

Buzz

SPOTLIGHT

Coming Alive

Singing from the soul: Warren Barfield

Singer Warren Barfield is a Pentecostal preacher's kid who knows a thing or two about soul-stirring music. But he was so surprised when God revived his own weary heart, he had to write about it. The result was "Come Alive," on his newest CD, Reach, and it tells of his private Pentecost. "Christ left us His Spirit to be with us at all times," he says. "That's what the Holy Spirit is about. ... He still wants to find me at my level and come alive to me."

Prayer Point

The World Christian Encyclopedia reports that more than 1 billion people have yet to hear the gospel. That's 27.8 percent of the world's population. Please join us in praying that:

1. Missions teams would reach the least-evangelized regions
2. Resistance to the gospel in non-Christian nations would break.

To get regular prayer updates from Charisma's Prayer Initiative, visit [.](#)

Coffee With a Purpose

Beginning this spring, patrons will leave Starbucks with more than just coffee to start the day. A quote from Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose-Driven Life*, will grace Starbucks' white cups as part of the company's *The Way I See It* series, which showcases more than 60 quotes by philosophers, artists, scientists, athletes and others. Warren's quote—"You were made by God and for God, and until you understand that, life will never make sense"—will be the first to mention God.

Mobile Mission

Before he preached overseas or even visited Africa and South America, pastor Jim Otis settled in the heart of the U.S. and discovered a new mission field.

For the last nine years, Otis and his wife, Pat, have lived among the residents of the Meadows Mobile Home Park in Nappanee, Ind., a community Otis says is 90 percent unchurched. In 1999, he founded Meadows Community Church, now named CityChurch, under a canopy. Today it draws 20 to 170 people. "Every week people are coming to Christ," says Otis, who is also associate pastor of evangelism at Nappanee Missionary Church, which supports CityChurch.

Otis says living in Meadows has been a challenge, as poverty and drugs run rampant and residents dabble in paganism and Satanism. "It is an absolute roller coaster," he says. But residents such as Angie Blankenship, 36, are glad the couple signed up for the ride. "Nobody knows how much he and his wife have impacted me and my family," she says. "People not just overseas really need people like Jim and Pat. People right

here need them, too. There's a lot of hurting people that need help."

Abigail Reese

MINISTRY PROFILE

Loving the Neighborhood

Scott Vogel sold his business to launch an urban ministry

Scott and Amy Vogel discovered their ministry calling while taking a walk through one of the most dangerous neighborhoods in their hometown of Grand Rapids, Mich.

There, Scott Vogel says, they saw a community lacking the most basic resources. Determined to turn his concern into action, Vogel sold his landscaping business just weeks later and began what is now known as Urban Family Ministries (UFM).

Launched officially in 2001 with support from Vogel's church, Calvary Church in Grand Rapids, UFM () seeks to meet the emotional, physical and spiritual needs of children and their families through mentoring, public school outreaches, and Bible studies.

The ministry placed a Christian couple in a renovated former crack house to build relationships with area families. Today the house is UFM's headquarters. And it partnered with Calvary to build a \$24,000 library for an underfunded area school.

Last April, UFM and Calvary Church joined forces to launch the Extreme Neighborhood Makeover, which culminated with more than

200 people planting gardens, removing thousands of pounds of trash and renovating a home.

“Our purpose is to go to the individuals in our community that are the most hurting,” says Vogel, who hopes to see the ministry build a downtown community center for youth.

Suzy Richardson

Changed Lives

David Ritz first met Jesus as a child, watching the legendary gospel artist Mahalia Jackson. Though he is Jewish, Ritz believed every word she sang and secretly accepted Christ.

That was before he had time to intellectualize the gospel. After college, he says, the simplicity of the Jesus message seemed unavailable to him.

He became a music journalist and co-wrote biographies for musicians such as B.B. King and Aretha Franklin. But despite his professional accomplishments, Ritz fell into addiction. Ironically, it was the 12-step meetings he attended and their talk of a “higher power” that softened his heart toward Christ. “I could not free myself of my addiction without God,” Ritz says.

He began to pray and study the Bible, and he watched the Christian witness of his sister, who had been born again. “I watched God change her; I saw the love of Jesus in her,” he says.

He also began attending a predominantly black Pentecostal church, City of Refuge led by Bishop Noel Jones, and writing a book profiling Christians who inspired him, such as Mable

John, a former Ray Charles background singer who leads an inner-city ministry in Los Angeles; pastor Marvin Winans; gospel artist Kirk Franklin; and evangelist Jackie McCullough. "Little by little, I came to the conclusion, I don't have to be the person on the outside looking in, but I can go in the church and embrace the church," Ritz says.

Today he hopes his book, *Messengers*, which released in March and profiles a diverse mix of ministers, will help lost readers find Jesus too. "I hope that the reader can feel Jesus," he says. "I hope they can feel the hope and heart of Jesus."

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Pioneering Fiction

Frank Peretti's novels have brought spiritual warfare to life

When Frank Peretti graced the cover of *Charisma* in May 1989, he was leading the Christian fiction genre. His groundbreaking supernatural thriller *This Present Darkness* had sold thousands of copies, and its sequel, *Piercing the Darkness*, was soon to be released.

Today those books have sold 3.5 million copies, and Peretti has sold more than 12 million books overall. And though the genre is more crowded now, he is still setting trends in Christian fiction.

This month he releases *House*, a collaboration with suspense writer Ted Dekker. Set in rural Alabama, the novel follows two couples who find themselves stranded in an antebellum hotel

with a psychotic killer who has rigged the house to showcase the sins of those in it.

Readers would expect nothing less of Peretti, a former Assemblies of God pastor whose fictionalized accounts of spiritual warfare drove thousands of Christians to their knees. "There is power in story, in parable, in illustrating spiritual truth," Peretti says. "I always wanted to be a storyteller for the Lord."

These days Peretti's stories are taking on a different form. His books Tilly, The Veritas Project: Hangman's Curse and The Visitation were made into movies. And Peretti says 20th Century Fox, which owns the film rights to This Present Darkness, may be pulling it back out of the vault.

But he also wants to write and direct his own projects, beginning with adaptations of his novels Monster and The Oath. "It's so fascinating to look back and look forward," he says. "Way back ... the Lord gave me a pretty big vision of what He wanted me to do. I trust Him entirely to do what He wants me to do."

Adrienne S. Gaines

FAITH & CULTURE

Trading Places

Kelly Stonerock, a charismatic pastor's wife, had no idea she would trade lives with the wife of an atheist when she applied to participate in the ABC reality show Wife Swap. But the Michigan mother of seven says the experience became an unexpected outreach tool, leading her to develop a Web site to field responses to the Nov. 28 episode.

The show features two families with very different values who agree to switch wives for two weeks. Each wife gets the opportunity to modify the rules and lifestyle of the other family in hopes of introducing positive change.

Stonerock met Reggie Finley, host of an atheist Internet radio show and Web site, and his three children in January 2005. "I knew God was trusting me with the heavy responsibility of righteously representing Christians to this family on national TV," says Stonerock, whose husband, Jeff, pastors Victory World Outreach Center in Goodrich, Mich. "I was very careful to evangelize to the Finleys using wise words rather than judgmental ones."

Her attitude touched her TV family. "Reggie told me he had never met a Christian like me before," Stonerock says, "and Reggie's 12-year-old son [Dorian] told me he never knew someone could have so much joy."

After the show aired, Stonerock's Web site, , which she set up as a door for ministry, received roughly 350 e-mails. One young man wrote that he went to church and accepted Christ after the Stonerocks responded to his letter.

Stonerock says her Wife Swap experience reminded her of the importance of a timeless truth: "Call it an old message, but I feel strongly that Christians need to walk in the love of Christ."

Jomili Noble

NOTEBOOK

Bishop Walter E. Bogan Sr., who raised thousands of dollars for Hurricane Katrina victims, died Jan. 8 at the age of 57. Pastor of Harris Memorial Church of God in Christ in Burton, Mich., Bogan is survived by his wife, Dianne, two sons, two daughters-in-law and three grandchildren. Funeral services were held Jan. 16 and 17.

The Foundation for Pentecostal Scholarship has been formed to promote research and publishing on Pentecostal topics. By funding research projects and recognizing "outstanding works of Pentecostal scholarship," president Robert Graves said the Atlanta-based organization hopes to "advance today's move of the Holy Spirit around the world." The foundation's 11-member advisory board includes William Menzies, an Assemblies of God New Testament scholar, and James Shelton, an author and noted Bible scholar ordained by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada.

Bill Greig II, chairman of Gospel Light Publishers, died Feb. 15 at the age of 81. A founding member of the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association, Greig worked in the industry for more than 55 years. Memorial services were to be held March 10 and 11 in Ventura, Calif. He is survived by his sister, four children and nine grandchildren.

Regent University professor Charles L. Holman, Ph.D.., died Jan. 18 after battling cancer. He was 70. Former professor of Biblical Interpretation and New Testament at the Regent University School of Divinity, Holman was one of the school's founding instructors. "There was not a more loved and respected person on the faculty of the divinity school," said former School of Divinity Dean Vinson Synan. "We all looked up to him for wisdom and guidance." Funeral services were held Jan. 21 in Norfolk, Va. He is survived by his wife, daughter, two grandchildren, two sisters and a brother.