

Buzz

Spotlight

A life Song

Casting Crowns; Making worship a lifestyle

Casting Crowns' self-titled debut sold more than 1 million copies and spawned three No. 1 singles. But when it was time to head back to the studio, lead singer and songwriter Mark Hall wanted to make sure the band wasn't going in to simply "make songs about music."

Hall believes the band has something worthwhile to say in its latest effort, *Lifesong*, which he says is about making worship a lifestyle. "I think we're all starting to look at worship now and we're seeing that we've hollowed it out a little bit," Hall said. "We can't just come in here and crank the band up and read a bunch of words off the screen and call that worship because that's not what it is. Worship started this morning when you woke up."

CHAD BONHAM

Prayer Point

Attacks against children are widespread. Children are being molested, abused and sold into prostitution. Some are homeless and malnourished. Millions have been orphaned by AIDS. This month, we invite you to join us in praying for the world's children.

1. Pray for the protection of children and youth in homes, schools, churches and summer camps.
2. Pray that child-sex tourists will be caught and prosecuted.
3. Pray that the world's street children and AIDS orphans will discover the love of Jesus.

To get regular prayer updates from Charisma's Prayer Initiative, visit [http://www.prayerinitiative.com](#).

UNSUNG HEROES

All in the Family

When Jim and Sandy McCann set off for Ukraine in 1993 to serve as missionaries, the couple was expecting God to surprise them. But neither would have guessed that God would use the devastating loss of their long-awaited son, Joshua, to help them find their calling.

Born premature in a nation less than two years removed from communist rule, Joshua died in a Ukrainian hospital from what his parents believe was a medical error. He was only 3 weeks old.

But after his death, the McCanns said, God began to send them abused and abandoned children. The first was Marianna, whose parents sold her to be raped when she was 6. Her grandmother took her in, but died when she was 11. Petrick was 9 and living on the streets after running away from an abusive home. At 7, Galia was on the verge of committing suicide.

Today the childless couple are parents to 27 and oversee

Joshua's House

() in L'viv, Ukraine, as part of their God's Chosen Fast Ministries. They have seen God heal and restore countless lives. And after nearly 12 years of ministry, they're looking toward a ministry expansion that includes planting similar homes in other parts of Ukraine.

ADRIENNE S. GAINES

Let's Get Married!

Missouri church challenges cohabiting couples to wed

Bishop Clifford L. Frazier and his wife, Pamela, are serious about strengthening marriages and families. That's why the pastors of The City of Life Christian Church in St. Louis decided to offer cohabiting couples in their community a free wedding and reception after they completed a 10-week premarital counseling program that's also free.

"We found that their reasons for living together weren't blatantly sinful," Bishop Frazier told Charisma. "It was their perceived notion that it was harder to be married and successful than living together and successful."

"A number of the couples came from homes where the parents weren't married, so that's all they knew," added co-pastor Pamela Frazier.

Last year, nine couples signed up, and six made it to the altar for a mass wedding held March 21, 2004. Three couples even accepted Christ during the altar call given at the end of the ceremony. This year, 10 couples are enrolled, with the big day planned for this fall. And there's already a waiting list

for 2006.

The “no more excuses” offer was just what Eric and Cameaka Jackson needed. The couple had been living together for six years and had a 6-year-old son. They planned to marry when they were more comfortable financially. “With them offering the program, there’s no reason [we couldn’t] go ahead and do it,” Cameaka Jackson said.

Both say life is better since they tied the knot. “Before [marriage], you [think]: I shouldn’t be with this man,” Cameaka Jackson said. “Afterward, you get so much blessing. It’s an overflow.”

Adrienne S. Gaines

Signs from God

The unique “God Speaks” billboard campaign is back with nine new pithy words from “God” that can be seen on 400 billboards in 21 states. Launched in 1999 with 18 one-liners, the publicservice campaign is funded by an anonymous donor and receives backing from the Outdoor Advertising Association of America. The benefactor also funds a Web site,

Walking by Faith

After 20 years, Fred Price’s message is still the same

Frederick K.C. Price hasn’t changed much since he graced Charisma’s cover 20 years ago. And that may be exactly what makes the 73-year-old pastor of 21,000-member Crenshaw Christian Center in Los Angeles one of the charismatic

movement's most influential leaders.

After more than 50 years in ministry, Price has essentially the same method and message as he did 35 years ago, when he was introduced to the baptism in the Holy Spirit and embraced the teachings of the Word-Faith movement.

Price has remained firm in his belief that Christians should be physically whole, financially blessed and free of suffering—a theology some opponents say doesn't ring true in a world in which the most vibrant sectors of Christendom are often its most impoverished and persecuted.

Price's own life hasn't been a bed of roses. His oldest son was killed in 1962, his wife battled cancer, and he publicly took a minister-friend to task for comments he believed were racist. But Price still says belief in the Word, verbal confession of its promises and obedience to its commands constitute a legitimate formula for prosperity and health.

Yet, he says, faith is not a "force" believers can tap into to get whatever they want. "Faith is acting on the known will of God," said Price, who is featured in the July/August issue of *Ministries Today*, a publication of Strang Communications.

Though his son has been tapped to succeed him, Price has no plans to retire. "One of these days, when nobody shows up for church, I'll know it's time for me to go golfing," Price said. "Until then, I'm gonna keep on doing what I'm doing the way I'm doing it."

Matthew Green

Cary Sparrow had been snorting cocaine and heroin for almost a decade, but he said he knew he had really messed up when he began injecting the “monster” drugs into his veins.

In his early 20s at the time and already a divorced father of four, the St. Augustine, Fla., native said his life began to spiral out of control. “I ended up losing everything because I was so in love with this cocaine,” said Sparrow, 50.

His turning point came in 1982. “I made up my mind that I was not going to live like this another day,” Sparrow said. He put a .22-caliber handgun to his head and pulled the trigger, but nothing happened.

“I heard a voice say to me: ‘I love you. I died for you. Get up and go to church. I love you.’”

He hadn’t been to church in 15 years, but he got up and began walking until he ended up at an old Holiness church; four hours later he left saved and completely set free from addiction.

Two years later he began doing street ministry, and he hasn’t stopped in 21 years.

Now a licensed elder at St. Augustine Shores Assembly of God, Sparrow knows many people are than a testimony.”

Faith & Culture

Notebook

Gospel artist SHIRLEY CAESAR was among 25 legendary black women honored in May as part of Oprah Winfrey's tribute to her personal heroes. Noted for their contributions to the arts, entertainment and civil rights, the honorees included Coretta Scott King, Maya Angelou and Tina Turner. Caesar has recorded more than 40 albums, and has received 11 Grammy Awards, 13 Stellar Awards and 18 Dove Awards.

Elim Fellowship President BERNARD EVANS retired in May due to health problems resulting from a fall in December. Elim Vice President Ron Burgio will act as president until Evans' three-year term ends in May 2006. Founded in 1933, the Lima, organization offers ministry training, supports local churches and assists missionaries and overseas outreaches.

The National Coalition of Men's Ministries has appointed RICK KINGHAM as its president. The senior pastor of Overlake Christian Church in Redmond, Wash., Kingham was to succeed Patrick Morley. Kingham has been involved in men's ministry for 25 years and was one of the original 72 men who helped Coach Bill McCartney launch Promise Keepers in 1990.

The original Christian rock band PETRA has announced plans to retire, effective in December. Founded in 1972 by guitarist and songwriter Bob Hartman, the band has sold more than 7 million CDs, but Hartman said interest in the group had been declining in recent years. The band is planning a final tour through the U.S. and Europe.

Faith & Culture

Dream Job

Amy Grant will star in NBC's Three Wishes, a new reality series in which the recording artist will lead a group of experts in making dreams come true for viewers. The show is to debut Sept. 23 at 8 p.m. EDT.

"When I heard about this show, I was extremely moved by NBC and the production company's concept to provide incredibly positive changes in the lives of different people," Grant said. "Seeing the initial prep work the producers had done for the pilot episode gave me reason to look at my own life-and remind myself, once again, to never underestimate the impact that one life can have on another."

In each episode, Grant will lead a team of experts to a small town where they make three "wishes" come true. They range from paying tribute to an unsung hero to helping a family deal with a medical crisis to working to keep a floundering factory open.

"That's the great challenge of this show; we welcome the opportunity to take on seemingly impossible tasks," executive producer Andrew Glassman told Charisma. "Everyone has a lifelong dream or wish they would like to see come true. We wanted to take this simple and relatable idea of three wishes and bring it to life." Glassman said Grant was their first choice for host. "I'm so glad my name was thrown into the pot," Grant said. "And I hope that together, we are able to make a lot of dreams come true."

MARSHA GALLARDO