



The Messenger

Messenger Project Newsletter

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Dynamic Duo



Andrew and Mary Kate Kirby add keys and vocals.

Messenger Project has been blessed with the talents of **Andrew** and **Mary Kate Kirby** on our newest recordings. Mary Kate added soulful vocals on a couple of tunes and Andrew laid down a keyboard track. We are hoping to incorporate them into many future recordings and live shows.



Lionel and Skip clown around for the camera.

Lionel De Leon and **Skip Hahn** played an acoustic set of Messenger Project songs at East Gate Café in Bellflower (7/11/03). The café features two Christian artists every Friday and Saturday night and is located just north of the 91 freeway on Bellflower Blvd. The sign in front says "Angel City" and there is plenty of parking in the rear.

Lionel will also be playing a solo performance at a youth detention center in Lancaster, CA, on August 30th.

Early Church History

Christianity was founded on the miracle of Jesus' resurrection. Because of this miracle, the infant church spread at a phenomenal rate throughout the Roman Empire in its first forty years, despite persecution. Many early Christians were stoned or crucified. In 64 A.D., Rome burned for six days in a great fire that laid a great part of the city in ash. Nero blamed the Christians and many were arrested and persecuted. Some were sewn into the skins of wild beasts, then big dogs were released who tore them to pieces. Women were tied to mad bulls and dragged to death and Christians were burned at the stake in Nero's garden after nightfall. The term *martyr* originally meant "witness," which is what most Christians were at the moment of death. The courage and loyalty of martyred Christians made an overwhelming impact on witnesses of their trials and executions. Many witnesses suddenly decided to become Christians.

The term "Christian" originated in Antioch as a derogatory label for followers of Christ, who adopted the name gladly.

In A.D. 70 the Emperor Vespasian's forces, led by Titus, completely destroyed the Temple and marked the end of the apostolic age.

Throughout the first three centuries, the majority of believers were common people like slaves, women, traders and soldiers. But by the end of the second century, many people with the keenest minds were followers of Christ. Men like Aristides, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, Irenaeus and Melito directed their intellectual gifts toward the advancement of Christianity. Origen was the first theologian who justified Christianity to the intellect as well as the heart of mankind.

The Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in 312 after a military victory

gave him proof of the power of Christ and the superiority of Christianity. In 321 he made Sunday a public holiday. In 325 he called for a council to meet in Nicea to resolve divisions between churches. The Nicene Creed was adopted as the standard of orthodox Christianity at this meeting:

"I believe in one God the Father Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds. God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; he suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets. And I believe in one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen"

All but two bishops signed the creed, and they were soon afterward sent into exile. Orthodox Christianity arose to combat heresy in the church and early church writings were canonized into our current New Testament. The first complete list of books were listed in an Easter letter written by Bishop Athanasius from Alexandria (in 367 A.D.).

In 380, the emperor Theodosius made belief in Christianity an imperial command. In 381, he called a general council at Constantinople that excluded bishops from Rome. The next year, Rome argued "The Holy Roman Church takes precedence over the other churches." Eastern Orthodoxy and Western Catholicism continued to drift from each other, developing different doctrines. In 1054, the split between Eastern and Western Orthodoxy began when Pope Leo IX sent a Bull of Excommunication to the church of Holy Wisdom in Constantinople.