

## FAITH CONVERSATIONS



Contributed / Pulse Evangelism

Pulse Evangelism founder Nick Hall preaches to a crowd at the Together event at the Texas Motor Speedway in 2018.

# Pulse ministry marks 20 years, returns to fair

### MINNEAPOLIS

When Nick Hall of Pulse Evangelism takes the stage the last evening of the Red River Valley Fair, the moment will be a pivotal look at the last two decades of Christ-centered relationships for the Fargo-originated ministry.

“Twenty years is a bittersweet reality,” said Hall, who credited meeting and spending time with renowned Christian evangelist Billy Graham in his youth for having inspired him to launch the Twin Cities-based ministry that began on the campus of North Dakota State University during his college years.

“Someone asked me this weekend, ‘How can you keep doing this for 20 years?’” said Hall, now a husband and father in his 40s. “I told him that 20 years ago, I thought it was more about the stage, but now I realize it’s about the people; those conversations with everyday people are the reason I continue to do this.”

While more souls can be reached from a stage, he admitted, it’s only through those private, heartfelt conversations that ongoing, deep transformation can happen.

Hall hopes to reach more people thirsting for the Gospel message on July 12, when he’ll address the Red River Valley Fair crowd, opening the night that will include Christian artists Anne Wilson and Matt Maher.

“My favorite thing about being on stage is that it makes my availability mean something when I’m off it,” Hall said. “If you haven’t heard the stories, felt the tears dripping down your clothes and been so close to someone you can smell them — it’s



ROXANE B. SALONEN

those conversations that matter most.”

And the need for outreach never ends, he added, because every generation needs Jesus’ touch.

### The next generation

Azari Young, 21, is one who’s been changed recently by Hall’s affinity for initiating conversations every day. They met at the barbershop where Young was working.

“I don’t believe in coincidences — only divine timing,” said Young, who noted that despite the shop being usually very busy, that day it was “bone dry” except for him and Hall.

“I was going through a patch where I was doing really good in life financially, but I was looking for happiness in physical items: cars, clothes, jewelry — things that don’t satisfy,” he said. “We had a crazy conversation about God.”

Young’s path had hit some major bumps through the years. After several significant deaths in his life, including his brother’s murder and the loss of his grandmother who’d been a steady source of strength and faith, he took a wild turn in high school, becoming addicted to drugs.

Eventually, Young went to treatment, got sober and enrolled in barber school, finding a path of success — to the point of buying the sports car he’d always wanted. But soon, he realized the car came with a price tag more than its cost.

“People try to steal



Contributed / Pulse Evangelism

Young people file into an event at NDSU where Nick Hall was speaking in 2009.

**“We have to keep coming back to the heart and the source of strength and joy and life.”**

NICK HALL

those cars, so I started worrying, ‘Am I going to get robbed today?’” Young said. “It brought a lifestyle I knew I didn’t want.”

His life was spiraling downward again, he said, with “problem after problem,” until Hall showed up with a message of redemption.

He invited Young to a monthly Bible study that just happened to be meeting that very night.

“I took it that this is a sign; it’s time,” Young said. He ended up turning his life over to Jesus that night, he said, and was baptized.

“Nick showed me what

needed to go and stay, and that removed a lot of (unhealthy) things,” Young said, including the sports car. When Hall encouraged him to apply to help at Pulse, he decided to try. Being offered the job as events operator has brought “blessing on blessing ever since.”

“I am so excited to have a normal car I can take to the car wash without worrying,” Young said. “God shows me what true happiness is and it’s not in a car or nice home or lump sums of money.”

The first time he got on stage before 40,000 people to help promote a Pulse

event, he said, “I just cried. God did this, and now I know where I’m supposed to be.”

### A mentor to the mentor

Laurel Bunker met Hall about 17 years ago while working as dean of campus ministry for Bethel University in Arden Hills, Minn. He and comrade Jay Anderson had approached her, asking for help with their evangelization efforts.

“They said, ‘Would you give us your best leaders to build this vision?’ and I said, ‘No. How about you come here and help me reach Christian kids who oftentimes hide behind masks instead?’” Bunker said.

Bunker, who considers herself “Nick’s big sister,” had seen too many people hurt by ministries who come in, do a big event,

and leave without a discipleship plan.

“As an African American woman, I’d been seeing that for decades,” she said.

She suggested that they humble themselves and serve first, learning from others who’d been working in the vineyard longer.

“I said, ‘Since you’re the new kids here, go to the pastors of every tribe and tongue,’ she said, encouraging them to make connections with potential partners.

To her surprise, they took her advice, then circled back to ask if she’d attend one of their fundraising events.

“I came to one of the first galas, and I was stunned. What I heard and saw in (Hall) was very different than what I had

# Byron woman crowned 90th Miss Minnesota

Post Bulletin staff reports

WELCH, Minn. — A recent Byron High School graduate has been named Miss Minnesota and will go on to compete in the Miss America contest.

Anna Brennan was crowned Miss Minnesota 2026 on Friday night, June 19, at Treasure Island Resort & Casino in Welch. She will receive a \$10,000 educational scholarship and represent Minnesota at the 2027 Miss America competition.

Brennan, a 2024 Byron High School grad, is a journalism student at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis and a KSTP-TV promotions intern, a Miss Minnesota press release said. Her community service initiative, which she will promote during her year of service, is MediaWELL.

“MediaWELL is dedicated to building the foundations of Empowered Connection for the digital generation,” Brennan said in the release. “Empowered Connection

is the ability to engage with today’s digital landscape intentionally and intelligently, gaining the benefits of media without harming quality of life.”

Brennan’s talent was performing classical ballet en pointe to “Tango de Roxanne.”

The Miss Minnesota competition featured 25 candidates ages 18-28 competing in various categories.

The other finalists in the Miss Minnesota competition include:

- First runner-up: Miss Capital City, Jordan Mann
- Second runner-up: Miss St. Croix Valley, Whitney McClain
- Third runner-up: Miss Granite City, Michelle Rose Bergh
- Fourth runner-up: Miss Waseca County Sleigh & Cutter, Jasmin Kotek

Natalia Yurecko, a 17-year-old senior at Minnetonka High School, was named Miss Minnesota’s Teen. She will receive a \$3,000 educational scholarship and represent



Contributed / Miss Minnesota

Anna Brennan.

Minnesota at the Miss America’s Teen 2027 competition.

Yurecko will spend the year as Minnesota’s teen ambassador at various events across the state. She will also promote her community service initiative, “OCD: Transforming Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Into Obtaining Confidence Daily,” the

release said.

The Miss Minnesota’s Teen competition featured 14 candidates from across the state. Top finalists included:

- First runner-up: Miss Moorhead’s Teen, Jillian Bain
- Second runner-up: Miss Twin Cities’ Teen, Marnie Shepersky

# Breaking the silence that has broken my marriage

Dear Annie: I am not someone who talks easily. Most of the time, I respond when spoken to, but otherwise I keep to myself.

I grew up in a home where silence was a weapon. When my mother was angry with my father, she would stop speaking to him. Sometimes it lasted for days. Sometimes, believe it or not, it lasted for years. Somehow, they are still together, though now it seems less like love and more like old age, habit and their shared dependence on each other.

When I was 22 and in the military, I met my first wife. We had a child, and at first, life seemed manageable. But when we argued, she could become cruel. She would say the meanest things she could think of, especially when she was drinking. When I tried to talk and she would not calm down, I shut down. It felt like the only way to protect myself.

But shutting down did not solve anything. Over time, things got worse. Her drinking increased, then drugs entered the picture. Our home became chaotic. During one deployment, I realized things had spiraled even further. There were



ANNIE LANE  
Dear Annie

people in our house, and eventually, cheating. She also became physical with me. More than once, I was the one removed from the house, even though I was the one with marks on my body.

After seven years, I filed for divorce and got custody of our son. He is now 24 and doing well. My ex and I have since buried the hatchet, and she has apologized.

A few years after that divorce, I met my current wife. She was 18, and I was 27. We loved each other and quickly had three children. She was nothing like my ex, but I brought my old habits with me. When things got hard, I shut down. I failed in ways that matter deeply: I was not always present, I did not listen well, I did not help enough around the house, and I lacked patience with our children at times.

My wife would say she is not perfect either, but after 18 years together, she is perfect to me.

Now our children are mostly grown, and the

distractions of raising them no longer hide the cracks in our marriage. My wife has told me she cannot keep living this way. We have talked about my need to change, and I have tried before, but it never lasted.

For years, I avoided therapy because I thought going meant there was something broken in me. My ex used to call me weak and worse, and part of me believed that if I got help, she would be proven right. I was also afraid my wife would see me as damaged and leave.

Now I have finally called and scheduled an appointment with a therapist. I know this will not be fixed in a week or two. It may take months or even years. My wife has asked for space, so I will be moving into the front room for now. We are also preparing to talk to our children about what is happening.

I love my wife. I want to change. But I am terrified that I will do the work, become better for her and our family, and she may still choose divorce.

Is it possible to truly change with help and still have a chance at saving my marriage? — Trying to Learn How to Talk

Dear Trying: Yes, change is possible. But the change has to be for

more than saving your marriage. It has to be because you are finally ready to stop letting silence run your life.

Therapy does not mean you are broken. It means you are brave enough to stop handing your past the steering wheel. Your ex’s cruel words were not a diagnosis. They were weapons.

Your wife may or may not stay. That is the painful truth. But becoming a better listener, father, husband and person will never be wasted work. Give her the space she asked for. Continue your growth through attending therapy. Try to make small changes every day in the direction of taking care of yourself.

Show up. Listen. Help without being asked. Speak before you shut down. Apologize without defending yourself.

Sometimes the most loving thing you can do is stay and try to work it out when it is difficult.

Follow Annie Lane on Instagram at @dearannieofficial. Visit <http://www.creatorspublishing.com> for more information. Send your questions for Annie Lane to [dearannie@creators.com](mailto:dearannie@creators.com).  
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## PULSE

CONTINUED from B10

heard and seen in others,” she said. “Everything was about prayer and reaching the next generation and finding the lost.”

As a woman of color, she said, she’d been blown off so many other times, but Hall had taken her words seriously.

“I was stunned by his humility, the tears in his eyes and the burning in his heart,” she said. “He wasn’t trying to be polished; he was heartbroken for a generation lost to self-hatred and drugs.”

In 2011, she said, she joined the board, and Hall on stage, speaking at almost every founders’ gatherings since.

Bunker said her experience traveling the country and preaching to young people from “all kinds of backgrounds” has kept her insulated from trying to appease the powerful, and that Hall appreciated that she wasn’t “moved by numbers.”

“I don’t care how many books you’ve written or followers you have,” she said. “I’d been in ministry and seen too many people fall and churches

destroyed. Numbers don’t mean integrity.”

She’s stayed with Pulse through the years, Bunker said, because she recognizes the challenge of seeing people come and go and needing to persevere through all times.

“I’ve always seen in Nick that, even if nobody else will go with me, still I will follow,” Bunker said.

Just as importantly, through Pulse, she said, young people are “getting delivered from confusion, darkness and suicide.”

In the end, Bunker said, Hall is “just a guy from North Dakota” with “a burning for Jesus” that will never end. He might not be the latest thing to come onto the scene, she added, cautioning, “Don’t look for the shiny penny. Look for the trail of consistency, and get behind (that person).”

Bunker said North Dakota’s “purity of heart” makes it special, but there’s still work to be done here.

“None of us can impact who moves in next door, but we can be radical neighbors who give hospitality like nobody’s business,” she said.

Hall said we all can be distracted in trying to



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Nick Hall preaches at NDSU in 2009 at the start of his ministry.

find our significance in the adulation of others, or a paycheck. “Then we get sad and depressed when the crowd leaves, and we ask, ‘Who am I?’” The goal of all of our lives, he said, should rather be to discover our significance in being a child of God.

“I have seen many people get crushed by the stage and the platform. They end up becoming a casualty of what was their calling; they let

their calling become an idol,” Hall said. “We have to keep coming back to the heart and the source of strength and joy and life. It’s the people, family, those who really know us; it’s our faith and whether or not it’s grounding us; and not it’s community.”

Salonen is a freelance writer and speaker in Fargo and hosts the “Matters of Soul Importance” podcast. She can be reached at [roxanebsalonen@gmail.com](mailto:roxanebsalonen@gmail.com) or [roxanesalonen.com](http://roxanesalonen.com).

## YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

**BIRTHDAY STAR:** Actor Gil Bellows was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada on this day in 1967. This birthday star portrayed Lawrence Lacroix on “Patriot” from 2015-2018. He also played Warren Price on “Chucky.” Bellows’ film resume includes roles in “Awake,” “Business Ethics,” and “The Shawshank Redemption.” He has also made appearances on episodes of “Alert: Missing Persons Unit,” “Women of the Movement,” and “VC Andrews’ Laundry Family.”

**ARIES (March 21-April 19):** Today’s deeply-negative day score is the indicator that anything started today is likely to end poorly. Table decisions, discussions, big purchases, first meetings, financial moves, really any FIRST, until Monday or Tuesday.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20):** While ideas could be flowing, they should be revisited tomorrow or after; insights under the worst stars can be flawed in ways that won’t show until stars improve. A desire for a financial agreement should also wait.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 20):** You could be well set up to make financial improvements once Universal stars get back into daylight — it’s worth the wait to maximize your odds and minimize your risk. A relationship could be moving toward healing.

**CANCER (June 21-July 22):** Don’t let underwater stars get you down, they pass by tomorrow. If daily routines are disrupted today, roll with it, it’s to be expected when stars go this far south. Hold realistic expectations, both for experiences and for outcomes.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22):** Expressing yourself though art or music could bring a healing catharsis now; with today’s poor stars it could hit hard for a few hours. Reach out for support if needed. It’s a very productive period overall for inner work.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22):** Keep expectations realistic for a home project — it’s not a good day to initiate anything new, and even an ongoing project could get held up. With a slow pace though, you might at least get a few steps completed today.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22):** Words can soothe, or words can challenge — your instincts could drive either kind of message today. It’s not recommended to toss down a gauntlet



MAGI HELENA  
Your Daily Horoscope

during negative stars, you could severely underestimate consequences.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21):** It’s not a day to work on budget or any other financial matters, including making a major purchase or signing any agreements. Things decided or begun when stars are in quicksand seldom work out as planned.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21):** Your intentions could be helpful and still be misread under today’s dark stars. Keep expectations low; stars move back into sunshine to just above the zero line tomorrow. Better stars mean better odds and lower risk.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19):** Both old peace and healing, and old resentments, could come up today. Process internally, it’s not a day for any hard conversations if you want positive change. With a little time, a relationship could improve.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18):** Cut people lots of slack when Universal day scores are this negative, most people’s frequencies shift downward when general influences are this negative. But always notice patterns; always uphold crucial boundaries.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20):** Your spirit might yearn for escape and freedom, but you might need to work or get critical things done. Do your best, initiate nothing, make no big decisions, don’t have big feelings about how things go today.

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