

Kelita found God in an icy ditch

■ Singer turned her life around after 1989 car wreck

By ALAN COCHRANE
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Eight years ago, singer Kelita Haverland wrecked a van and turned her life around.

"I was driving a van with all the (musical) gear in it, when I hit a patch of black ice. The van was totaled, but I walked away without a scratch. That night, I sat in the ditch and said: 'OK God, I got your message.'"

For Haverland, who now goes simply by the name Kelita, that night was both a beginning and an end. In the years leading up to the 1989 accident, she had suffered through many personal tragedies, a bad marriage and an up-and-down career as a singer. In the years since the accident, she ended her bad marriage, found new love, had a baby, recorded a new album of country-gospel music and embarked on a new career.

November, 1997, finds her on the road again, telling her story and singing country-gospel music at small churches. She will be in Moncton for concerts Nov. 1 at Hillside Baptist Church, and Nov. 8 at Allison Baptist Church.

Born and raised on a ranch in Alberta, Kelita grew up in a family that included an alcoholic father and an abusive brother. Both her parents died when Kelita was quite young. Her mother died of breast cancer and her brother died of a heroin overdose.

Kelita found a friend in music and God. She learned to write songs and pray. But when she left Alberta for Toronto, the freedom went to her head and she went a little wild.

While her talents brought a number of Juno nominations and the Canadian Country Music Association's Rising Star award, Kelita was miserable.

"I kept hiding behind everything and the masks I kept putting on," she said in a telephone interview from her home in Toronto yesterday. "When I finally reached this point eight years ago I just said 'enough is enough.' I wasn't trying to be perfect anymore or please everybody else. I started to work on myself."

In time, she found happiness. Her story is told in the songs of



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Country-gospel singer Kelita will perform concerts at two Moncton churches, Nov. 1 and 8.

her album *Lucky One*, which was released a year ago. The single, *The Strong One*, has been played on Country Music Television.

She has also written songs and toured with well-known Canadian singer Susan Aglukark.

Although she has found God and turned her life around, Kelita doesn't urge others to follow her path.

"Basically, what I'm doing is telling a story. This is what happened to me and how I got through things. I'm just sharing it. I think there are so many people who have gone through experiences like I have. This is normal. This is real life. I was just so tired of hiding everything and pretending I was OK when I wasn't."

"If I'm trying to get anything across, the important thing is that

people can be honest with themselves with where they are, and not be afraid to dig up the past. Or if they are in a situation where they are being victimized or not happy where they are, they can change things. Life is too short and you can change it. It just so happens that my faith played a big part of this."

• *Kelita will appear at Hillside Baptist Church on Nov. 1 at 7:30 p.m., and for the 11 a.m. service on Nov. 2. She will be at Allison Baptist Church on Saturday, Nov. 8 and the 11 a.m. service on Nov. 9. Tickets for the shows are \$5 in advance and \$7 at the door. Family prices are available. For information contact Allison Baptist Church at 853-7170, or Hillside Baptist Church at 857-0832.*