

THE BRIDGE CHRISTIAN RADIO BROADCASTS BIBLE TEACHING TO 80,000 WEEKLY IN NEW YORK CITY, NEW JERSEY, AND AROUND THE WORLD. EACH YEAR LISTENERS CELEBRATE ITS SPIRITUAL IMPACT AT

BRIDGEFEST

Story by Christmas Beeler
Photos by David Beeler

In a cavernous auditorium on the Jersey Shore, a young man listened soberly as Pastor Tony Clark of CC Newport News, VA, explained that only Christ could pay for our sins when He died on the cross. Now 17, the teen had spent years in foster care with no one to trust or rely on. As Pastor Tony invited the crowd to surrender their lives to Jesus Christ, both he and his girlfriend stepped forward.

In a nearby building, they talked to counselors one on one. A friendly, middle-aged woman—Diana Lesniak of CC Old Bridge, NJ—shared how she came to Christ 13 years ago. The teen listened intently: Like him, Diana had come from a rough neighborhood, been raised in traditional religion, and been hurt as a child. She told how Jesus had saved her, healed her, and become her close Friend.

“My mom’s a junkie,” the young man began, and then the hurt just started pouring out of him. He related how he had grown up in foster homes and how he had been sexually abused as a child, which his girlfriend didn’t know. Diana’s eyes filled with tears. After he finished, Diana embraced them, all three weeping together in a long hug.

“Honey, I am so sorry for what you’ve been through,” Diana said gently. “What happened to you is not your fault. God loves you so much, and He has started a work in you tonight. He’s going to be with you and help you.”

She shared Matthew 7:7b, when Jesus said, **“Seek, and you will find,”** urging them to keep seeking God in every aspect of their lives. Feeling a special love and care for them,



Diana has kept in touch. “I’ve been texting them Scripture and reminding them that God loves them,” Diana said. “They’re very grateful. I told them, someone did it for me.”

Nearly 100 people came forward to receive Christ during Bridgefest, the annual Jersey Shore outreach of The Bridge Christian Radio, a ministry of Calvary Chapel Old Bridge, NJ. Radio listeners were invited to meet the pastors they hear on The Bridge, see them teach live, and bring unsaved friends to hear the Gospel. In its 13th year, the one-day event in June included a youth rally, Bible teachings, and a large concert and Gospel invitation.

Sharing the Word Year-Round

Fifteen years ago, Pastor Lloyd Pulley of CC Old Bridge faced a tough choice: to build a new church complex on 100-plus acres of land, or to sell the land and buy a radio station. Lloyd recalled, “I felt I’d rather get the Word of God out in the Northeast. People here often have the worldview: be a good person, follow your heart, and believe in yourself. There is a deep hunger for the teaching of God’s Word.” The Bridge features continual verse-by-verse teaching from many Calvary Chapel pastors.



Top: Left to right: Pastors Lloyd Pulley, CC Old Bridge, NJ; James Kaddis, CC Signal Hill, CA; Ed Taylor, CC Aurora, CO; and Bobby Hargraves, CC Hudson Valley, NY, answer audience questions.

Bottom right: Ed Taylor speaks with attendees and volunteers on a rainy afternoon at Bridgefest.



After waiting 10 years for license approval and securing an antenna in Midtown Manhattan, in 2015 The Bridge extended to New York City—a listening area with more than 800 different language groups and nearly 7 million people. The Bridge has more than 80,000 weekly listeners—nearly half through online streaming, some as far away as Russia. “God has opened amazing doors for us,” said Rob Taylor, general manager of The Bridge. “Our heart is to get the Gospel out to people all over the world.”

The Power of the Word via Radio

“Radio is one of the best mediums to impact people spiritually,” Lloyd explained. Anyone, anywhere, at any time can tune in: “It’s very personal as you listen to it alone and let the Word of God pierce your heart.” Many commuters

tune in to the same teacher daily. “People love to meet the teacher who has impacted them,” Lloyd explained. “One woman was thankful for God saving her life and her marriage. It’s such a privilege to be used by God to touch people through His Word. Another woman drove six hours to tell me that a group in her area regularly tunes in.”

Another benefit of radio, he said, “Radio penetrates all barriers: rich, poor, the down and out.” There are more than a dozen correctional facilities within The Bridge’s reach, and many inmates have been transformed by the Bible teaching. One notorious prisoner, “David Berkowitz—the Son of Sam serial killer [arrested in 1976] from New York City—is now an avid listener,” Lloyd related. “He’s on fire for the Lord and uses The Bridge to disciple others.”

Souls Won to Christ

Many pastors and volunteers from several churches shared the Gospel and prayed with dozens who opened their hearts to Jesus during the day-long celebration.

One volunteer, Brian Williams, came to Christ through Bridgefest. “Several years ago, I wanted to end my life,” recalled Brian, now in his 60s. “So I checked in to a mental hospital. A woman from CC Old Bridge came and prayed for me. A few years later, I came here to go to the beach, and a lady shared the Gospel with me during Bridgefest and invited me to her church.” Touched by the Gospel, a few months later Brian visited CC Old Bridge, where he accepted Christ and grew in his faith. “One day, a woman at church asked me, ‘Do you remember me?’ I didn’t, but she had prayed for me at the hospital.” Brian added, “God had His hand on my life. He was guiding me to Him.”

Transparent Encouragement

A regular teacher on The Bridge, Pastor Ed Taylor of CC Aurora, CO, noted, “When I teach, sometimes I mention the tragedy that our family endured when my son passed away. A lot of people connect with that and ask for prayer. It gives them hope that I’m still standing—that God will help them through the storms in their lives,” he said. “It’s okay to be transparent. God uses broken vessels. When you’re empty, the Holy Spirit can fill you.”

When Ed was a new believer, he listened to Calvary Chapel teachers on the radio. “Different teachers influence you.

With my background of drug addiction and poor treatment of my wife, I was impacted by Pastor Raul Ries and how God changed the way he esteemed his wife.”

Growing the Church

Featured on The Bridge, Pastor Bobby Hargraves of CC Hudson Valley in Poughkeepsie, NY, got saved in 1980 and grew in his faith by listening to Pastors Chuck Smith, Greg Laurie, and Raul Ries. “They weren’t yelling or screaming; they were just teaching the Word of God. I was a lost, hurting kid in Yonkers, and I could understand it. That changed my life forever.” Romans 10:17 says, *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

At CC Hudson Valley, Bobby related, “Every other person is coming to our church from listening to The Bridge. There’s a difference between teaching from the Word and teaching the Word. People need the whole counsel of God.” He has watched the Word change countless lives: “Isaiah says that when the Word of God goes forth, it doesn’t return void.”

Pastor Bobby recalled one changed life. On Easter Sunday 2017, Mike Love came to CC Hudson Valley just after doing 25 years in the New York prison system; for the last 10 years, he had listened daily to Bible teaching on The Bridge. “The Bridge was like a spiritual oasis for us every day. The teaching was so sound doctrinally. There were days I was having a rough time, and there would be a message reminding me that I am a new man in Christ, that He is my *very present help in trouble* (Psalm 46:1b). God got ahold of many of us in prison, and now we’re serving Him on the outside.” Mike attends CC Hudson Valley with his wife Brynne and sings on the worship team. 🙌

The Bridge Christian Radio

listen online: Bridgeradio.org

or use an app: [The Bridge](#), [iHeartRadio](#), [tuneln](#)



Top left: Pastor Tony Clark of CC Newport News, VA, encourages those who responded to the Gospel. Nearly 100 came forward at invitations that day.

Bottom left: Jeremiah Koczman and Sarah Ellen Long of Jesus Fellowship CC, NJ, lead youth in worship.

Bottom center: Ryan Ries, co-founder of The Whosoever, and Karen Pulley, wife of Pastor Lloyd, rejoice after Ryan led several dozen youth in prayer to commit their lives to Christ.