Introduction — “Out of the Blue”

Every year the music and dialogue committee meets to discuss the theme of our “Sermon in Song”. For 2015, we actually met early, in the fall of 2014, to review suggestions from other singers as well as consider topical themes. In the past, ideas have resulted from thoroughly refining information that eventually evolves into our sermon title, and then other times ideas appear ‘out of the blue’.

In the Bible, the color representing faith is blue. You will also notice that Jewish prayer shawls often contain blue threads woven into the fabric as an observable sign of faith. I like that; and it makes me wonder “what is our observable sign of faith?”

Blue is also the color of 45th anniversaries. New G is celebrating its 45th year throughout 2015. It's exciting and humbling to reflect on our past and ponder our future. In 1970, I’m sure Byron and those first singers had no idea the New Generation Singers would still be together 45 years later. But I’m glad they chose to act on their idea. And I’m glad that thousands of dedicated singers and sponsors continued the tradition for all these years.

Our 2015 sermon theme is based on a combination of many things. As Christians, our lives must be faith-based and we must do our best to act on that faith.

So here’s a sermon calling you into action! A sermon calling you to do something for God. It’s a sermon that came to us out of the blue, in a blue anniversary year and as an observable sign of our faith. Please answer the call. Find your way of showing your faith!

- Bemo Myers, Musical Director

Informal Program

I Just Came to Praise the Lord
Someone Up There
The New 23rd
Shout My Praise
Resurrection Song
Dive
I Lived
Fear Not
Forgiven
He’s Alive

Benediction
The Lord Whom We Love

Happy Anniversary!
Throughout 2015, New G is celebrating its 45th anniversary. The traditional gemstone for 45 years is sapphire, which of course is blue. You’ll notice that color represented in our costume and in this program.

New G will celebrate this anniversary all year, starting with a first-ever Easter concert, held on Palm Sunday. However, it wasn’t just current New G members that sang, over 40 alumni combined with 70 current Singers to perform favorite songs from the past and present. It was a powerful concert as a “Prelude to Easter”!
Byron “Bemo” Myers II has been directing the New Generation Singers since 1998. He sang with the group for 12 years and served three terms as president. Bemo is a graduate of Missouri Western State University with a B.A. in Psychology and a minor in Music. In addition, he earned a masters degree in social work from the University of Missouri. Bemo also directed the award winning men’s a cappella chorus — the Voices of America — and sings in a champion barbershop quartet, the Noise Boys. He and his wife Carol sang with New G through their high school years and enjoy the opportunity to be sponsors. Bemo says “Music can touch you...it gives kids an opportunity to say and do things they might not otherwise do.” Bemo, Carol (a second grade teacher) and their two sons B.J. and Joe live in St. Joseph. Bemo is a forensic case monitor for the department of Mental Health for the state of Missouri.

Byron Myers Sr., with his wife Phyllis, started the New Generation Singers in 1970 and was musical director for 28 years. In 1998 he turned the reins over to his son, Bemo, and moved to the role of executive director. Byron is recognized nationally in various vocal music arenas. He is perhaps best known for his success in barbershop music with quartets, including as the Mid-Continents, the Kippers and the Saint City Singers as well as with choruses such as the Pony Expressmen, the St. Joseph Sweet Adelines Show Chorus and the American BarberBoys (now known as the Voices of America). He is past president of the Central States District of the Barbershop Harmony Society and conducts director workshops all over the nation and is active on a national level with the Barbershop Harmony Society. In April of 2010, he was elected to an at-large position on the St. Joseph City Council and also became the Deputy Mayor for the city. Byron believes that “New G gives young people an opportunity to develop churchmanship and gives them the chance to share faith and fellowship.”

The New Generation Singers have been a family from the beginning and continue to maintain that atmosphere and philosophy. The sponsors are a group of adults who supervise the group. They are involved in every aspect of New G, but still allow the members to run the individual areas, giving the youth the chance to grow and develop as young adults and leaders.

The sponsors volunteer their time for Sunday rehearsals throughout the year as well as vacation time for the two-week summer tour. Most are alumni of New G or have had children who sang in the group. In the past 45 years, New G has had a total of 60+ sponsors with anywhere from four to twelve serving at any one time. The sponsors represent many diverse backgrounds, ranging from school teachers, a mental health case-worker, a realtor, a caterer and an EPA employee. The Singers wish to publicly thank these dedicated adults for their devotion to New G — both the organization as a whole and to each Singer.
While the sponsors oversee New G, an elected group of New G members is in charge of running the week-to-week activities. The executive committee – aka “Exec” – is elected by the membership. Exec consists of a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, immediate past-president, elected ‘at large’ representatives and five sponsors. Exec serves as the leadership hub of the group by creating, organizing and following up on ideas which help the group succeed. Their main duties are membership, social activities, financial resources and chairing various committees and work crews. The executive committee offers the opportunity for members to gain valuable leadership experience through increased responsibility.

The officers are elected to lead the group in the planning, administration and implementation of New G activities as well as provide a communications link between the sponsors and membership.

New G also has many work crews and committees that function throughout the year — especially during the summer — to organize many facets of the group. For example, on tour there are committees responsible for lights, risers, sound, taping cables, handing out programs and of course the ever favorite, bus clean-up. During the year, a social committee plans many fun non-singing events and a worship committee plans weekly worship time during rehearsals — just to name a few.

Since 1972, a small leather cross has been a symbol of membership in New G. It is crude and simple, like the cross Christ died on. While on tour in California years ago, a man named Henry Butcher gave every Singer a cross. He had carved each one by hand. He realized this was a ministry he could perform, and ended up distributing these crosses all over the world...even behind the Iron Curtain. No count was ever taken as to how many crosses Henry distributed, but a good guess is well into the thousands.

Henry passed away in 2003 at the age of 91. The Christian Men’s Fellowship at his church has continued making and distributing the crosses so that his ministry can continue. Mr. Butcher would always wear one of the crosses and if anyone asked about it, he would give a testimony of his faith. In the same fashion, our crosses are testimony to what New G represents.

Ashland United Methodist Church is New G’s “home church”, mostly because we rehearse in their fellowship hall. Ashland also provides storage space for our equipment, but more importantly, Ashland provides a spiritual home for the group.

Ashland is known for outstanding musical and worship arts opportunities, hosting between 400 and 500 people at weekly worship services. Ashland is located at 2711 Ashland Ave (Ashland Ave & Gene Field Rd).

We want to thank senior pastor Gary DeWitt, the congregation and church staff for their tremendous support of New G. Also special thanks to former New G member, Shaun Agnew, who is Ashland’s director of music and worship arts. Visit Ashland’s website at www.aumcfamily.org for more information.
**Frequently Asked Questions?**

*Here is perhaps our most-asked question... what faiths are represented in New G?*

New G doesn't promote a specific faith or denomination. Instead the group concentrates its efforts on spreading the idea of Christianity and the love of Christ. There are always many denominations represented including Methodist, Lutheran, Catholic, Presbyterian, United Church of Christ, Baptist, Disciples of Christ and several others.

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**How often does New G rehearse and what are they like?**

New G rehearse once a week for 2 ½ hours. We sing for most of it, but in the last half hour, we have our business meeting full of new events, fun traditions and worship!

Katrín Hunter, 15, 2 years

**What is your favorite song this year? Why?**

My favorite song this year is “Fear Not”. We’ve sung “Fear Not” in the past and it has always been my favorite; it reminds me that God is always with me through my toughest struggles. Singing “Fear Not” makes me feel like I am also reminding other people of God’s great power and to rely on Him in their times of need.

Ally Fields, 17, 3rd year

**What other activities does New G do during the year?**

During the year, we have an annual Christmas concert and we performed with the St. Joseph Symphony. Also this past winter, we accompanied the local Figure Skating Club. At Easter we had a 45th Anniversary concert.

Zach Scamurra, 15, 2nd year

**Why did you join New G?**

I joined New G because I enjoy praising the Lord. Plus my brother and sister are already in it, and my dad is an alum, so I was kind of obligated!

Colton Connors, 14, 1st year

**Why should other young people join New G?**

The New Generation Singers are, proverbially and literally, a family. Over the years it has included my mother and sister, and now, the closest friends I’ve ever had. In addition to a musical outlet and a two-week summer tour, you’ll gain a support group that sticks with you throughout your entire life.

Rylan Sampson, 23, 8th year

**What does it mean to you that New G is in its 45th year?**

That the group is strong and we support each other like family. Over the years we gain and lose members but New G is still up and running.

Brooke Huffman, 20, 5th year

**How do you join New G?**

You come to five meetings, then get inducted and become part of New G’s family.

Jordan Clark, 16, 2nd year

**What was a highlight of last year’s tour?**

Going to see *The Lion King* at the Kennedy Center. Everyone got dressed up, we ate and we all had a lot of fun. It was a great experience and I got to do it with my New G family.

Keatley Cotter, 16, 3rd year

**What does it mean to you that New G is in its 45th year?**

Family. It means generation after generation of love and worship. No family is perfect we have our ups and downs, our crazy uncles (Bemo) and our fights, but somehow we always end up standing together on the same risers singing our hearts out. Forty five years is a love of our neighbors and of God. It’s a family that will never break. So thanks for adopting every last one of us.

Allisen Hunter, 15, 2nd year

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**What other activities does New G do during the year?**

New G does lots of activities throughout the year. We do parades and we have our Christmas and Easter performances. We also have socials every now and then, like a Valentine’s party, bonfire and picnics.

Andrew Gerhardt, 16, 3rd year

**Why should other young people join New G?**

New G is a wonderful place for young people to get to know others who share the same love of praising God. No matter who you are, or what you have been through, you will always be accepted I the New G family.

Sydney Van Dyke, 15

**Why do you enjoy New G and how has it affected your life?**

I enjoy New G because all of my friends are members. It has affected my life by helping me grow as a person and becoming closer to God. In New G, I have found my strength. I don’t know where I would be today without New G.

Lynn Jordan, 20, 4th year

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Lynn Jordan, 20, 4th year

1971 - **I Looked for Love** - First tour lasting one week to Texas; first Homecoming performance.

1972 - **God is Real** - First two-week tour, presented with leather crosses, the symbol of membership.

1973 - **It’s Getting Late** - 56 performances of the sermon-in-song.

1974 - **Come Together in Jesus’ Name** - First year for the traditional Benediction.

1975 - **It Begins Now** - 120 member group travels to California.

1976 - **In God We Trust** - Group goes northwest, visiting Idaho, Washington, Utah and Montana.

1977 - **No Deposit, No Return** - Performance on Capitol steps in Washington, D.C., which gets New G entered in Congressional Record.

1978 - **Good News** - Recording made and sold to audience members.

1979 - **Let’s Get Together** - Back to California, first year for the now-annual Christmas concerts in St. Joe.

1980 - **Let’s Go Tell the World** - New host church at Ashland United Methodist Church.

1981 - **Starting Here, Starting Now** - Performance at Guide Post in New York attended by Dr. Norman Vincent Peale.

1982 - **Building Bridges** - Tour heads to Florida while membership grows to 200.

1983 - **Crossroads** - Back to California!

1984 - **Victory Through Faith** - Performance at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

1985 - **What Difference Does it Make** - 15 year reunion event reunites past members.

1986 - **Discipleship– Now What?** - Back to Florida with 168 members on four buses.

1987 - **V.I.P.- You Do Make a Difference** - Travel to northeast states as well as Canada

1988 - **These Three Words** - Back to California...again!

1989 - **Praise the Name of Jesus** - Group travels east to Washington D.C. and New York.

1990 - **Family of Friends** - New G celebrates 20th year and tours Rocky Mountain area.

1991 - **A Life Worth Living is a Life Worth Giving** - Back to Texas and the southwest U.S.


1993 - **A Solitary Christian is Like a Fish Out of Water** - Our emcee introducing us in French in Canada!

1994 - **In His Image** - Group visits Quinter, Kansas, Disneyland and Yosemite National Park.

1995 - **Growing in His Son** - A “monster trip” to the Edmonton Mall, the largest mall in the world.

1996 - **Come Together** - Trip to the Mid-Atlantic states and yes, a trip to the beach.

1997 - **For This One Reason** - A tour to supersede all tours...a cruise to the Bahamas.

1998 - **Attitude is Everything** - Trip to Disneyland and a performance at a retirement community.

1999 - **We Can Make a Difference** - Rocky Mountains, Yellowstone and walking on a glacier.

2000 - **The Journey** - Our evening at a Broadway play, stay in Brooklyn and sing for John Cathcart.

2001 - **The Song is Alive** - Trips to Disney World, Cocoa Beach and Cape Canaveral.

2002 - **We Will Stand** - Touring San Francisco, the Jelly Belly factory and visit friends in Sandy, Utah.

2003 - **For His Glory** - Singing in Abraham Lincoln’s church and Cedar Point amusement park.

2004 - **The Power of One** - Lake Louise, BANFF, Mt. Rushmore and a special tour worship to remember.

2005 - **The Lord Whom We Love** - Disneyland’s 50th Anniversary, Universal Studios and the Grand Canyon! Program included highlights from the past 35 years.

2006 - **Until the End of Time...** - A trip to New York City including seeing a Broadway performance of “Wicked”, an emotional concert at Beulah Church in Brooklyn and stops at Ground Zero and Shanksville, Pa.

2007 - **The Word** - If it’s Florida, it must be trips to Disney World and Sea World. Of course there were many memorable performances throughout the southeast with a close-knit group of singers and sponsors.

2008 - **More Than Words** - Always proclaimed the most scenic tour — the Canadian Rockies and BAMF plus a performance at the foot of Mount Rushmore made this a memorable tour.


2010 - **He’s Alive, Forever, Amen!** - Roughly re-tracing the first trip out west in 1975, New G returned to California as part of their 40th year anniversary celebrations.

2011 - **God Is...** - Three buses to carry an enthusiastic group to New York City and back. Seeing Daniel Radcliffe perform in “How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying” — on his birthday no less — was one of many highlights. There were also many emotional performances including one where there wasn’t time to change into costume — street clothes worked just fine!

2012 - **Definitions** - Tour is always fun when it includes Disney World. The “Sermon In Song” theme led to many “best ever” dialogues and “Down to the River to Pray” provided many emotional moments.

2013 - **Brighter than the Sun** - Often considered the most scenic tour — through the northwest into the Canadian Rockies, with stops at Old Faithful and rafting in Yellowstone.

2014 - **Who Am I?** - Back to the nation’s capital and many other sites around Washington, D.C. and Philadelphia. Tour also included stays in cabins, Abraham Lincoln’s church bench and all the rides at Cedar Point.
The New Generation Singers began in 1970 in St. Joseph, Missouri, under the direction of Byron Myers. Rehearsals were held at Wyatt Park Christian Church (WPCC). In 1980 the group moved to Ashland United Methodist Church, where it continues to be hosted. The group is composed of approximately 100 area high school and college age youth.

Connie Miller Heard was a member in the beginning. “It was Christmas 1969, I was a sophomore at Central High School. At WPCC we had a good youth group choir. Byron was the church choir director. About 12 of us met at church one day and decided we wanted to create a Christmas program. We had no costumes, but we had great songs; we made up dialog and added choreography. It was a simple program by today’s standards, but it lit a fire that hasn’t stopped burning,” said Connie.

“The New Generation Singers” was formed shortly after that first Christmas program. They invited friends outside of WPCC first, then friends of friends with a conscious decision to open it to youth from all different backgrounds and churches. The heart of New G is a mutual love for music, family, friendship and worship.

New G meets most Sunday evenings all year. In the fall, they work on Christmas music which they present as a free concert. In January, they start working on their summer program which is presented at local churches each Sunday during June and July.

Each year the singers pick a theme for the summer season. A committee meets to work on the dialogs that will help to tie the songs together to create a “sermon in song”. The individuals write and present their own dialog during the performances.

More FAQs

Financial Support
Each member pays tour expenses out of their own pocket (or perhaps their parents’ pockets!) or by raising money through group activities. New G holds fundraising events including frozen food sales, trash bag sales and special projects. Watch for information on our website — www.ngsingers.com. Of course we also graciously accept financial support from audience members throughout our summer sing-outs and two-week tour.

Besides tour expenses (mainly buses, group sightseeing and some hotel stays), year-round expenses include equipment and truck maintenance, music and insurance. If you would like to support the group beyond what you may have done today, please contact Byron & Phyllis Myers, 3002 Miller Rd, St. Joseph, MO 64506.

Membership Info
If you, or someone you know, might be interested in joining the New Generation Singers, please contact us. We are always looking for new members. Requirements are simple: you must be a second semester eighth grader up to a college-aged, single young adult who is interested in singing (no audition!), socializing and traveling...all in a safe Christian atmosphere.

Email Emily Howell at emily.ngsingers@gmail.com or call 816-262-8257 for information. Be sure to visit us online at www.ngsingers.com or on Facebook to learn more about the fun times you can have in New G.