

## *Elvis Gospel Fan Club Quarterly Newsletter 2020-3*

Madeleine Wilson - Fan Club President and Newsletter Editor  
J Peter Wilson – Fan Club Vice President Dr. Tony Stone - Chaplain  
Shalom, 87 St John's Avenue, Bridlington, East Yorkshire, YO16 4NJ Tel: 01262 416266  
Website: [www.elvisgospel.com](http://www.elvisgospel.com). Email: [info@elvisgospel.co.uk](mailto:info@elvisgospel.co.uk)



### *Editorial*

Dear Gospel Fan,

This issue has news of the passing of three dear souls. Firstly, Ed Hill on 13<sup>th</sup> July. We have met and conversed with this legendary Southern gospel singer and a former member of J.D. Sumner and the Stamps Quartet. We found him to be such a gentle, gracious person.

J.D. Sumner of the Stamps Quartet asked Ed to manage his talent agency and music companies, and in 1973 was asked to sing baritone temporarily until a permanent voice could be acquired. His temporary singing engagement turned into five years of fulltime service with the Stamps Quartet. Ed, along with The Stamps, sang backup with Elvis through 1971-77. Ed is famously known for being one of the voices who would announce at the close of an Elvis performance ... "Ladies and gentlemen, Elvis has left the building. Thank you and good night!" Graceland says," Ed was a guest at many events here at Graceland and was a dear friend to all of us. We will miss his kindness and sweet spirit".

Dear Ethan Shaw went to be with Jesus on 11<sup>th</sup> June. We have been very much following the story of this wonderful little fellow and there is more information in this issue.

Benjamin Keough, son of Lisa Marie Presley tragically died on 12<sup>th</sup> July. More news of this inside.

We pray that you, our dear fellow fans of Elvis' gospel music, will continue to be encouraged by listening to that music and to know the warmth and security of Jesus' love for you.

We can be assured that whatever is happening there is always good news, which is that you are loved and that the Lord has wonderful plans for your life. Place your trust in him!

God bless you, *Madeleine*

# Ethan's Story

In our last newsletter I asked you to pray for Ethan Shaw, and I thank you for your prayers. Ethan went to be with Jesus on 11<sup>th</sup> June. I have been so encouraged by his parents' response to the tragedy, that I would like to share more with you, hoping that you will be encouraged too and continue to pray for the family during their grieving process.

Here is his Mum, Shavona's, message on the day of Ethan's funeral/ life celebration:

*We have always been a family, and nothing changes that now as we go thru one of the hardest days of our lives! Ethan gave us so much love and joy that we could have never imagined!!!! We say goodbye to his little body that we have hugged, kissed and loved on for 2 & 1/2 yrs. But we know that he will greet us when it's our turn to be welcomed into Heaven! We look forward to seeing those that will join us today because of the impact that his life had on so many people. It's been an honor and a blessing to see the beautiful gift that has blessed us and so many others!!! As I hug you guys today and cry, I know that the pain will subside eventually but my love for him will endure for eternity! Please pray for us as we do something that brings heartache to all of us! Love and blessing!!!! 🙏🏻🙏🏻 Shavona*

Here is her message the next day:

*As I go to bed crying and wake up crying, I am reminded of my little boy in Heaven. Though my heart is going thru the worse pain I have ever experienced, I find comfort and hope that the Bible says "He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever. Revelation 21:4 The Lord is close to the broken hearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed. Psalm 34:17-18" Hope is what I have. The grief is real, and it will be a very long time!!!! But every time grief takes over me to where I can't hardly breathe, I receive a peace that passes all understanding. Thank you soooooo much to all of you that came for Ethan's Life Celebration yesterday!!! It was beautiful to see all the lives that he has touched! Thank you for the gifts, flowers and donations to our family also!!! You all have loved us well thru these past few months. I will forever be grateful for all the support thru our hardest days! Please keep them coming as our family continues to mourn our loss but Heaven's gain!!!*

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James Burton and his wife attended the celebration, and this is what James says:

*Louise & I went to the CELEBRATION of life for Ethan.*

*We can tell you we have NEVER attended anything like it. There was so much LOVE for Ethan ❤️ The HOLY SPIRIT was so strong you could hardly breathe. The songs that were sung by everyone told of SALVATION thru JESUS with eternal life for BELIEVERS. We WILL see each other again forever 🙏🏻🙏🏻 LOOK TO JESUS for this wonderful FREE GIFT 🙏🏻🙏🏻🙏🏻*

Ethan and his Dad, Will



Ethan's father, Will, also shared his thoughts and feelings. So inspiring and encouraging:

*I was talking with a friend, and I would like to share this with all of you. Especially since Father's Day was yesterday.*

*A Father's Heart...*

*Ethan wasn't mine to keep, Shavona and I were his caretakers while the Lord had him here, I don't know or understand why God allowed things to go the way they did, but I know He continues to be good and continues to love each of us more than we could ever hope to imagine. Now that I know what it means to be separated from my little boy for a short time, I realize that I didn't really know God's heart as a father because I was not fasting and praying for lost sons and daughters of God who will be separated from Him for all eternity, and now I partly understand how terribly that hurts our Heavenly Father.*

*I am determined to spend the rest of my life trying to tell as many people as I can how much their Daddy really loves them! If you would like, Please share that with your family.*

*I believe The devil tries to make us forget how much God loves us, because he knows that if we don't get our self-worth from Him then we will look for our self-worth in other earthly things and will get tripped up trying to feel good about ourselves, when all along all we wanted was to know that we were loved and cherished.*

*I believe that Jesus was trying to communicate that to us when he said that the Hairs on our head are numbered, and that every breath was counted before we ever took one... That sounds to me like a Daddy that is close and loves his children.*

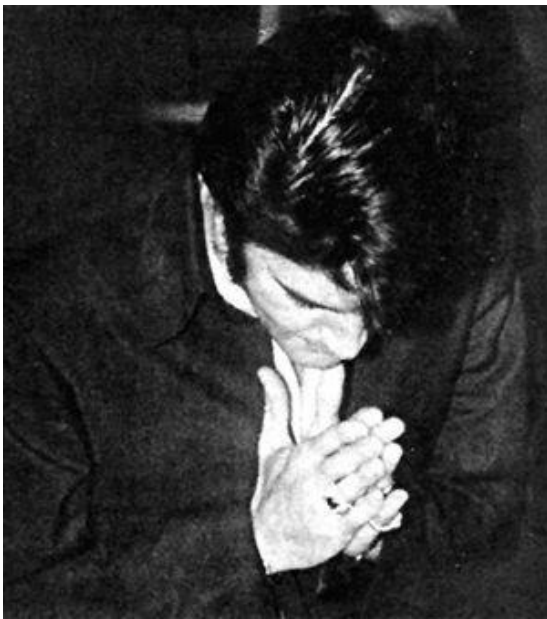
*I pray that you feel his love more today than you ever have before! God bless you all!!! We love you all!*

## How Elvis Rose to the Challenge ~ Elvis in Concert on November 14, 1972 at the Long Beach Arena in Long Beach, California.

This is the show that Aloha from Hawaii producer Marty Pasetta attended along with his wife. When he met with Elvis in Las Vegas a few days later to discuss the satellite show, Pasetta didn't hold back, but instead told him that he thought his singing was wonderful, but his stage presence was boring and that he needed to lose weight. As you can imagine, Elvis was not used to anyone talking to him so directly, prompting him to jump out of his chair, go over to Marty, hug him and tell him that he was the first person who had been honest with him a long while.

Of course we now know that Elvis accepted the challenge given to him as he showed up state in Honolulu in January of 1973 looking spectacular and singing with a level focus, professionalism and conviction not seen since the '68 TV Special.

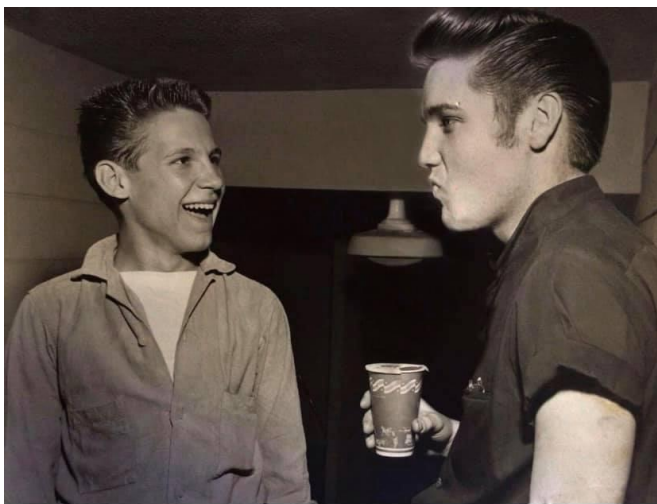
*Written by Dave Rogers and published by Krista - June 19, 2020 at 6:40 pm (TCB radio network)*



Elvis praying backstage with the Blackwood Brothers and the Statesmen at the National Gospel Quartet Convention in 1968. The baritone singer for the Statesmen was in the hospital with pneumonia, so Elvis joined in prayer for his recovery.



"I ain't no saint, but I've tried never to do anything that would hurt my family or offend God...I figure all any kid needs is hope and the feeling he or she belongs. If I could do or say anything that would give some kid that feeling, I would believe I had contributed something to the world." - Elvis commenting to a reporter 1950's.



Nikki Brnak shared this photo of her father with Elvis, taken at a concert in LaCrosse, Wisconsin



## The Thrill of Your Love

Recorded 4/3/1960 - Studio B Nashville, first released on Elvis is Back

This article was found on the Internet. I do not know the source, but many thanks to whoever wrote this:

*I can't help but wonder what Elvis' thoughts were when presented with this song, recording it in early 1960 shortly after his return from the Army. He often denied his songs were auto biographical but this one has always given me a different feel. Elvis Presley was far from unloved or alone, in fact, just the opposite, worldwide. He had every reason financially and fame wise to be sitting on top of the world. But did this song hit him deep within or do we just read too much into things?*

*His early 60's voice is tinged with a bit of soulful yearning that is difficult to fabricate, an edge to his new maturity with a quality of a youthful ache. It's as if the words come from a deeper place of an experience he wished he'd never had.*

*Elvis was young, barely 25 and life at his feet. I love the emotion of this song, real or fabricated but equally convincing either way. Truth is truth - the things that count in this world have far more worth than the temporal things that can slip on by. It was true then and it's true now, more than ever.*

Reading this, I began to think how I respond to the song. Of course almost any song about love, with the change of a few words, can be thought of as a gospel song, rejoicing in God's love for us. This song talks about the thrill of love and it is indeed thrilling to know that the maker of the universe, not only created us, but also loves us unconditionally and no earthly price, no sacrifice is too much to give. Of course we can't buy God's love, it is free, but in order to live fully in that love we do need to make some sacrifices.

### **Thrill of Your Love Written by Stanley Kesler) LYRICS:**

I have wished for the wealth of a great millionaire  
I have reached for a bright star above  
But the thrill of it all, to me seems so small  
When compared to the thrill of your love  
I'd rather give (I'd rather give) everything (Give everything)  
That I own (that I own) in this world (Own this world)  
Than to be all alone and unloved  
For no earthly price and no sacrifice is too much to give for your love  
I'd rather give (I'd rather give) everything (Give everything)  
That I own (that I own) in this world (Own this world)  
Than to be all alone and unloved  
For no earthly price and no sacrifice is too much to give for your love.

## Elvis Gospel Service in The Netherlands at Veenkerk July 5, 2020 led by Rev. Fred Omvlee

Our friend, Rev. Fred Omvlee has done much research about Elvis and organises many Elvis Gospel services in the Netherlands. The services are conducted in the Dutch language, but Fred has kindly translated the service for us. Below is an edited (for length) version:

**Theme: About the beam and the splinter, Elvis and Jesus.**

**Piano intro:**... improvisation on Crying in the Chapel

**Fred: I would like to start with a prayer:**

Good God, We are here in thoughts together, From our houses, in this house of yours. We take everything that is important in our life, everything that is beautiful and everything that is difficult. We lay that down for you and we ask you: be with us: In the difficult moments and in the beautiful moments.

Be with us with your Spirit, we ask you that for now and for all days of our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**Fred:**

In my daily life I am a chaplain in the navy for the last 18 years. Before that I was a pastor in the beautiful town of Monnickendam, where I still live. Working in the navy has also changed my faith and church work.

Less than in church you can fall back on what people are used to. Young people in the navy are usually not churchgoers. But they are interested in the services on board. I have been operational for 16 years, with services in Afghanistan and at sea off the coast of Africa, off Libya, on the Caribbean sea and on Curaçao. There I learned to use what touches myself and what the visitors bring themselves. Pop music by the crew members and Elvis gospels by myself. I have been an Elvis fan since I was 11, when Elvis died in 1977. Elvis was swinging, attractive to me. Much later did I learn the power of his gospels. They are emotional, perhaps sentimental. But they touch me. Balm for my soul.

**Fred sings Peace in the Valley**, about the desire for rest: now I am tired and lonely, but I have to keep going, but there will be peace in the valley for me someday. It is the vision of Isaiah: One day the animals will live peacefully side by side and I will be another human.

**Bible Reading:** Luke 6: 36-43 (New Bible Translation)

**Meditation:** About the beam, the splinter, Elvis and Jesus ...

Dear people,

The beautiful words of Jesus fit very well with this time: in which we have fierce debates and people scold each other on social media and in demonstrations. Be merciful, as your Father is merciful. Don't judge, and you won't be judged. Why do you look at that splinter in your brother's or sister's eye when you don't notice the beam in your own eye?

It seems like we like to judge hard these days. But anyone who is honest will have to recognize that it is not perfect in his or her own life. Let's give each other some space. Also to be different.

The young rock star Elvis was immediately reviled by parents, by teachers, and by church. That couldn't be good, dancing so wildly and shaking your hips. Incredible to us now perhaps, but his legs were no longer allowed on TV, because they were regarded obscene.

This young star who became an inspiration for Bob Dylan, John Lennon, Jim Morrison, Bono and Bruce Springsteen, sought refuge in gospels. That put his mind at ease. He sang the gospels from the beginning of his career until his last performance.

Was Elvis a saint? Definitely not. He was just a recognizable person with many talents, beauty and voice and a number of shortcomings: he was insecure, depressed, sought support with the wrong friends and stimulants. It led to his early death at age 42.

But from the faith in which our father and mother Omvlee brought us up: you can always start over. A simple, cheerful faith. Do your best. Ask God for help. Forgive, then you will be forgiven. Big words, not easy, but beautiful. Jesus says it even better here: be generous: because the measure that you use for others will also be used for you.

We can be inspired by the talents of others: their music, their singing, their beauty. That can raise you up, don't be discouraged by the beauty of others.

I think one of Elvis's life lessons is his energy: do what you do with genuine energy. Then that energy comes over and we recharge each other. Be a king or a queen on your square meter. And let's be gentle with each other's shortcomings: the beams and splinters. Be kind to yourself is an advice that I also give to my fellow spiritual counselors in defense. Because often people give a lot of care to another, but they forget to take care of themselves.

A service like this: whether online, at sea, or on a mission in a war zone is a moment to realize what you're thankful for. Look around, look at what you have and count your blessings. I believe a flower can bloom through any raindrops, I believe a candle burns in the darkest night, I believe that even in the heaviest storm, the smallest prayer is still heard.

**Song: I Believe** (piano Edwin, vocals Fred)

**Prayer:** Good God,

We want to thank you for everything that is beautiful in our lives: friendship, family, children, grandchildren, parents and grandparents, neighbors. We pray for those who have missed that social contact recently, due to compulsory isolation, of the church, of drinking coffee, of a nice chat.

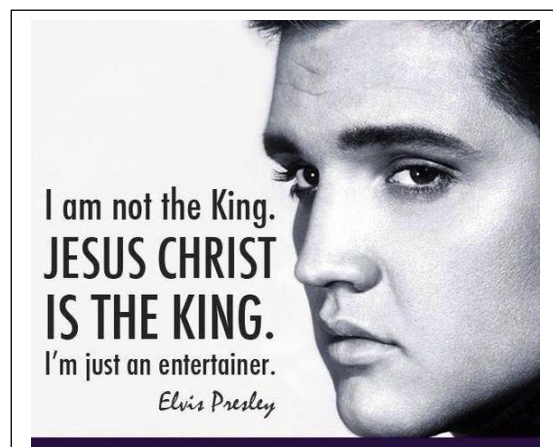
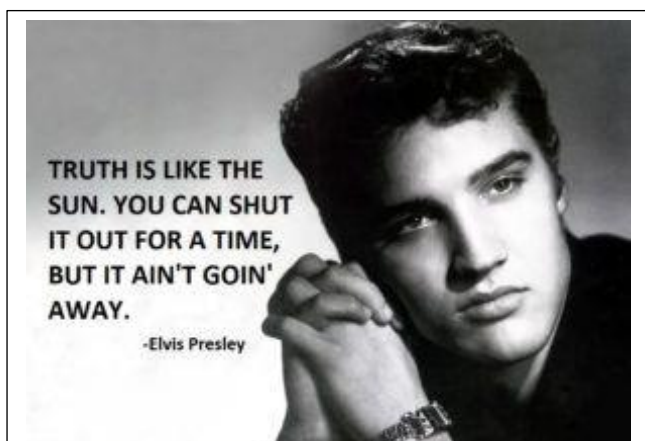
Be with all of us worldwide who still suffer from this.

We thank you for good health and for meaningful activities at work or at home. But we also pray for them to worry about health, or who have doubts about purpose and meaning. Do you want to give comfort, peace and advice.

We pray for soldiers who try to do something good together in the Netherlands and far beyond, long from home. Be with these young men and women and their home front.

Since there are things no one can say for us, we lay them down for you in a moment of silent prayer.

Hear our thoughts and prayers: **The Lord's Prayer** and **Blessing for the road**



# Elvis' Grandson's Tragic Death



*Left:* Mama lion with Cubs (from Lisa' Facebook page)

*Right:* Showing Ben with Riley at Graceland for the cake cutting ceremony on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2015 (our photo)



Benjamin Storm Keough died Sunday, July 12, at the age of 27.

Elvis' only grandson died on Sunday July 12<sup>th</sup> at his mother's Calabasas near Los Angeles home, from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. He was with his current girlfriend Diana Pinto, who tried to stop him and who called the police. Ben was a musician who had done some acting and had attended his grandfather's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations at Graceland in Memphis in 2015

Please pray for Lisa at this time, especially for the divorce proceedings, for custody of her twin daughters to Michael Lockwood. The trial, which is expected to last through the end of August, will finally end the couple's 10-year marriage and decide who gets custody of their twin 11-year-old daughters Harper and Finley.

Michael Lockwood, 59, argued last week in court papers that he should be awarded primary custody of his daughters because he feared Lisa Marie could relapse back into drugs and booze due to her grief over Benjamin's suicide last month. Lisa Marie has admitted in the past to battling opioid and other painkiller addictions but claims to have been sober for the past three years. Michael Lockwood also expressed concerns in court documents about guns at the Presley's \$1.8 million home in Calabasas.

## Messages from Priscilla

These are some of the darkest days of my family's life. The shock of losing Ben has been devastating. Trying to put all the pieces together of all the possible whys has penetrated my soul. Each day I wake up I pray it will get better. Then, I think of my daughter and the pain she is going through as she was a doting mother. Ben's father, Danny, who is completely lost, as Ben was his only son. Riley, so loving and so close to him; Harper and Finley, who absolutely adored Ben. Navarone, who struggles deeply with loss and death. Rest In Peace Ben, you were loved. ❤️

And later after receiving condolences:

Dear friends,  
Thank you all for your condolences through: letters, Twitter, Facebook, texts and flowers on the loss of my grandson, Ben. Your heartfelt words were comforting through this time of mourning. I have reread so many of your messages for support and inspiration. You have all given me inner strength in this very lonely, diversely chaotic, challenging time. 🌹

## Words from Alexa Rohde, ex-girlfriend of Benjamin:

Benjamin Storm, YOU. Always happy in the sun and water. And a laugh that made everyone happier. You gave love to anyone who needed it. You were wise like a thousand year old man, but silly as a 5 year old. You always said your favorite tarot card was the hermit, cause you could relate. You made the best jokes, and always broke the rules. You were my favorite person from the moment I met you. I wish we could've kept you forever Ben. I hope you're having all the delicious sushi in paradise 💙 words will never be enough.