

Buzz

SPOTLIGHT

No Limits

Israel Houghton says nothing is impossible for God

Recording his latest CD live in South Africa was a dream come true for worship leader Israel Houghton. Live projects capture the crowd's energy and excitement anyway. But in South Africa, where Houghton says he didn't have to "convince the people that they're hungry" for God, the experience exceeded his expectations. Houghton says *Alive* in South Africa has some surprises—like the moment when "God showed up" as the crowd sang along to "Alpha and Omega," an African worship chorus. But what he hopes leaves the strongest impression on listeners is a prophetic declaration "that there is absolutely no limit in God." Right now, he says, "the favor of God is extra pronounced. If you sow you will most definitely reap. There's no limit."

Adrienne S. Gaines

Prayer Point

Thousands of families have been devastated by Hurricane Katrina, which rocked the Gulf Coast in late August. Charisma invites you to join us in praying:

1. That God's redemptive plans for this region and the nation will be accomplished.

2. That families would be reunited, jobs restored and homes rebuilt.
3. That churches and humanitarian organizations would have the resources they need to help the victims.

Déjà vu?

Charisma has a new look, but in late August we thought we were seeing double when Newsweek released its cover story about spirituality in America. With a cover image similar to the one that graced our August issue about the Holy Spirit, Newsweek discussed the growing interest in spirituality in America. As it examined the interest in Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism, the cover package also explored the appeal of the Holy Spirit's "empowerment" and the rising influence of Pentecostalism.

FAITH & CULTURE

Faith on FM Radio

Although he has preached in thousands of churches, charismatic evangelist Sean Dunn is focusing his energies on getting the gospel into more secular venues. His primary tool: 60-second radio spots called "GroundWire."

Aired on 450 stations worldwide, the spots are currently carried by only 10 general-market radio stations in the U.S. But the Denver-based speaker and author aims to reach 100 by 2008.

Dunn, whose Champion Ministries recently celebrated its 10th anniversary, has written about 320 messages in the last three years. Covering such topics as love, hunger and the speed of

life, Dunn builds his rapid-fire delivery around four themes: God loves you, He's next to you, He has answers and if you're hurting, He can heal you. "[Teens are] in so much pain," said Dunn, 37. "We deal every week with people who are cutting, burning and bruising themselves. One girl rips her hair out."

Dunn estimates more than 5 million students a week hear the minisermos, which direct listeners to . From e-mails, calls and personal conversations, Dunn knows he is touching hearts. "There's so many stories of cutters receiving Christ, people who have been hopeless who reached out or child prodigals coming home," he said. "I love the stories."

Ken Walker

Ministry Profile

Praying for a Nation

A National House of Prayer (NHOP) was permanently established in September in a 12,000-square-foot former convent in Canada's capital city, Ottawa. The sprawling, gray, 1930s-circa mansion, just a six-minute drive from the Parliament buildings, was purchased for \$900,000—half the original asking price of \$1.8 million.

Rob and Fran Parker, who set up the house of prayer last year, plan to have rotating teams of intercessors from across Canada staying there and praying in Parliament for one-week stints. They will also host and mentor young interns for three-month periods, giving them intercession training and theological instruction in exchange for help in the ministry's daily operations. The ministry has hosted one team per month since it got under way last fall, and the rest of the time the

Parkers themselves have prayed daily in Parliament.

“God gave us a vision to open this house so we and others can pray in Parliament every day it’s in session and so we can bring to government a positive presence of a caring church,” said Rob Parker, who left his full-time pastorate in western Canada in February 2004 and moved to Ottawa with Fran to build the NHOP.

The Sept. 16 opening was preceded by a 15-day cross-Canada prayer tour initiated by several young people from Extreme Prophetic Vancouver. They stopped in eight cities, where they talked with members of Parliament, spoke in churches and interceded for the cities.

“The heart of intercession for Canada’s spiritual inheritance rests with our young people,” Parker said, “so we want to encourage, train and mentor them in the right way.”

Josie Newman in Toronto

Charisma Feeds Florida Families

In honor of its 30th anniversary, Charisma magazine partnered with Feed the Children in August to distribute food and personal items to needy families in Orlando, Fla.

Hundreds gathered Aug. 27 in the parking lot of the T.D. Waterhouse arena, a downtown venue where Orlando Magic games and large-scale concerts are held, as volunteers passed out enough food to feed 1,200 families for a week. The food and personal items donated totaled about \$117,000.

“We felt it was important in our own city to feed the poor,” said Charisma publisher Stephen Strang, president and CEO of Strang Communications. “We’re not just a publishing house, we’re a ministry.”

Every five years since 1985, the magazine’s anniversary has been marked with special gatherings, including three banquets and a conference. “We decided this year that instead of having another banquet, we wanted to help the poor,” Strang said before the food drive. “We feel that giving to others is more important than congratulating ourselves on Charisma magazine’s 30th anniversary.”

In addition to the pasta, juices, soups, milk and other items prepacked in the boxes, participants were given copies of Charisma magazine and a choice of books published by Strang Communications, which is based about 15 miles north of Orlando in Lake Mary, Fla.

Larry Jones, co-founder of Feed the Children, an Oklahoma City-based ministry that has helped feed millions of people around the world since 1979, estimated that each family went home with more than \$100 worth of groceries. “The problem we face in Orlando is the same problem we face across the country—one out of five children going hungry some time in the month,” said Jones, who helped organize similar efforts in Dallas and Houston.

Adrienne S. Gaines

MINISTERING OUTSIDE THE BOX

Assemblies of God chaplains Paul and Linda Scholtz are no strangers to the rough-and-tumble rodeo life. The couple is at

home among the fire-breathing 2,000-pound bucking bulls and broncos that toss seasoned athletes to the ground like rag dolls.

Each year they attend 35 rodeos, ministering to professional rodeo contestants on the national circuit, a community they say most churches have ignored. "There is a respect for God among cowboys," Linda Scholtz said. "When they get into trouble they like going to the cowboy preacher."

While attending Central Bible College in Springfield, Mo., in the mid-1970s, the Scholtzes linked up with the College Rodeo Association. Linda was an accomplished trick rider and Paul rode saddle broncos. He helped pay tuition catching stray cattle for ranchers. In 1976 the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association enlisted the couple to become full-time chaplains.

"We'll do it until we starve," Paul Scholtz said. "No one was taking the gospel to the rodeo. Many Christians considered rodeo a dark black sin."

In the first year 25 people accepted Christ. Last year, 680 conversions were recorded. The Scholtzes hold on-site Bible studies, counseling sessions, and offer their trailer as a fellowship hangout. During summers they run Rodeo Bible camps for youth.

About 25 chaplains from different denominations minister to the national rodeo community, which numbers about 35,000 professionals. "Anyone who is effective [in this venue] is a Spirit-filled person," Paul Scholtz said.

Peter K. Johnson

Chainsaw Christians

Just days after Hurricane Katrina buzz-sawed across Louisiana and Mississippi, Christian volunteers from around the country descended on the region with chainsaws and tractors.

In Magnolia, Miss., a primarily Midwestern group cut and stacked trees and limbs the week after the storm left thousands of trees down across the area. The group, which doesn't have a name, consisted of volunteers from Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Tennessee, even New Hampshire. The group was interdenominational, with Baptist and Church of God members providing most of the workers. "It's a godsend that these individuals have come," said Mayor Jim Storer. "There are so many people here who could not pay to have their trees removed."

After the hurricane hit, some Illinois residents got their heads together and decided to go south. As news of their plan spread, donations and volunteers poured in. A group of 35 volunteers arrived in Mississippi with six trailer loads, bringing their own equipment, food, fuel and tents. The group even carried goods to distribute locally—bags containing bottled water, juice, snacks, gum and a strip of paper quoting John 3:16.

The men came from all walks of life. "I don't think any of us actually run a chainsaw for a living," said organizer David Bettz of Buffalo, Ill. "I think all of us were just raised on farms."

"This here shows the power of God," said Jim Miller, a fireman from Sesser, Miss. "There is hope, and this is the calling of

God to help others.”

Ernest Herndon in McComb, Miss.

Notebook

Bishop G.E. Patterson, presiding bishop of the Church of God in Christ (COGIC), announced in September that he is battling prostate cancer. The pastor of Temple of Deliverance COGIC in Memphis, Tenn., said he received the diagnosis in 2003. Recently profiled in Newsweek because of COGIC's influence on American spirituality, Patterson has said he does not plan to run for a third term as president in 2008. COGIC is the nation's largest Pentecostal denomination, with more than 6 million members worldwide.

Without Walls International Church pastor Randy white was consecrated a bishop in the Church of God Sept. 11, the Tampa (Fla.) Tribune reported. The ordination was held during the first service at Without Walls' new satellite church in Lakeland, Fla. Based in Tampa, Without Walls finalized the purchase of the facility once owned by Carpenter's Home Church in August. The 75-acre campus will be home to Without Walls Central.

Jane Mann, wife of Mission Possible founding president Ralph Mann, died Aug. 10 after a brief illness. She was 64. The missions and relief organization has been working in Eastern Europe since 1974. Its activities include church planting, ministry training, and outreach to youth through orphanages and children's homes. Mann is survived by her husband, three sons and eight grandchildren.

Publisher Jason Christy has been named executive director of

the Christian Coalition. The 34-year-old Boston University graduate is founder of The Church Report, a news and business journal for pastors and Christian leaders. "I am honored and humbled to be chosen ... for this key position," Christy said. "It is crucial at this time in our nation for people of faith to engage the culture, and to realize that at the grass-roots level they can make a difference." Christy was to begin his tenure by establishing an advisory council made up of a broad range of national Christian leaders.