christian organization that is having an enormous effect in a country that is almost completely Hindu, in and of itself an amazing feat.

Working hand in hand with SAC-CCC is New Creations Ministry. One of the main goals for this ministry is to introduce people to SAC-CCC and show them how they can have a part in changing the lives of countless human beings.

Eddie Lofton and his wife Barbara live in Kenosha Wisconsin. This also serves as the home base for New Creations Ministry. Eddie, Barbara and the staff of New Creations work diligently to raise financial as well as

prayer support for SAC-CCC. They also facilitate the recruitment of volunteers for mission and medical trips and to raise awareness of the plight of the Indian people.

Eddie says, "We would like to work with as many gospel music groups as we possibly can in an effort to raise awareness of this ministry."

In the field the responsibility lies with Dr. Samuel Issmer. (Pronounced "Ishmer") Dr. Issmer has been working hand in hand with the Loftons for fifteen years. He is a graduate of Columbia University where he earned a degree in Social Welfare. After graduating Dr. Issmer felt called to return to his native country to work at both changing the plight of the people and spread the gospel of Christ. It is apparent from the impact and growth of SAC-CCC that the Lord has honored Dr. Issmer's obedience.

Dr. Issmer arrived in the US last month; while he will travel extensively here, speaking and sharing the heart of both New Creations and SAC-CCC. While the schedule for his visit is very busy, he is still accepting speaking engagements. If your church or organization is interested in learning more or possibly becoming involved with these great ministries, you can call (262) 658-8412 or email new_creations@ameritech.net.

As a part of an ever expanding ministry, the Branson Gospel Music Convention will welcome brother Issmer this year. This will be a great opportunity for all that attend the convention to meet him and gain a better understanding of this ministry. Rod Burton, co-owner of Branson GMC says "We are thrilled to have Dr Issmer with us this year. It is amazing how God continues to diversify Branson GMC's ministry opportunities and methods. I believe everyone who has the opportunity to speak with Dr Issmer will receive a blessing and new excitement for international missions."

If you would like to learn more about these exciting ministries and how you can be a part, be sure to visit www.sac-ccc.org as well as www.sufferingchurch.com Above all please remember to uphold both of them in prayer. 🇺🇸



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A ride beyond the ashes

*Anthony Facello takes his testimony, his calling,
and his cutting-edge gospel group to churches, to
youth, and to the next big thing God has in store.*

By Kelly Capriotti Burton



Last year, on the second night of the Branson Gospel Music Convention, something rather un-convention-like occurred. At the end of a set by an up-and-coming gospel trio, the program stopped. The leader of the trio shared his testimony. The emcee for that portion of the evening came on stage and asked him to continue singing their song, "That's How Much I Need a Savior." And the audience was invited to come to the altar for prayer.

That trio was Beyond the Ashes, that testimony was given by its leader and tenor Anthony Facello, and that kind of sincere moment has become one of the stand-out ones for the Branson GMC and an expected outcome of a "BTA" concert or service.

"We serve a big God," Anthony says. "All of us have been in situations that were not great, but God loves us enough to bring us through the fire."

While "fire" comes in different forms for all of us, for Anthony it has come in the form of depression, addiction, and since, a sometimes uphill battle to find a niche in a genre-driven Christian music industry that doesn't easily know what to do with a group like BTA, whose sound is some Southern Gospel, some contemporary, some praise and worship.

For Anthony, however, the question of category is less important than the call itself. As a typical music kid – he began singing with his Dad's group at an early age – Anthony's exposure to God and music led him to his first full-time group in 1993, singing with Heaven Bound. That was the predecessor to time spent with Journeymen, Down East Boys, and Mercy's Mark.

"I knew at an early age..." Anthony recalls. "I remember sitting at a Hemphill concert, feeling very blessed loving the music, and knowing it was what God wants me to do."

But after time spent with that handful of groups, in 2006, Anthony suddenly found himself off the road.

"I thought maybe God was done with me in the capacity of singing full-time," he says. He spent time focusing on his real estate career in middle-Tennessee, getting involved in the local church, and focusing on finding more depth in his relationship with Christ.

It was then, Anthony remembers, that his call was made new again.

"I was in bed one morning, the sun shining in my room, and I heard an almost audible voice say: 'I've prepared you all this time for this moment.'"

Within three weeks, Anthony had found two additional singers, formed a group (then called Anthony Facello and Crossroads), and began traveling.

Word Publishing executive and self-described "fan and friend" Dusty Wells recalls this time in Anthony's life. "You know I have known Anthony for many years, have watched him with other



groups, seen his amazing talent, but I will never forget sitting at a Starbucks (such a great place for ministry) about 5 years ago and him being so discouraged and thinking his ministry was over and he was going to just focus on real estate, which he did for a year." Dusty recalls. "And then all of a sudden, God spoke to Him and told him what He wanted. I have never seen someone as more disciplined as Anthony and his passion for BTA and ministry. He has truly died to so much to the flesh, he has taken a stand for what he believes and his call and will not compromise his standards or values. He has given his all in every part of his life for Beyond the Ashes. Then add in Casey and Joe's part and God is truly blessing them."

The "add" Dusty mentions consists of lead singer Casey Rivers and Joe Combs on baritone, each of whom had their own interesting ride before arriving at the trio.

Casey hails from Texas and was a the 2006 Nashville Star first runner-up. His background included singing with a church quartet and being a fan of Karen Peck and New River and Gaither Vocal Band.

He always thought country music would be his life's work, until he felt God calling him into ministry. One night at church, he and his wife were praying about how God would use him. That same night, a mutual friend of Anthony's and Casey's told Casey about Beyond the Ashes.

He joined the group in early 2009, and says: "Being part of Beyond The Ashes goes beyond great singing and showmanship. It is a calling and I am proud to be part of the team!"

Joe, hailing from the Jacksonville, Florida area, had some southern gospel in his blood; his dad sang with Higher Ground, and Joe sang with his dad and his brother. He

never anticipated singing full time, but was on his way to Nashville two years ago to record a solo CD.

At that time, Anthony had put an ad on Craigslist for a baritone. Joe met with Anthony that weekend instead of beginning the CD recording, and of course, has been with BTA ever since.

"Being raised in a Christian home where music was a huge part of our lives, having a dad who traveled professionally, in Christian music, I knew from a young age what my calling was," Joe says. "I always wanted to be like [my dad] and here I am many years later with Beyond the Ashes, doing what I love and what I was called to do with a couple of guys that have become like brothers to me. "

Anthony testifies that since its inception, Beyond the Ashes has seen consistent growth. "I know God is in the midst of it," he declares.

The ministry focus of BTA is to minister to churches and to reach everyone, with not a specific style, though Anthony says they are Southern Gospel at their roots, but with music that expands in appeal and that attracts younger audiences.

A recent series of concerts in Louisiana illustrates the appeal BTA has for younger audiences. After singing to full churches on Thursday and Friday, three rows of "young people" followed BTA to their Sunday morning service.

"We're constantly thinking outside the box," Anthony says. "We believe it's our responsibility to help [the gospel industry] continue...[Our goal is to] offer ministry, with great music."

Dusty discusses the appeal of BTA's approach. "I have been around many groups and artists in my 30 years of being in this business, and I truly think they are one of the most anointed, talented groups out there in the music world. You could put them on stage with anyone and in front of any crowd and they would do nothing but honor God and follow His leading. To me, that is true ministry and call. "

"We want our concerts to be like a roller

'We want our concerts to be like a roller coaster ride...e want church wrapped in a concert.'





Opposite page top: BTA at the Grand Ole Opry, June 2009 *By Dusty Wells* and (bottom) at Branson GMC in July 2009. Below: Church ministry *By Rex Allen Murr* / All other photos promotional, courtesy of *Beyond the Ashes*.

coaster ride," Anthony expounds, "...for people to laugh, cry, reflect, feel every emotion. We want church wrapped in a concert."

The group seeks to be vulnerable in their concerts, to avoid showiness. "We're real, and we want to be accessible," Anthony says, noting that their table is open for prayer and sharing, something audience members seem to appreciate.

Anthony's personal testimony, in which he recounts battling addictions that left him nearly suicidal, is one that reaches audiences with a potentially controversial subject matter. He is grateful not to have met with opposition to his sharing it.

"I share my story every opportunity I get," he says. "Every time, someone comes to me who's 'there' or knows someone who is. God opens that door."

He continues, "Most people who have known me for a long time can see the change in me. Their reaction is 'Wow'... that it's amazing to see where God has brought me."

Where God brings Anthony, Casey, and Joe next is somewhat like the roller coaster that BTA rides in their concerts. They are currently enjoying a purposefully slow recording process with producer Wayne Haun (The Perrys, Triumphant Quartet). Haun "gets us where we want to be," Anthony says. Several songs are completed, and the group hopes to have the product finished in time for National Quartet Convention in September.

Outside of recording, Anthony feels a vague but certain push toward something grander. "I'm a big dreamer," he says, "And my vision is huge. I see us potentially doing conferences, something along the lines of 'The Power of Music,' how it can change people's lives, how to effectively use our testimonies. We want to minister to more people, touch lives in bigger ways."

With approximately 200 singing dates on the group's calendar for the second year in a row, it's a fact that the group's appeal is consistently growing. Their impact at Branson GMC in 2009 was large enough to warrant them an "anchor" slot for 2010. Recent appearances on Daystar TV, the NQC spotlight showcase, Solid Gospel Network, and with Marty Rayborn on the TCT network are bringing additional exposure to the trio as well.

Dusty concludes, "I believe in them and I am excited to see that the Gospel Music World will grow and thrive because of artists of this caliber."

As Beyond the Ashes continues to combine legacy and new direction, it is their sincerity and their sound that is sure to keep a growing audience along for the ride. 🇮🇹



2010 Program Schedule

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Monday June 28, 2010 Welcome Concert

Featuring:
2nd Generation
English Family
Jon Groves
Hinson Revival
Twice Adopted
Beyond the Ashes
Shannon Bunch
Melody Boys Quartet
Rod Burton
Freedom
Ron Brewer
McMillan & Life
HisSong

Tuesday June 29, 2010

Matinee Concert

11:00 Minister's Quartet
Crossroads V
Beth Mexin
New Beginning Ut
12:00 The Parnells
Randy & Wendi Pierce
Joyce Summers
Lori Jonathan Inc
Peggy Inks
1:00 Annette Hendon
Lookin Up
Brenda Kirkland
Charles Koas
Kimi Holzapfel
2:00 New Direction
David Livingston
Donnie Abraham
Spotlight
Ava Kaach
3:00 Shane Lecza
Beyond the Ashes
Heart to Heart
Mary Kay Jackson

Evening Concert

5:30 Marcey Wall
The Bethels
The Southernaires
6:00 High Road
Ministers Quartet
Mystery Men Quartet
7:00 The Roarks
Wendy Word + forgiven
The Maxwell's
Taj Rohr
8:00 Mike & Darla Cornell
Hallmark Quartet
Dale & Cheryl Golden
Crosspoint Quartet
9:00 Spotlight
Lynda Lynn
Chuck Wagon Gang
10:00 Melody Boys Quartet
Jericho
In Him

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2nd Generation



Bev McCann



Branson
GOSPEL + MUSIC
convention
The Spotlight Connection Message



Brothers Forever



David Hill Trio



Diamond
Awards
Angels of the Heart



Dave Brothers



Driven Quartet



Eighth Day



English Family



Faithful Crossings



The Freeman's



The Partners



Heavens Highway



HisSong

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Wednesday June 30, 2010

Matinee Concert

- 11:00** Jay Stone Singers
Majestic Sound
Maria Ratliff
Celebrate the Gospel
- 12:00** The Dysart Family
Cathy Reynolds
The Baker Family
Bill Dykes and the Sonmen
Nathan Young
- 1:00** Sons of the Shepherd
Jon Groves
Curtisinger
Ansha Green
James McMicken
- 2:00** The Williamsons
Top Shelf
Spotlight
April Hinson
- 3:00** Sunday Edition
Joshua's Vision
Trophies of Grace
Nikki Headley
Taj Kohr

Evening Concert

- 5:30** Weaver Believer
DC3 Trio
Chuck Wagon Gang
- 6:00** Buddy Liles
Beyond the Ashes
Shannon Bunch
- 7:00** Jay Stone Singers
Praise Incorporated
Spotlight
Kenny Bishop
- 8:00** Lookin' Up
Dino
- 9:00** The Williamsons
Hinson Revival
Sue Duffield
Highest Honor Quartet
- 10:00** Mike Powell
Chris Hester
Crusaders Quartet

Thursday July 1, 2010

Matinee Concert

- 11:00** Wendy Word + forgiven
Margaret Anne Smith
Keith Caldwell
His Voice Through Us
Heather Chapple
- 12:00** The Ellis Family
The Pachmayers
The Spiritual Voices
Heirs of Grace
Kris Miller
- 1:00** Pismo Jubilee
Zack Swain & Friends
Danny Thomas
Connected
- 2:00** The Oneys
Logan Road
Violet Maynard
Spotlight
- 3:00** Forgiven Quartet
The Shannons
Darlene Battles
Tupie L
Living Waters

Evening Concert

- 5:30** English Family
Ron Brewer
- 6:00** Diamond Awards



- 8:30** Ascension Quartet
Eric Hinson
- 9:00** Blackwood Quartet
Buddy Liles
The Wilsons
- 10:00** Ricky Atkinson
The Nerkhorns
Firm Foundation

Friday July 2, 2010

Matinee Concert

- 11:00** Hallmark Quartet
Twice Adopted
DC3 Trio
Christ Mynatt
Mary Davis
- 12:00** Kenny Bishop
Annette Johnson
Hearts of Grace
Dale & Cheryl Golden
Ken Gates
- 1:00** Tribute to Albert L. Drumley
- Featuring the All Star Choir
David Livingston
The Cereces
The Davis Family
- 2:00** Spotlight
Ava Kasch
Hearts of Faith
Dustin and Kaila
- 3:00** High Road
4 His Love
Roarks
Mercy Mountain Boys
Jan Keeton & The Keetons

Evening Concert

- 5:30** Jake Holder
Debbie Bennett
Appointed By Grace
- 6:00** Gold Harbor
2nd Generation
ReignSong
Ricky Atkinson
- 7:00** The Shireys
Russ Taff
Young Harmony
- 8:00** Spotlight
Dan Keeton & The Keetons
McMillan & Life
Rod Burton
- 9:00** Bill Dykes and the Sonmen
Blackwood Quartet
Sunday Edition
Bev McCann
- 10:00** Grand Finale

*Please note that schedule and performance times are subject to change without notice.



Joseph T. Lee



Melissa Morris



Men of Music



Misty Freeman



The Nelons



The Pfeifers



Praise Incorporated



The Quicks



Vertical Praise



Sharon Kay King



Shine On Trio



Southern Plainsmen



Sunday Edition



Rod Burton



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Johnathan Bond

Still staying strong through the storm

By Lorraine Walker

As the bright summer sunshine floods the streets of Branson, Missouri, one artist returning this year for the Gospel Music Convention is thankful to be seeing a break in the clouds on the other side of a major life storm. Johnathan Bond of Young Harmony is still standing as he faces the reality of divorce in the stage lights. After a very public split from his popular wife and singing partner, Johnathan is finding strength in the joy of the Lord.

Johnathan and Ginger Bond as Young Harmony had developed a diverse, award-winning ministry and received several Dove Award nominations. Traveling over 200 dates per year, the duo saw many lives changed and hearts turned to God. With an obvious calling and anointing on their lives, everything seemed to come to a crashing halt with the end of their marriage. [continues]

The Calling that God gave is individually, not jointly. He just allowed [Ginger and I] to do it together. We may not be together, but His calling hasn't changed. - Johnathan

"In ministry, a lot of people try to hide what is happening," says Bond. "They find it difficult to deal with hard change. Most people know that I've gone through a divorce in the past year and it was devastating. It was definitely not what I wanted, but it happened. I've learned that change will happen and the best way to deal with it is by having a close relationship with the Lord."

"In this extremely devastating time, I tried to act like nothing was happening," says Bond, "But it was very difficult. I had to learn that it was okay to say, 'I'm hurting'. I want to be able to say to people that you don't have to be phony and you don't have to hide when you are in pain. It's okay to ask God, 'why?' I always look to Jesus as my example, and He asked His Father, 'Why have You forsaken me?' We have to deal with real things in a real way."

In the midst of his real crisis, Bond tells of a Pastor friend who had called him one night, broken because his wife had left him. He asked Bond if he should stop pastoring. Bond replied that God's call on this Pastor's life hadn't changed. There should be repentance for the anointing to remain on the ministry, but the pastoral call remained. Bond feels the same about his own call to ministry.

"The divorce came through in December 2009 and I was booked to do a cruise in January that Ginger and I had been on many times before," says Bond. "I didn't want to go and I prayed to God for help because I didn't know His plan. He let me know that the calling He gave me hasn't changed. The Calling that He gave is individually, not jointly. He just allowed us to do it together. We may not be together, but His calling hasn't changed."

Bond has realized that his calling hasn't changed even though life circumstances may seem devastatingly wrong. "Being a Christian is not about being perfect," Bond continues. "When things go bad, that's when we need to lean on the Father. That's where the strength is. Scripture teaches us that 'all things work together for good', and it wouldn't have stated 'all' if it meant just 'some'. In the hardest of hard times, He is still working all things together for our good."

Bond says that God has strengthened him in those dark times. "One night, laying in bed, I was experiencing one of the hardest moments in my life. I said, 'God, I trust You and I know You are here, but, it doesn't feel like You are here.' I heard a noise that just sounded almost like a 'shush'. I hadn't realized my radio was on until it began to play a song with the lyrics:

*I can tell you're in a battle, fighting for your life.
You smile through your tears, as though everything's alright.
You wonder if you're all alone, but friend I have good news.
Jesus is with the Father, interceding for you.
Satan has desired to sift you as wheat.
But Jesus is praying that your faith would not get weak.*

*No matter how hard the
wind blows, or how high the
waves,*

*Satan does not stand a chance
when Jesus prays.*

"It was actually a song I had written just months before, but it was like I was hearing the lyrics for the first time. At that point, I felt I was able to cross that hurdle."

"No matter who you are and what you do, storms will occur," says Bond. "The difference will come with who you let handle the storm. The only way that I know to handle a storm is by spending time with the Peace Speaker and let Him handle it. He has been my strength through all of the changes and storms of life. It's more than just going to church, more than just singing and preaching. Relationship is what keeps anyone grounded during the storms of life. Knowing that He is an ever-present help right now when we need Him."

Bond says that he has learned some very important lessons while going through this latest life-changing storm. The first of these lessons was learning to find joy again. "Through all of this, I have only dealt with things in segments. I have been very concerned with the other people in our lives who have been hurt, like family, friends and fans. Focusing only on certain areas at a time was beneficial and caring for others taught me to rely on the joy of the Lord. For it is the joy of the Lord that is our strength. When Satan steals our joy, he is weakening us for the fall."

"It's normal to lose our joy and be-

continues>

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come weak," Bond continues. "Even the psalmist David asked the Lord to 'Restore unto me the joy of my salvation.' I have learned to find joy through sharing good things with others. The Bible shares in Revelation about believers who 'overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of their testimony'. I will continue to share what God has done for me. He's not finished with me yet!"

Bond has had many miraculous moments in his life. A deadly car accident put him in the hospital Emergency Room, his body being prepared for identification, when God answered his mother's prayer and he began to breathe. Another hospital stay due to a ruptured appendix could have left Bond with chronic health issues, but a healing God brought him back to physical well-being. Bond knows he serves an Almighty God who is able, and he reminds himself and others of

Everything in life is either God's way of blessing or Satan's way of destroying.

As Bond faces tough things like loneliness in his new life, he is able to keep his sense of humor and says that is extremely important. Just like past incidents in his journal bring a smile, sometimes a fan's words or deeds also bring a chuckle. "You have to take things lightly," he says. "Everything in life is either God's way of blessing or Satan's way of destroying. When God blesses you through someone, realize He is blessing and don't put that person on a pedestal. In the same way, if Satan is trying to destroy you through someone, don't blame that person but lift them to the Lord."

After years of ministry and counseling, Bond is thankful that the Lord has enabled him to continue to stand in his faith, whether in the midst of blessing or trial. "It's a wonderful thing to know in tough situations that you can practice what you preach," says Bond. "I have told so many not to let what Satan is doing destroy them, but to keep their focus on God and He will mend them. God keeps bringing those words back to my mind and using them to now help me."

Another lesson Bond is learning is the power of forgiveness, and says

what God has already done in his life.

Along with testifying to God's goodness, Bond realized his need to have someone he could share with. "Matt McFarland of Crossway is my best friend, and someone that I can share my real feelings with. If I was mad or hurt, I could let it all out and not harbor the feelings."

"I keep a journal and when I'm feeling down or lonely, I will look back in it. One day I wrote that I'd been struggling and Matt said, 'You know what you need? You need to hit somebody. So go ahead, hit me!' That made me laugh, and laugh, and then laugh some more!"

The third lesson Bond is learning is how to handle loneliness. Many people who are suddenly alone after years of being part of a couple, struggle with loneliness and the difficulties of doing things as a single person. Bond says he faces up to these things, just so he can say that he can do it. He will go to the theatre alone or to a family restaurant to eat by himself.

"I have to get things behind me that I know Satan will use to hurt me," says Bond. "When you are lonely, you think it is just you in a big world and no one notices you. You need to remind yourself of the people that love you. Loneliness can be a tool Satan uses to steal your joy and weaken you, again causing you to fall."

he had often shared with others the need to forgive. He quotes Vince Gill as saying at an Academy of Country Music Awards Show, "Who is blessed the most when you forgive? You are."

He says he mentioned this to his friend McFarland at one point, and said, "I don't feel like forgiving, but I know if I don't, it will destroy me." He says he was able to forgive his wife, but had trouble forgiving others involved. A difficult phone call offering forgiveness was one of the hardest things he ever did. But after he made the call, Bond realized he was completely free of the animosity.

"When people found out what had happened, many would come to me with condolences and want to turn the conversation into a trash session. I couldn't go there because I

can't be ignorant of Satan's devices such as this. He tries to trip us up and we need to stay focused."

Bond has turned his focus into a greater desire to minister through Young Harmony. Currently, he is singing with two new group members, Noel Walters and Darlene Chapman. Young Harmony will have a new CD available for the Branson Gospel Music Convention, with the first single hitting the airwaves around the same time. Bond has written several of the cuts on the new recording and is also joined by fellow songwriters Charlotte Sons Baker, Debra Shepherd and Philip Hare. He is excited about returning to Branson to visit with other artists and judge the talent contest. Many new plans are in the works for this mixed trio.

Jonathan Bond and Young Harmony continue to look ahead at what God has in store for them. "Our goal this year is to learn more about Him, share more about Him, and grow closer to Him. He is our goal. When we have our focus on Him, the rest will come together." Johnathan continues, "I have a work to do and this is the most important thing to me. I am always looking for opportunities to make a difference."

These days, Johnathan Bond is seeing the rays of sunlight through the clouds. "I wouldn't want anyone to go through something like I have had to go through, and am still having to go through. But I am thankful to say that I have been able to sustain in this storm because of Who is beside me. I know that He has carried me and because of Him I'm still standing strong after the storm." 🇺🇸



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Changes

a year made all the difference for some of the artists who were part of the inaugural branson gospel music convention. be it personnel changes, name changes, or a combination of those and more, the difference to their ministries is evident... and their hopes for the future are bright.

reporting by jerry 'jt' tinkle

The first ever Branson Gospel Music Convention received critical acclaim and was well attended, both by artists and fans of Southern Gospel music. Groups from all over the country converged upon the Hilton Convention Center in downtown Branson, to participate in an event where "The Spotlight is on the Message." And the message WAS heard IN the music.

A few of the artists that came to the first Branson GMC were The Blackwood Quartet, The Gospel River Boys, The Jay Stone Singers, The Minister's Quartet, and Eric Hinson. Over the course of the past year many changes have taken place inside these ministries. Read on as the artists themselves explore the reasons and the results

blackwood quartet

Last year, Ron Blackwood was enjoying tremendous success leading the group bearing his last name, arguably the most recognized name in Southern Gospel music. Then, suddenly, he announced that he was leaving the road, and that The Blackwood Quartet and The Blackwood Gospel Quartet would merge into one group.

In Ron's words:

"I left the road for several reasons. First and main reason is my doctor told me that traveling is just too hard on my health. I have seen many people keep pushing knowing the time bomb was ticking but yet



From opposite page, far left: Blackwood Quartet 2010, Jay Sone Singers 2009, Blackwood Quartet 2009, Jay Stone Singers today.

refused to listen to the doctor (I'm listening to my wife, Shelley, too). I feel God gives us signals and warnings; I got mine and as hard as it was to do, I told the quartet I was going to have to stop and change my lifestyle on doctor's orders. I also for the first time in my life feel this is a blessing in disguise as I now can spend time with my family, go to church, and be involved in things I have never been able to do with my wife and kids. I will still be involved with booking many dates for Blackwood Quartet, Florida Boys, Chuck Wagon Gang, Classic Imperials, Stamps Quartet, and Dove Brothers.

"I contacted my cousin Mark Blackwood and we made a deal that he would take over the reins of Blackwood Quartet and I would

continue doing the booking. Mark is the son of the late Cecil Blackwood, my uncle who took my dad's place when Dad died in a tragic plane crash. Mark has had a group for years and understands the commitment it takes to run a group. Blackwood Quartet consists of Mark Blackwood as lead, Chris West as bass, David Mann as baritone, and Dale Evans as tenor. The promoters I have spoken to who have just had them said 100% that they were incredible and booked them again. They will be in Branson to support Rod and Kelly [Burton]'s dream and this great sing fest.

"The memories I had traveling with John Rulapaugh, Josh Garner, and Chris West leave me with thoughts that I had some of the finest singers and men with me that I

have ever worked with. In one year God had blessed us with a major record contract, working with many major promoters such as my good friend Bill Bailey, the first Branson Music Convention, Harold Marshall, and many more. We recorded one major video, went on a cruise to the Bahamas, participated in Charlie Waller's Grand Ole Gospel Reunion, and were the first Gospel group ever to perform at Farm Aid with Willie Nelson to 40,000 people. Our music was featured in a movie with Willie and we recorded several songs with Willie. Doing many Concerts with Florida Boys, Chuck Wagon Gang, Gold City, Kingsmen, Imperials, and Stamps Quartet were other highlights.

"I won't be in Branson this year. I

continues -

had plans to be there, but so many things came up I could not make it. Moving to Waco, Texas and setting up my offices took more time than I realized it would take. I will miss many of my friends, but I strongly want to encourage all who read this that without God's blessings on your life and having the right motives in pursuing your calling you will always fall short. Jesus is alive and well! I write this from Texas and I will be praying for a huge success in Branson."

Jay stone singers

This great family group participated in the first Branson Gospel Music Convention last year. Like the other groups that were mentioned, Jay Stone Singers have not been immune to change during the past year. We asked Bobby Carter of the group to explain the change.

"We are a family ministry that has been singing for almost 34 years and has involved three generations of singers and musicians. Earlier this year Jay and Mary, the group founders and parents of Bobby's wife, Sharona Stone Carter, decided to retire from traveling. With this change, Bobby and Sharon's children, 15 year-old Stone and 13 year-old Emma have taken their place on stage and are doing a great job."

And with change always there is an adjustment period. Of theirs, Bobby says, "Well certainly anytime the head of an organization steps out it is going to have some impact. However, [Jay and Mary] have given 33+ years of their lives to this ministry and they have kept their family involved with the hope that when it was time for them to quit that we would continue on. The dynamic on stage is quite different with two teenagers onstage all of the time. But it is a good energy that our audiences seem to be enjoying. We are very clear about what God wants us to do and we are "Fully Committed" to walking through every door that He opens for us."

Bobby continues, "We have always been a very versatile group. Stone and Emma knew our program and were able to step in and sing the parts effortlessly. So it was a fairly easy transition. Of course we miss having Mom and Dad with us, but we honor them for all of the hard work and sacrifices they have made through the years and we are excited for them to have this time to do some of the things they enjoy."

And speaking of enjoying, Bobby then turned his attention to memories of the convention from last year. The Carter family's favorites include: "Everything about Branson last year was exciting! We really enjoyed the energy of the first year for this great event," Bobby recalls. "Of course we always enjoy meeting and making new friends, but we really felt that all of the effort to put the emphasis on ministry made the atmosphere very special for all who attended."

This year, the family looks forward to, as Bobby says, "...catching up with old friends, meeting new friends, and of course hearing all of the great music. We are just going to show up expecting God to do great things in each and every concert. We are believing that we will all come away refreshed and encouraged."

hallmark quartet / gospel river boys

Since last year this group has experienced not only the loss of personnel, but also a name change. Gary Morgan, CEO and tenor of the group explains all the changes.

Gary told us that time and time again, using the name Gospel River Boys got them into situations where people thought that they were a bluegrass group. After trying and trying to convince these prospective bookers that they were not bluegrass, and at times even losing bookings because they were not bluegrass, a decision was made by Gary to pursue a new name. During the same period of time that this was being tossed around, it became necessary to make a couple changes in personnel as well. The current lineup for the group consists of Gary Morgan, CEO/tenor; Mark Flaker, lead; Jim Sheldon, baritone; and Jerry Fisher, bass.

"The name Hallmark Quartet was chosen to add a touch of professionalism to the title for the group, and is something that the group is aspiring to do jointly, as well," Gary says. "That is not to say



that the previous makeup was not professional. The reputation that comes with a name can add to or detract from how a group is pictured by prospective clients and we want people considering us for their venue to be aware that we strive to give the most professional approach to their ministry as possible."

Gary states that being at the inaugural Branson Gospel Music Convention was a great thrill for them. Joining groups on stage like The Blackwood Quartet, The Florida Boys, The Chuckwagon Gang, Young Harmony, and the like will bring a smile to any group out there today, and Gary's group is no exception.

minister's quartet

This up-and-coming quartet from Muncie, Indiana, had the dubious honor from last year's convention of being the only group to have its picture featured on the front page of a Branson, Missouri newspaper during the convention held last year. That in itself was one of the highlights of the group from last year's event. Also on the list of memories from 2009's convention was the fact that Ron Pence, bass for the group, was asked to be the bass singer for the opening song, "Halleluia Meeting" which featured Eric Hinson, Brenda Denney of 2nd Generation, and Rod Burton, backed by the friends of Branson choir! Another highlight was getting to shake hands with Dino Kartsonakis, who, with wife Cheryl, took the stage immediately before Minister's Quartet, to welcome people to the convention.

Aside from those memories of their trip to Branson, Minister's Quartet has experienced rapid growth in their ministry. They have expanded the boundaries of their ministry to include visits to Pennsylvania, Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan, Illinois, and Missouri, and are scheduled to debut in Oklahoma in 2011.

The past year has not bypassed Minister's Quartet as far as personnel change. Doug Nowlin was the lead singer a year ago, but he has since departed the group. Filling in is Danny Lee Burr, originally hired by the group as pianist. Danny now sings lead, plays keyboards, and was instrumental in the recording of the group's latest CD project. This talented young man has a talent you have to hear to believe. Be looking for even more great things from this rising group.

eric hinson & hinson revival

Q: At last year's convention, you were part of leading a rendition of "Halleluia Meeting" to kick off the week. Was that, in any way, a reason for putting together Hinson Revival?

Not exactly. This idea about putting together a trio to bring back the old Hinson songs in this fashion was brought to me from a dream that the Lord gave me. In this dream, I was standing in a large field at an outdoor singing. There was a group on the stage and they were singing one of the older Hinson songs. Instead of being actual people in the audience, it was sheep. These sheep were branded on their side like cattle. The brands were The Freemans, The Crabb Family, Gold City, The Perrys (the group singing during my dream), etc. Those sheep seemed to be very happy and healthy. Among those sheep were also sheep with the brand Hinson on them. These sheep were weary and frail. In this dream I was wondering and asking God what in the world this was all about. As the dream unfolded and pieces were being revealed to me, it was as if the sheep with the brand Hinson were amongst the others trying to feed. The interpretation of this part of the

dream is there are many groups out there that still sing some of the classic Hinson songs every now and then, so these Hinson sheep would try to

Before and after: Gospel River Boys to Hallmark Quartet, Minister's Quartet 2010 and last year at the Branson GMC.



get as much as they could from each group. Yet they were still starving and weary. Then my attention was drawn to the backside of the field where this singing was going on. I noticed a multitude of sheep in the back far corner, which was separated from the audience. All these sheep had the Hinson brand. They too were very weary and starving. I asked the Lord, what are you trying to show me.

It was plain revelation to me that the sheep that God had brought to support the Hinsons' ministry for many years were not getting fed enough from the

continues -



Above: Eric and April Hinson minister together; Eric at last year's Branson GMC.



other groups that were just singing a Hinson song every now and then.

To make a long story short so to say, the Lord moved on me to put together this group, Eric Hinson and Hinson Revival. Our goal is to bring back the old songs from the Hinsons that is the food for OUR sheep, like "I Could Still Go Free," "Mas-

ter's Strong Hand," "The God that Cannot Fail," "Hallelujah Meetin'," and of course "The Lighthouse." I am very appreciative of the other groups such as the Perrys and the Crabb Family and The Freemans and so on that have kept some of the Hinson songs on the list of their songs that they sing. They have done it VERY well. When God calls ministers into the ministry, He also calls a people to support that ministry. After Uncle Kenny passed away, the

Hinson family as we all knew, was no more. With Eric Hinson and Hinson Revival, we want to revive those old songs so that the Hinsons' sheep can be strengthened, encouraged and healthy in their spirit once again.

When it comes to the beginnings of this, I had thought of calling this group Eric Hinson & the Hinson Review it was actually going to be me, my brother, and his wife. However, personal job situations would conflict with traveling schedules with him and her.

At the Branson Gospel Music Convention of 09, Rod Burton and I discussed going ahead and singing some of the older songs at the convention, to sort of see how the audience would accept something like this.

It was a type error that got the words Hinson Review changed to Hinson

Revival and Folks were wondering if I & Uncles Ronny and Larry and aunt Yvonne and Cousins Bo and Weston (Bo is Ronny's son & Weston is Kenny's Son) were going to be, if The Original Hinsons were coming out of retirement, and it sort of bothered me that the audience wouldn't like what we were going to do with this idea of putting together this Hinson Revival at the Convention. Well I must say, that they loved it very much.

After the convention, Rod and I had talked about him and I doing this together with my wife April. It wasn't until March 2010 that we started out on our first concert as Eric Hinson & Hinson Revival. It is not about us trying to be the Original Hinsons or competing with any of the other family's ministries. Ronny's son is still traveling and singing as also Kenny's son, Weston, is traveling with his wife and family as Weston Hinson & By Faith. They also sing a few of the older Hinson songs while in concert/service. But Eric Hinson & Hinson Revival's main focus is all about the reviving of the old songs that have a powerful anointing that still needs to be heard today in the True Hinson way that we hope all can appreciate.

Q: How has the trio been received as opposed to your solo ministry? Are you going to take the trio full-time, or keep doing it as a solo ministry AND trio ministry like you have been doing?

The trio has been received very well. The audience has enjoyed the trip down memory lane and reminiscing the first time they had heard these songs and the times they had going to the Hinson concerts. Also, we are excited to see the new people who are latching on to those

classic Hinson songs that they are hearing for the first time.

As far as my personal solo ministry goes, I have been out since 2004 in my solo ministry and have been received very well. I have had numerous songs that have hit radio such as, "Home with You Tonight," "Once Again," "Beyond The Shadow of a Doubt," (which are some of the Older Hinson songs that I re-recorded) along with my brand new original songs from my second solo project, "Homeless Man," "I've Got You Lord, That's Enough," and my latest radio single, "The Preacher was Right, and We were Wrong," I will always continue in my personal solo ministry along with booking Eric Hinson and Hinson Revival as the trio.

Q: What is the one memory of last year's convention that you'd like to tell our readers about?

First and foremost, that is where I met my soul mate and realized that honoring God first in all that you do, including relationships, that God will honor you in return. It has been one blessing after another since the convention of '09. A lot of changes have happened in my life, but every one is for the better for the continuing of the ministry and purpose that God put in my life. I and my soul mate (April) were married on January 30, 2010. We have been traveling, singing, and ministering together since that time.

Second of all, being a part of a convention that really cares about the ministering to the souls of the people that are in the audience, instead of just putting on another singing. It pleased me to see the ones in the audience that got up and came down to the front of the stage and prayed. To coin a phrase, "Ain't That What It's All About?"... to see a soul saved. 🇮🇹

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ALBUM

Almost Morning, The Perrys
Footsteps Of Life, Firm Foundation
Graveyard Revival, Dr. J.D. Brown
It's All About Him, Praise Incorporated
Journey Through the Sky, HisSong

SONG

"Hold On"
Written By McCray Dove
Recorded By Dove Brothers
"If You Knew Him"
Written By Joseph Habedank & Ronnie Griffin
Recorded By The Perrys
"Mercy Leads"
Written by Kenna Turner West,
Sue C. Smith, & Stephanie Boosahda
Recorded by Sisters
"Somebody Died For Me"
Written By Christy Sutherland and Kyle Matthews,
Recorded By Triumphant Quartet, Christy Sutherland
"What Children Believe"
Written by Brent Lamb, Jerry Salley
& James Isaac Elliot
Recorded by Gold City

PAUL HEIL AWARD in BROADCASTING

Daniel Graves, Heir Wave Internet Radio
Jonathan Edwards of KWFC-FM, Springfield, MO
Ken & Jean Grady, Gospel Music Today
Les Butler, Solid Gospel 105
Mickey Bell, This Week in Gospel Music

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Gigi n Randy Burgess
Ladd Family
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Dianne Wilkinson
Gerald Crabb
Jim Brady
Kenna Turner West
Rodney Griffin

INSTRUMENTALIST

Gordon Mote
Kelly Back
Jeff Stice
Johnathan Presnell
Roy Webb
Zack Swain

MALE SOLOIST

Adam Crabb
Chris Hester
Ivan Parker
Jason Crabb
Mark Bishop

FEMALE SOLOIST

Charlotte Ritchie
Christy Sutherland
Janet Paschal
Misty Freeman
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New Day
Talley Trio

MIXED GROUP

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The Isaacs
Karen Peck & New River
The McKameys
The Perrys

QUARTET

Brian Free & Assurance
Gaither Vocal Band
Gold City
Jericho
Triumphant Quartet

BLUEGRASS ARTIST

Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver
The Isaacs
Jeff & Sheri Easter
Primitive Quartet
Watkins Family

LIVING LEGENDS

Ann Downing
Claude Hopper
Karen Peck Gooch
LuLu Roman
Peg McKamey Bean

ARTIST WEBSITE

Booth Brothers - boothbrothers.com
Christy Sutherland - christysutherland.net
Firm Foundations Qt - firmfoundationsquartet.com
McKameys - mckameysonline.com
Paul's Journey - paulsjourneyonline.com

CHRISTIAN COUNTRY GROUP

Diamond Rio
Dove Brothers
Jeff & Sheri Easter
Oak Ridge Boys
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Jason Crabb
Shane Roark
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Debbie Bennett
Lisa Daggs
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Wendy Word

INDUSTRY WEBSITE

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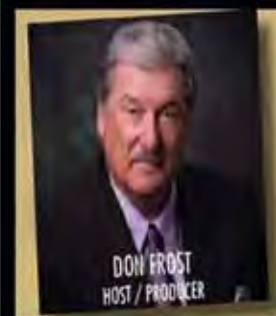


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A: Admit that you are a sinner.

Romans 3:23- For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

B: Believe that, because of your sin, you deserve to spend eternity in Hell. However, Jesus shed His blood and died on the cross of Calvary to pay the debt for our sin. He then rose from the dead three days later, proving His victory over death, Hell, and the grave. He offers this as a free gift to anyone who will accept it in faith.

Romans 5:8- But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 6:23- For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Call upon Jesus and ask Him to come into your heart, forgive your sins, and make you one of His children.

Romans 10:9- That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Romans 10:13- For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

If you would like to accept God's free gift of salvation, then all you have to do is pray and ask Him.

Your prayer might sound something like this:

Dear Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I know that I deserve Hell because of it. However, I believe that you died on the cross and rose again in three days to pay for my sin. I ask you to come into my heart, cleanse my sin, and make me one of your children. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

Please remember that simply saying a prayer doesn't save you. You must believe this in your heart as well.

If you have any questions about salvation, or if you just prayed to receive Christ, please e-mail us at sgnscoops@gmail.com. We'd love to rejoice with you! God bless you!



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What is Idol Worship – or Idle Worship?

"Christian Fitness" by Laurette Willis

"Idol worship? Me? Never!"

That's what I would have said if someone had suggested that I was putting my enjoyment for food before delighting in the Lord.

When we put someone or something ahead of God in our affections, we are creating an idol. In the area of food, my conscience was soothed by the excuses I made why I kept turning to food to change the way I felt instead of turning to God. I made food an idol in my life.

Idol Worship Not a Problem?

If you don't think this is an issue in your life, do what I have done: next time you have a craving for something to eat and you know your body does not need physical nourishment at that moment, say "No" to your flesh and turn to God instead.

You may be horrified at the battle in the mind which ensues. Or--you may have your flesh pretty much under control, but you'll notice thoughts about that particular snack or other food options keep coming to mind (as if the flesh is saying, "Okay, if I can't have that, let me have this!").

It's like disciplining a headstrong child. "No" is often not good enough--even when you add "because I said so, that's why!"

The apostle Paul understood about the necessity of disciplining the flesh. He said he kept his flesh "under" and made it his slave. "I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified."

The Amplified Bible enlarges (amplifies) this verse for us: "But [like a boxer] I buffet my body [handle it roughly, discipline it by hardships] and subdue it, for fear that after proclaiming to others the Gospel and things pertaining to it, I myself should become unfit [not stand the test, be unapproved and rejected as a counterfeit]."

Our flesh can be very persuasive, demanding and even seem to SCREAM when it doesn't get its way. Food manufacturers understand this part of human nature, often better than we do. Food commercials are meant to entice and cause us to take action, hopefully

in the direction of the refrigerator, cupboard, local supermarket or fast food haven.

Question: Have you experienced sudden urges to eat certain foods? If so, what has been your standard response when cravings hit?

"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" 1 Corinthians 10:13.

God IS faithful. He has made a way for us of escape in temptation. Jesus said of Himself that He IS the way: "'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.'"

He is the door and the way out of temptation--if we turn to Him and ask Him to save us. It's a wonderful thing to realize that our God is a Savior who always saves. Yes, He saves us from eternal separation from God when we submit our lives to Him--and He saves us in the everyday sense of the

**You shall have no other
gods before Me.**

Exodus 20:3.

**Do not turn to idols...I
am the LORD your God.**

Leviticus 19:4

word, too.

Yet--"Ye have not because ye ask not," James tells us.

What is Idle Worship?

Unfortunately, I can see the road signs for "Idle Worship" almost every time I enter into praise and worship, or approach quiet time with the Lord in prayer or Bible reading. D-I-S-T-R-A-C-T-I-O-N hits. Suddenly ten things I "need" to do come to mind. Do I really need to do them? Perhaps. But do I need to do them NOW? Probably not.

I find my spiritual motor running on "idle" instead of worship.

The "Food god" Bit Me!

I may even have already entered into worshipping the Lord, at church for example, and sudden thoughts of lunch begin doing the Texas Two-Step across my cranium.

"Arrgh! What's wrong with me?" I moan. "Oh Lord, please forgive me!"

It's at times like this that 2 Corinthians 10:5 comes in handy: "casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

continues >>



I've actually been known to physically reach up as if grabbing the thought from my head and dashing it to the ground -- then squashing it with my foot for good measure!

Replacing the "vain," self-centered or "idle" thought with an empowering word from the Bible causes the fiery dart from the enemy to boomerang back at him. "I love the Lord my God with all my heart, with all my mind and with all my strength. I love You, Lord and have NO other gods before You!"

Question: Can you remember a time when you asked God to save you from a problem or situation that ensnared you? What happened when you asked God for help?

Do you think God can help you lose weight, overcome overeating and make some physical activity a part of your life? Some of us may think God can handle the "important stuff," but we're supposed to take care of the things of the physical world ourselves.

We may even think, "I got myself into this mess, so I've got to get myself out of it." That's one reason why God specializes in mercy. Aren't you glad? His mercy can reach even beyond His amazing grace.

The world abounds with well-worn platitudes such as,

"You've made your bed. Now go lie in it." "Just use a little will power." "God helps those who help themselves" (No, that's not Bible, it's Poor Richard's Almanac, penned by Benjamin Franklin.). If we could help ourselves, we wouldn't need a Savior--and we definitely need a Savior. Yes, even in this area--especially in this area if we are experiencing temptation, torment and defeat.

Assignment for Victory...

Write in your journal or notebook your prayer request to the Lord. Ask Him to help you in areas of temptation. Ask Him to help you remember to run TO Jesus ("the Way" of escape) when tempted.

Decide that the next time you're tempted to run to "comfort food," you'll run to the Comforter instead of to the false comfort the idol of food promises. How? See below...

* Physical food can only fill and satisfy the physical body.

* Jesus, the Bread of Life, fills and satisfies us - spirit and soul.

* Is it physical hunger that drives you to the 'fridge, or a hunger of another sort?

* When tempted, follow this quick exit strategy:

Praise FAST! As quickly as you can, praise and thank the Lord for filling you to the full with His presence, love and power, so you may "know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 4:19).

Has this strategy helped you? Please let us know! Write to Laurette at praisemoves@gmail.com.

(Adapted from *The PraiseFast Workbook* by Laurette Willis, part of the *PraiseFast Weight Loss Program*). For information, please see www.PraiseFast.com.

Carol Sanguinette-How

Carol's Music Ministry is a God-inspired ministry of Gospel Music and testimony! A breast cancer survivor, she is full of the desire to serve the Lord! Allow Carol to encourage your group with song and testimony!

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It is good to praise the Lord and make music. - Psalm 92:1

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Who's making new music... CD Reviews by Chad Hayes



LEGACY FIVE
Just Stand -
Versions 1 & 2
www.tbrqt.com

A few months ago, I had the privilege of reviewing Legacy Five's newest album, "Just Stand." The album was produced by none other than Lari Goss, and the lineup featured Frank Seamans (tenor), Scott Fowler (lead), Scott Howard (baritone), Glenn Dustin (bass), and Tim Parton (pianist). I mentioned in that review that Gus Gaches had replaced Frank Seamans at the tenor position and that the group was going to re-release the same album with his vocals in place of Seamans' vocals.

At the conclusion of that review, I wrote these words: *All I can say is that Legacy Five did very well in broadening their vocal horizons. Their previous album, God's Been Good, was one of the best they've ever done. Just Stand, however, surpasses that one easily. In fact, this might just be my favorite Legacy Five album of all. The song selection and arrangements were top-notch, and the vocals were solid throughout.* Because of this, I'm anxious to hear how the album sounds with Gus Gaches on tenor instead of Frank Seamans. If it's as good as this one was, then Legacy Five is on the right track. Well, Legacy Five was kind enough to provide me with a copy of the Gaches version of the album so that I could compare it with the Seamans version. Many thanks to them for allowing me to do this.

I'm going to go song-by-song and give my impressions. Also, the format will be a bit different from the reviews of mine that you have (hopefully) become accustomed to reading.

The first song is an old Cathedral Quartet song. "New Born Feeling" is an up-tempo song whose "jazzy" arrangement is slightly different than that of the Cathedrals. The tenor has the lead through most of the song, which gives a good opportunity for comparison right off the bat. Seamans has a harder "edge" to his voice than Gaches does, so Seamans was often very prominent in the mix. On this song, you can tell that the sound has changed a bit due to Gaches' softer vocal, but it also sounds like they left Seamans' stacks in during the tenor pickups on the chorus. (Although I could be wrong about this). The next song is a beautifully-orchestrated rendition of "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." The tenor feature on the second verse is the

While I have always been a fan of Frank Seamans and thought Legacy Five sounded good with him as tenor, I think that a whole new door has opened for them with the addition of Gaches.

point in the song where it really kicks into high gear, and yet Seamans and Gaches approach it differently. Seamans really drives it with a prominent, cutting vocal. Gaches, while still giving it the power it needs, also gives it a more rounded feel. Gaches seems to have more of a soulful flair to his voice than Seamans. Song No. 3, "One Thing God Can't Do," is a Tim Parton feature whose light background vocals don't really give us much of an opportunity for tenor comparison. The fourth song, the up-tempo "Just Stand," is a Glenn Dustin feature. However, there is a noticeable difference in sound in some places here- most notably the last chorus. Seamans seems to hit the highest notes a bit more easily than Gaches, which might be an indication that Seamans has a slightly higher range. However, it could also be due to Seamans' style of singing- he tends to "let loose" and hit his higher notes with volume and power.

Song No. 5 is a power ballad that has some tenor highlights to compare. The two versions of this song actually have distinctly different sounds and feels to them. The Seamans version is dominated by the tenor vocals, while the Gaches version gives the listener more of a taste of the all-around group blend. The next song, "Above All Circumstances," features Scott Howard and is another song that really offers no opportunity for tenor comparison. However, the seventh song, "When They Found Nothing," is another one that seems to have a better blend with Gaches than with Seamans. Song No. 8, the up-tempo "My Soul Is Firmly Anchored," sounds almost identical on both versions. There are only very minor differences not worth mentioning.

The next song, "Statement Of Faith" is a collaborative effort between members of Legacy Five and two other groups. However, since Legacy Five's tenor is not part of this song, we'll go on to the next one. "Thankful For The Change" is another song that sounds pretty much the same on both versions of the album. Then,

there is the last song, the mid-tempo ballad "'Til We Meet Again." On this song, Seamans comes as close to Gaches' style of singing as he ever does, while still remaining true to his own vocal style. While Gaches' version is good, the personal connection behind this song for Seamans and the group make it hard to imagine anyone else singing it.

In short, this re-cut album only gives you a slight glimpse of Legacy Five's new sound with Gaches at tenor. Sometimes you can tell a distinct difference, and sometimes you can't. You may wonder how this can be since Seamans and Gaches are two totally different tenors stylistically. Well, it's very simple- the songs on this album were chosen with Seamans in mind since he was the tenor at the time it first came out. Thus, when Gaches re-cut the tenor vocals, he wasn't always singing songs that fit him. Still, he did a good job at making some small changes to make some of the songs more "his." And even though you can get a small taste from this re-cut album of how they sound with a new tenor, the true test won't come until they release another new studio album with all of the current personnel in mind.

While I have always been a fan of Frank Seamans and thought Legacy Five sounded good with him as tenor, I think that a whole new door has opened for them with the addition of Gaches. I mentioned in my original review that this album represented somewhat of a new style for the group, and I actually think that a tenor like Gaches is what will allow them to more fully explore that style. I look for Legacy Five to refine their blend even further and explore some more complex and close harmonies and arrangements on future albums- especially if they keep having Lari Goss do their producing.

Overall, my impression of the *Just Stand* album hasn't changed. Both versions, while different in various areas, are still equally good. Thus, my original rating of 10 out of 10 microphones still stands! 🇺🇸





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Monday, June 28th

6:00 PM Exhibit Hall opens

7:00 PM Opening Night Concert begins

Tuesday, June 29th

10:30 AM Exhibit Hall opens for general public

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM Matinee concert

5:00 PM Exhibit hall reopens

5:30 PM Evening concerts begin

Wednesday, June 30th

9:00 AM Encouraging Today's Women: Service in Concert Hall

9:00 AM Food Court: Men's Prayer Times

10:30 AM Exhibit Hall opens for general public

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM Matinee concert

5:00 PM Exhibit hall reopens

5:30 PM Evening concerts begin

Thursday, July 1st

9:00 AM Concert Hall: HIS CHOICE MUSIC Talent Search / Open to all

9:00 AM Food Court: Devotion & Prayer / Open to all

10:30 AM Exhibit Hall opens for general public

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM Matinee concert

5:00 PM Exhibit hall reopens

5:30 PM Evening concerts begin

6:00 PM Diamond Awards begin

8:30 PM Evening concerts resume

Friday, July 2nd

9:00 AM Concert Hall: Chapel Service/Open to All

10:30 AM Exhibit Hall opens for general public

11:00 AM - 4:00 PM Matinee concert

5:00 PM Exhibit hall reopens

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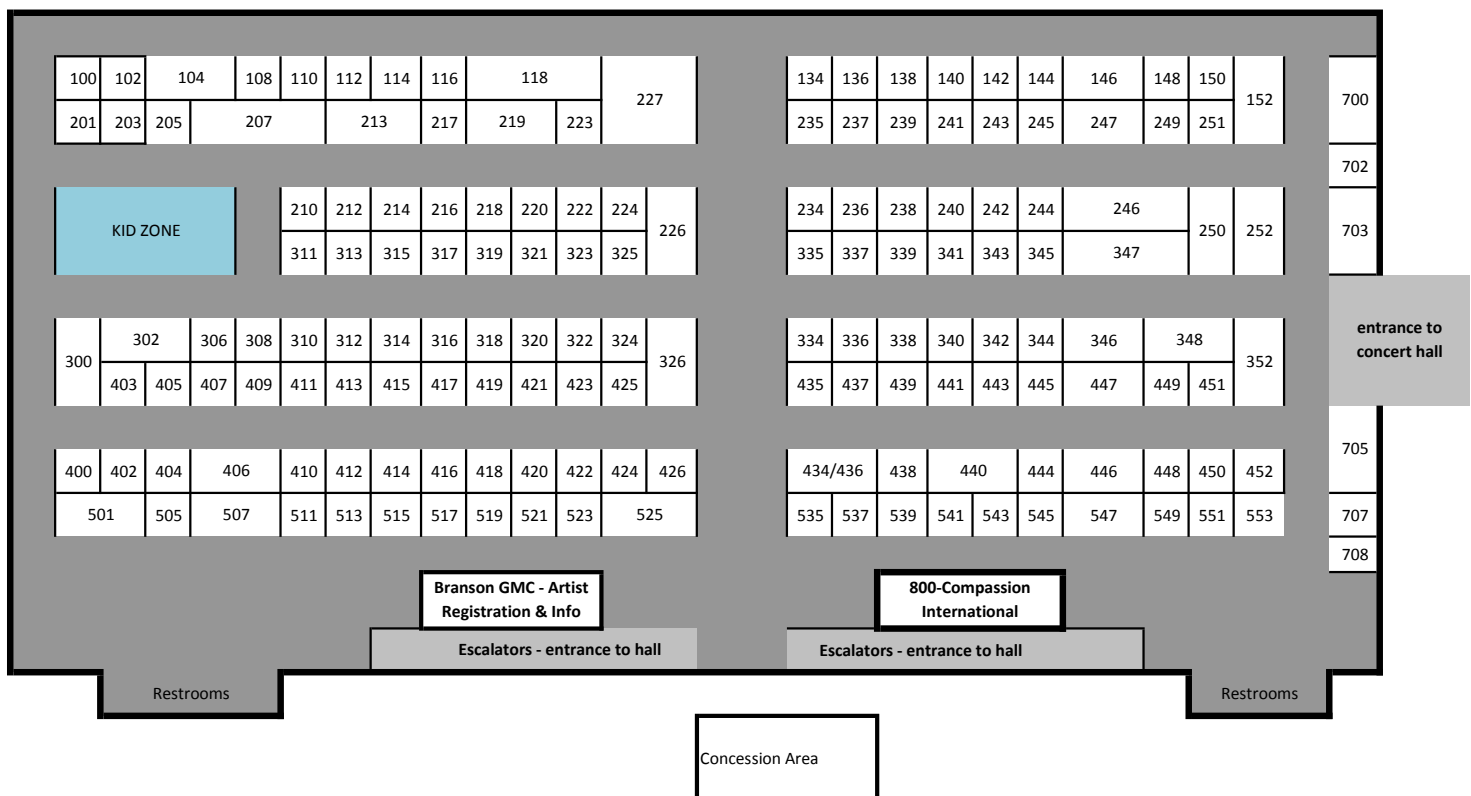


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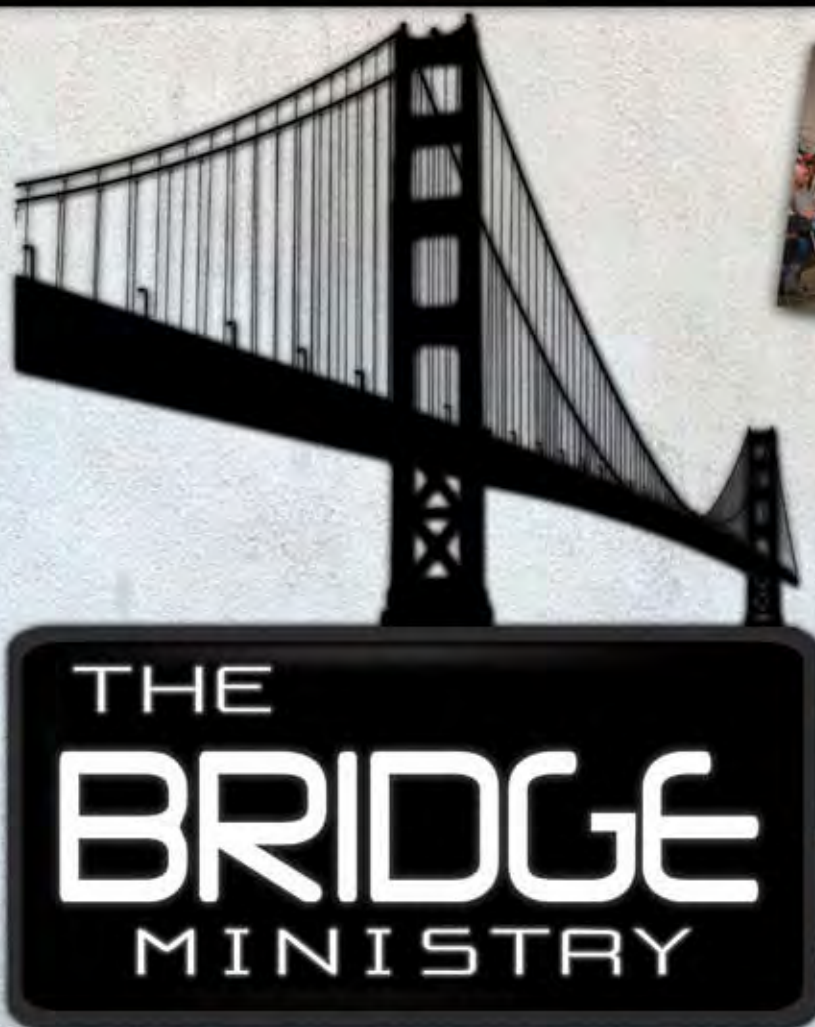
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