

FEBRUARY 2015

# SGN SCOOPS MAGAZINE



REMEMBERING THE GREAT

# LARI GOSS

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

The Lesters, Wilburn and Wilburn,  
The Hall Sisters & Austin Whisnant



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## OUR MISSION

SGNScoops exists to promote the gospel by unveiling what is intriguing and real about Southern Gospel and Christian Country music. With integrity, we aspire to strengthen Christians, highlight people who are fulfilling a call to minister and emphasize the music that inspires audiences and glorifies God.

Publisher- Rob Patz

Editor- Lorraine Walker

Feature Editors- Craig Harris

Layout/Design- Pete Schwager, Staci Schwager

Cover Design- Stephanie Kelley

Founder- Dr. Allen Smith

[www.sgnscoops.com](http://www.sgnscoops.com)

Have a SCOOP to share? For news consideration, email us at [news@sgnscoops.com](mailto:news@sgnscoops.com)

# PUBLISHER'S POINT

**by Rob Patz**



Welcome to the February edition of SGN Scoops magazine and the Publishers Point. We think we have put together another outstanding magazine for you and are excited for you to read it and to share it with your friends!

I hope you've taken time to vote in the 2015 Diamond Award nominations as we continue along the road to the Diamond Awards. Be checking weekly for updates on the website on a feature we are calling the *Road to the Diamond Awards*. Every year is exciting, so make plans to be with us in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, this November for the Diamond Awards, plus all the other great events that are a part of the Creekside Gospel Music Convention!

I'm really excited that next month I will be in Oxford, Alabama for the Southern Gospel Weekend. It is three great days of Gospel music, and the best part of all, it's free! We want you to come and be introduced to some great new artists and some of your familiar friends in the Southern Gospel industry. Make your plans now to join us for three great days.

February is of course the month of love, and there is no greater love than the love of our Savior. He died on the cross for each and every one of us, for our sins, so that we could live with Him in heaven. It's amazing to think that the Creator of this universe loves us so much that He sent His Son to die on the cross for your sins and for my sins, so that we could be with Him in Heaven. I think is a powerful statement of what love truly is!

If you have not felt the true love of our Savior; if you aren't saved and you don't even know what it is to be saved, please email me or someone on our staff and we would love to talk to you about the experience of true love through Jesus Christ. [rob@sgnscoops.com](mailto:rob@sgnscoops.com)



# A Letter From the Editor

By Lorraine Walker

February has arrived with all the usual cold, snow and ice, and of course, Valentine's Day. At first glance, you won't think that we have highlighted the hearts-and-flowers day in this month's edition of SGN Scoops. But really, the whole magazine is full of love, in different forms. After all, isn't that the way love is, in real life?

Two prominent music men passed away during the month of January and we mention them both in our Newsmakers section. One was very much a part of the Southern Gospel music scene, and at Lari Goss' homegoing service, the church was filled with his family and friends. There was a lot of love being poured out that day. When you read Jennifer Campbell's tribute to Goss, you'll see that his life was a conduit of God's love.

Craig Harris talks to Matt Felts, the newest member of the Lesters. The Lesters have been around Gospel music a long time and have shown a family's love through their ministry.

In fact, we have a few examples of family love this month, including the Hall Sisters and Wilburn and Wilburn. The Wilburn men talk a little more about relationships and marriage and even get a little sentimental. There is love in those articles.

You will find many more types of love in these pages, but always, I hope, the love of Jesus. Our many feature writers and columnists are dedicated to showing His love through their writing.

We have had to say goodbye to three of our writers this month. It is with sadness that we announce the departure of Sandi Duncan-Clark, Dixie Phillips and Scott Rhoades. So many times life makes demands on our time and we can't do everything we'd like to do. We wish each of them well and hope that the revolving door of SGN Scoops will bring them back to us at some point. We love you all.

I am so proud of our current writing crew and all the artistic/creative people who put their time and effort into making this magazine a publication that not only tells about the music that makes our lives enjoyable but also tells about the love of Jesus who makes our lives livable. No greater love is this, than that a man lays down his life for a friend. He laid down His life for me. And out of His great love, He has given me the gift of salvation and eternal life. How much more could I ask for?

I watched a Godly man sit and talk about his many years in a Christian mission, the emotions washing over the lines on his face that those years had brought, as he talked about touching lives daily with the love of Christ. Then he got up from the coffee table and gave a hug to another gentleman very much in need of a loving touch. A simple act, but one of love.

God's love is everywhere, in many different forms. Celebrate His love this month.

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# LIFE LOVE & LEGENDS

BY LOU WILLS HILDRETH



The Christian music industry is mourning the death of two LEGENDS: Andrae' Crouch, on January 8<sup>th</sup> and Lari Goss on January 10<sup>th</sup>. Andrae' wrote many of the Gospel songs that are recognized and loved worldwide. I am blessed with a sweet memory of a very special moment at the 2007 Gaither Homecoming video taping in Nashville when Andrae' performed his classic, "Through It All." Another highlight of that video is Andrae' playing for an excited Jason Crabb who sang,



"The Blood Will Never Lose It's Power," one of Andrae's dearly loved songs.

A favorite Crouch song is "My Tribute," written in 1971. The chorus echoes my personal thankfulness for a LIFE in gospel music—"To God be the glory for the things He has done."

Bill and Gloria Gaither produced four great videos from those memorable sessions. Most of the time, we were sharing highly emotional moments, but there were some fun times too. On one of the videos, *Nashville Homecoming*, we were all laughing as Larry Gatlin attempts to give Bill Gaither a lesson in songwriting. Bill was smiling big, as moments later, the Gatlins:

Larry, Rudy, and Steve, performed one of Bill's songs "In The Upper Room." We will never forget that taping at Opryland.

Andrae' Crouch will be missed, and we will always be thankful that Andrae' was able to join us for the great outpouring of honor and LOVE from his Gaither Homecoming Friends.

On January 10<sup>th</sup>, news of the passing of another LEGEND, Lari Goss, brought grief to the Gospel music industry and fans, as we shared the loss of a musical genius who touched so many of our lives. Lari Goss has been a treasured part of my LIFE since about 1965. A strong bond was formed when the Goss Brothers: Lari, James, and Roni, came to Texas to work on our first Skylite album, *The Family Bible*, featuring the Wills Family Quartet and the Junior Wills Family. A great friendship began with our Wills teenagers from this recording session.

Lari's arranging, producing, and keyboard talents, advanced the ministry of a multitude of artists, and his contribution leaves an indelible influence on every facet of gospel music. We send condolences to his wife



Carolyn and their sons, and to Roni and Linda Goss. We are comforted as we remember Lari's generosity and his steadfast faith in God, knowing we will see him again.

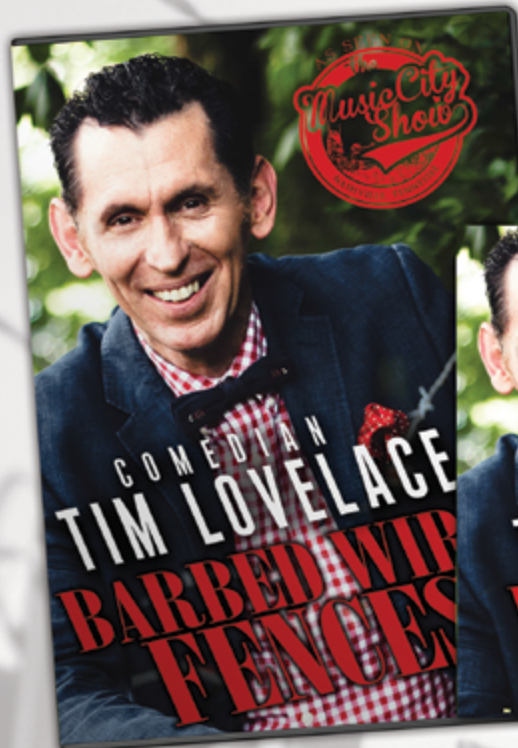
Lou Wills Hildreth  
gospplvideo@aol.com  
P. O. Box 271106  
Houston, TX 77277



Photo A. The Gatlins: Larry, Steve, and Rudy at 2007 Gaither Homecoming taping

Photo B. Lari Goss and Lou at Lari's 2009 induction into the GMA Hall Of Fame

Photo C. Andrae' Crouch, Lou, and Larry Ford at 2007 Gaither Homecoming taping



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# Featured Groups for February

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**Ascension Quartet**

<http://www.theascensionqt.com>

**Appointed Quartet**

<http://www.appointedqt.com>

**Blackwood Brothers Quartet**

<http://www.blackwoodbrothers.com>

**Bradford Ministries**

<http://www.facebook.com/bradfordministries1>

**The Bridgemans**

<http://www.thebridgemans.com>

**Chris Himmel Ministries**

<http://www.chrishimmelministries.com>

**Christy Sutherland**

<http://www.christysutherland.net>

**Collisons**

<http://www.collisontrio.com>

**Cross Pointe Trio**

<http://www.crosspointemusic.com>

**Delivered**

<http://www.we-are-delivered.com>

**Divine Mercy**

<http://www.divinemercysingers.com>

**4 His Praise Trio**

<http://www.4hispraisetrio.org>

**Encore**

<http://www.acrosstheaway.org>

**Full Life Trio**

<http://www.fulllifetrio.com>

**Gospel Messengers**

<http://www.gospelmessengersministries.org>

**The Harvey Family**

<http://www.gospelgigs.com/theharveyfamily>

**The Helmsmen**

<http://www.thenewhelmsmen.com>

**The Heritage Quartet**

<http://www.theheritagequartet.com>

**The Inmans**

<http://www.theinmans.com>

**Jeff Steinberg Ministry Team**

<http://www.tinygiant.com>

**Jim Sheldon**

<http://www.jimsheldonmsic.com>

**John & Dody Martin**

<http://www.martinministries.org>

**LeFevre Quartet**

<http://www.thelefevrequartet.com>

**Living Fountains**

<http://www.gospelgigs.com/livingfountains>

**Lumber River Quartet**

<http://www.lumberriverministries.com>

**Mark Dubbeld Family**

<http://www.mjdubbeld.com>

**The Masters Men + 1**

<http://www.mastersmenquartet.com>

**Masters Promise**

<http://www.masterspromise.com>

**Mercy River Quartet**

<http://www.mercyriverqt.com>

**One Way Quartet**

<http://www.onewayquartet.org>

**Persuaded**

<http://www.youtube.com/user/PersuadedVideo>

**Pine Ridge Boys**

<http://www.pineridgeboys.com>

**The Representatives**

[www.therepresentativesquartet.net](http://www.therepresentativesquartet.net)

**Servants Call**

<http://www.servantscall.net>

**Siouxland Gospel Promotions**

<http://www.facebook.com/SiouxlandGospelPromotions>

**Soul Seeking Disciples**

<http://www.gospelgigs.com/thessds>

**Sounds of Jericho**

<http://www.soundsofjericho.com>

**Southern Plainsmen Quartet**

[www.southernplainsmen.com](http://www.southernplainsmen.com)

**Southern Tradition**

<http://www.americanheritagemusic.com>

**Steve Jones**

<http://www.stevejonesgospelmusicministry.com>

**Stephen Wood**

<http://www.gospelgigs.com/stephenwoodministries>

**Three Parts Grace**

<http://www.gospelgigs.com/threepartsgrace>

**2 Determined**

<http://www.gospelgigs.com/2determined>

**Unity 4 Quartet**

<http://www.theunityfour.com>

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# NEWSMAKERS

By Lorraine Walker

## Andrae' Crouch

Andrae' Crouch passed away on Thursday, January 8, 2015 after a period of hospitalization. Andrae' was 72-years-old and in his lifetime had received seven Grammy and six Dove awards. He had been inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame and had received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. He was a singer, songwriter, producer and arranger who worked with many top artists across music genres and whose songs touched the hearts and lives of people across the globe. Some of his friends shared their reaction to his death with special news releases of their thoughts and comments:



*To say the legendary Andrae' Crouch was an influence on my life would be a vast understatement. One of the highlights of my career was to perform his classic song, "The Blood Will Never Lose It's Power," as he played the piano during a Bill Gaither video taping - I'll never forget it. We've lost a true pioneer and he will be missed. - Jason Crabb*

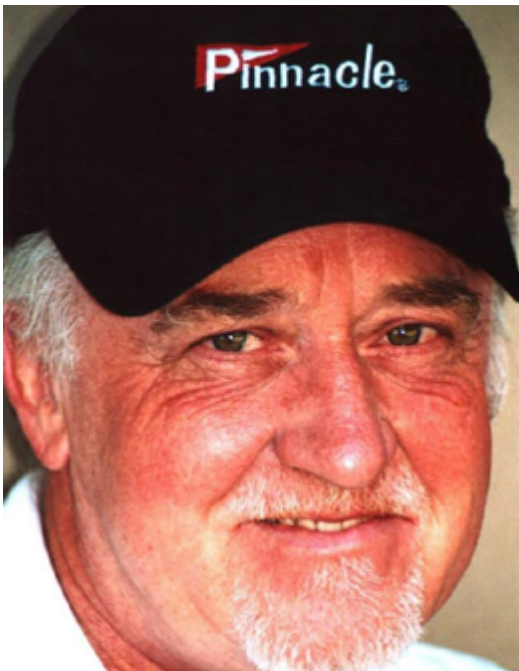
*My friend for 44 years - my encourager and my fellow warrior - caught a glimpse of heaven and couldn't stay here any longer. I'm sure the Heavenly Host gave him a standing ovation as "My Tribute - To God Be The Glory" filled the air. Andrae' touched my heart and I know will see him again.*

- Howard Rachinski, Chairman/CEO, CCLI

*His pen was dipped in heaven...his fingers dripped with passion and his voice had the haunting, familiar sound of home. He wrote the songs that expressed the longings of our hearts. 40 years ago he helped me find my voice. I will miss my mentor and friend.*

- Reba Rambo McGuire

*\*Note: Reba won a Grammy award in 1980 for Best Gospel Performance, Contemporary or Inspirational alongside Andrae' Crouch, Cynthia Clawson, BJ Thomas, Tramaine Hawkins, Walter Hawkins, The Archers and her husband Dony McGuire.*



## Lari Goss

Lari Goss passed away on Saturday, January 10, 2015 at the age of 69. Goss was married to Carolyn and they were blessed with a large family, including four sons, two daughters-in-law and five grandchildren. Goss was well known as arranger, producer, writer, orchestrator, keyboardist and musical genius in all areas of the Christian and secular music world. He was a multi-award winner, including a Grammy award, several Doves and an induction into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. Goss was also an ordained minister.

Many of Lari's friends have already expressed their condolences and memories on social media, but some have shared them with SGN Scoops. For these comments and more on Lari Goss as written by Jennifer Campbell, see the Lari Goss Tribute elsewhere in this issue.



# NEWSMAKERS

## 2015 Events in Southern Gospel

### Southern Gospel Weekend



Southern Gospel Weekend arrives in Oxford, Alabama on March 26th through 28th, 2015. The event will be held at the Oxford Civic Center. Artists attending include Jay Parrack and Vocal Event, Hope's Journey, Ava Kasich, Faith's Journey, the Williamsons, Clear Vision, Exodus, the Drummond Family, the Carter-Robinson Band, Redemption Song, Jesse Reece and many more. For current information visit [www.facebook.com/southerngospelweekend](http://www.facebook.com/southerngospelweekend). Tickets are free but must be reserved by visiting the website at: [www.southerngospelweekend.com](http://www.southerngospelweekend.com).

### Ozark Gospel Music Convention



Be sure to come out to the Ozark Gospel Music Convention in beautiful Branson, Missouri on May 4th through 6th, 2015. This event is held at the Stone Castle Hotel and Conference Center on Green Mountain Drive. Some of the artists performing at the OGMC include The Williamsons, Majesty III, the Ascension Quartet, Hope's Journey, Broken Vessels, Faith's Journey and many more. Don't miss it! Get your tickets today by visiting [www.ozarkgospelmusicconvention.com](http://www.ozarkgospelmusicconvention.com) or by calling (417) 425-7856.

### Creekside Gospel Music Convention



The fourth annual Creekside Gospel Music Convention will be held November 2nd through 5th as Creekside returns to the Smoky Mountain Convention Center, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. This resort provides special pricing for those attending the Convention. Rooms can be reserved by phone at: 1-800-223-6707. Creekside annual events include the Lou Hildreth Honors on Monday night and the Diamond Awards take place on Tuesday night with many special guests. Other events include showcases and an evening of choir singing, as well as the evening Midnight Prayer event. For more information visit [www.creeksidegospelmusicconvention.com](http://www.creeksidegospelmusicconvention.com).

### Diamond Awards



The 2015 Diamond Award Nominations are now open on the SGN Scoops website! Everyone is invited to the website to enter the Nominations area and list their top ten favorite picks for each Diamond Award category. Visit [www.sgnscoops.com](http://www.sgnscoops.com) for the link. The list of nominees will be posted on the website, and fans will then nominate their favorites from this list, with a maximum of five names nominated per award. In this way, the field of nominees will be narrowed to ten, voted on by fans once more and then narrowed to five. This final list of five will then be voted on by fans to find the one winner for each award. The Diamond Awards gala evening is November 3, 2015 at the Creekside Gospel Music Convention in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.

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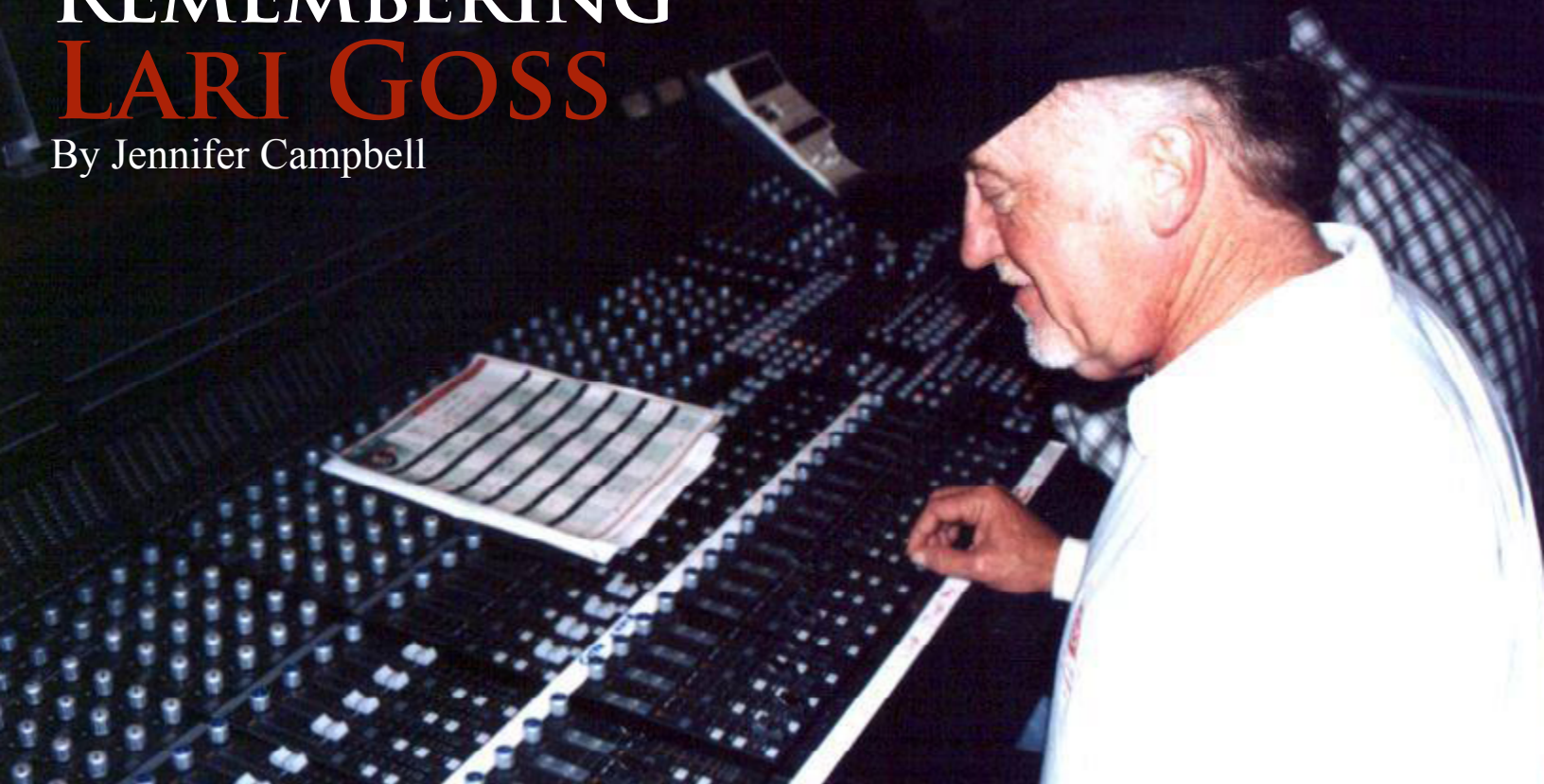
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# REMEMBERING LARI GOSS

By Jennifer Campbell



Lari Goss was a man with a heart of gold. He was a musical genius who composed and arranged a prolific library of songs. Every note expressed his extraordinary signature musical style. But his greatest characteristic wasn't the fact that he could write elaborate orchestrations. Nor was it the way he played complex chords on the piano that have the most experienced musicians struggling to pick apart the perplexing notes. It was not even the unconditional love and endless devotion that he had to his family and friends. Lari's most valuable attribute was his personal testimony. Through his music and through his life, he wanted everyone to know that his Cornerstone was Jesus Christ.

At just 10 years of age, Lari began singing about Jesus. Joined by his brothers and parents, he ministered to the congregation of Center Road Baptist Church in his hometown of Cartersville, Ga. As the boys grew older, they traveled and ministered as The Goss Brothers. Some said they were ahead of their time. Others listened in amazement, trying to decipher the complexities of the intricate musical and vocal arrangements recorded on their vinyl records. Inevitably, only God knew the impact The Goss Brothers would have on the world of Gospel Music. Meurice LeFevre signed them to Sing Records in 1962, which simultaneously launched their studio career. Within the short span of 15 years, they provided backup and instrumentation for

nearly every well-known Gospel group.

In 1980, tragedy struck the Goss household when Lari's brother James passed away in a plane crash. The loss of their brother closed one chapter of their lives, but opened up new doors for Lari and Roni. While Roni began traveling with Nancy Harmon, Lari dedicated more time to studio production and arranging musical scores. Jack Price of Prism Music gave Lari his start in the choral market, and he worked with Word Music for many years as well. In 1984, he received his first Dove Award for a recording with Phil Driscoll. Lari received 15 Gospel Music Association Dove Awards and three Producer Awards. He received the SGMA Arranger of the Year Award, SGMA Decade of the 90's Piano Honor Roll Award, SGMG Choral Music Honoree Award, James D. Vaughn Impact Award, a Telly Award, and a Commendation by the Legislature of the State of Tennessee. Lari even received a Grammy Award as Producer of The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir project, *HIGH AND LIFTED UP*, and he was inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. Yet with all of his tremendous success, he remained humble.

"Lari was a unique combination of extraordinary talent with a wonderful, humble spirit," said Phil Barfoot. "I recall many great laughs at his really bad jokes and impersonations, as well as many meaningful,



worship moments both while creating the music and recording it! I will always cherish a wonderful friendship and many great times with this incredible person!”

Rodney Griffin of Greater Vision put it best when talking about the studio work that Lari did: “If you remember a song that you fell in love with, he probably produced it. Way beyond his years, even as a young teenager, he was writing orchestrations. He was not just filling in the parts, but mapping out those lush chords of transition that revealed the ‘heart’ of the song.”

Those lush chords will forever be placed in a genre all of their own known as the Goss style. Anyone in the Gospel Music industry will tell you that Lari’s arrangements have a distinct flavor that is undeniably Goss. Ladye Love Smith reaffirmed this when she said, “No one does or did an arrangement quite like Lari Goss. When you hear the amazing chords and phrases, you know it is a Lari Goss arrangement. If it’s a sad song, you hear sadness. If it’s joyful, you hear joy. His music will live on forever in the arrangements he gave us all.”

“We were honored to work with Lari Goss on our *More Than Enough* project, which includes two number one songs, ‘I’ll Trust the Potter’s Hands,’ and ‘All Is Well,’” said Susan Whisnant. “It was without a doubt one of the greatest experiences in The Whisnants’ history. We will never forget working with him. You can hear an introduction of a song and know if Lari Goss produced it. We loved him and highly respected his talent. He will be missed!”

“I have spent a lifetime with him, from The LeFevres ‘till now and love him like family,” shared

Kelly Nelon Clark of The Nelons. “The very first time I went into the studio at LeFevre Sound I was terrified, but Lari and the Goss Brothers made me feel so at home. It was always my dream to have him work with us so Amber could work with him and be a part of that genius mind of his. He did that on The A Cappella Sessions. He is irreplaceable!”

Throughout Lari’s prolific music career spanning nearly 60 years, he worked with innumerable artists such as The Hoppers, The Gaither Vocal Band, The Nelons, The Speer Family, The Hemphills, Larnelle Harris, The Cathedrals, and many others. His music has been heard in prestigious venues around the world including Radio City Music Hall (with The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir), and has been played by numerous renowned orchestras, including the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra, Dublin Symphony, Belfast Symphony, Stockholm Radio Symphony Orchestra, L.A. Symphony, Seattle Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, The United



States Air Force Band, and the Nashville String Machine.

“Lari was a harmonic genius and he was a wonderful, warm human being,” said Bill Gaither. “Those characteristics rarely coexist in the same person. I have so many fond memories of hanging out with Lari in the studio over the years. He was a rare gift to Gospel



music; truly one of the very best! He will be sorely missed.”

“Lari Goss was a master at his craft,” The Hoppers said. “The music he wrote and orchestrated will live forever. His musical genius was exceeded only by his integrity. The Hoppers are thankful to have known him and had the opportunity to work with him through the years. Much of our recording sessions were spent talking about the goodness of God. We loved him. He was our friend.”



Lari thought highly of his clients and developed long-lasting friendships with many of them through the years. “Lari was an amazing person to work for, a co-worker, a friend and really family,” stated Ladye Love Long Smith. “Apart from the unbelievable talent

he possessed, he was fun to work with and cared about people. We first worked with him when he produced Larnelle Harris’s LIVE: Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs we recorded at Brooklyn Tabernacle.” Ladye and her husband worked with Lari over 20 years. She added, “Lari was intense in the studio and took the work seriously, but he also made it fun. He would take a minute to tell us a funny story and it gave us a break from the intense, long hours of work. He always went to lunch with most everyone he hired and/or dinner—depending on how late we worked! He had returning clients he had done over 50 projects with so that tells you a lot about how it was to work with him and about the quality of his work.”



“The touch of Lari Goss will always remain in my heart and echo through every Love Special telecast, on every CD, and every production,” stated Nancy Harmon. “He was filled with knowledge and talent, and his spirit and love for Jesus Christ was vivid in every composition, every note of the magnificent orchestra, and every choir or vocalist. He loved from his heart! Lari Goss was my dear friend for over 45 years.”

Lari’s musical impact is far-reaching. Whether he was working with a featured soloist or a member of the orchestra, he treated everyone equally. Carl Gorodetzky, Contractor for the Nashville String Machine, said that Lari will be sorely missed. He added, “I contracted all of Lari’s orchestras for recording ses-



sions for over 30 years. He was a great arranger, and a great person. The musicians always loved working with him. It would be an event, not just a job. In all the time I worked with Lari, I never saw him lose his temper or get angry with anyone. That is quite something in the music business! When we set up his Celebration of Life, I asked 44 musicians who had worked with Lari over the years to play at the service. Forty-four musicians were there and played their hearts out. It was a true happening.”



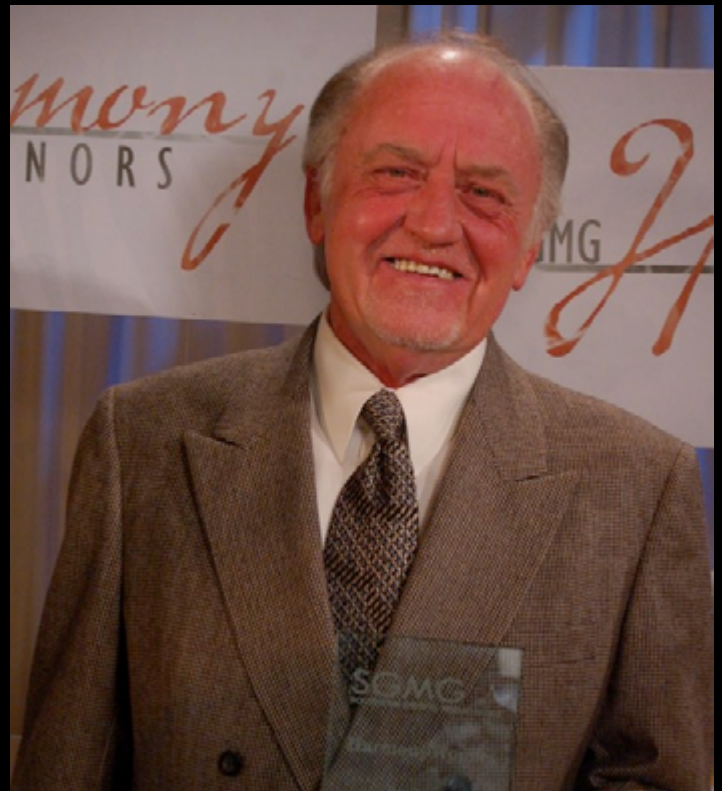
Personally, Lari Goss will always remain as one of the greatest musicians I have ever heard. As a little girl, my dad instilled in me an appreciation for the intricacies of the Goss sound. Not only is there a complexity that cannot fully be explained within Lari’s musical orchestrations, but also there is an anointing that transcends the physical aspects of music. Some people have talents; other people are inherently gifted by God. Lari

Goss had a divine, God-given gift for music.

“In His wisdom and purpose, God has uniquely gifted certain individuals for a special task or position. Lari Goss was such a person,” said Ken Campbell. “We were touched by a special anointing and as we listened to the amazing harmony, it seemed that we could hear distant echoes from Heaven. Lari will be missed and remembered in this world, but beyond the sound of battle, we will rejoice and sing together the song of the redeemed.”

The Goss Brothers sang a song titled, “Long and Winding Road.” On January 10, 2015, Lari’s road turned to gold. While Lari has left this temporary home we call earth, he is in the presence of Jesus. He is in Heaven, our eternal home. He is standing face to face with the One whom he always sang and wrote about.

Lari has left behind an enduring legacy, and his music will resonate in our hearts always. Ask anyone who knew him and they will tell you that Lari didn’t know that he was a musical genius. Lari was once quoted as saying, “All this means nothing if my music does not win people to Jesus, or draw them closer to Him.” Just as Paul wrote in I Corinthians, Lari created music for the sake of the Gospel, so he could share in its blessings (I Corinthians 9:23). Lari kept the faith, he ran the race, and he has earned his crown that will last forever. Until we meet him again in Heaven, may the God-given music of Lari Goss continue to inspire us all.



## *Remembering Lari Goss*

“He knew how to draw out the emotion of the lyric. He arranged many songs for us. My favorite is ‘Then I Met The Master.’ Lari was an encourager too. He worked us hard in the studio, but we always left so proud of what had been accomplished. He was a producer, brother in Christ, and friend. We cherish the memories.” – Ronnie Booth of The Booth Brothers

“Lari was a genius when it came to arranging, orchestrating, and vocals. I would best describe him this way: he was a joy to be with; he showed pride in his work with our family, The Hoppers. We had a lot of fun and laughter. He loved BLTs made by me. Our loss, but Heaven’s gain. His musical arrangements will live on forever ‘til Jesus comes. We still have the last six songs he ever produced for us in the can already produced and orchestrated. Praise God. We loved him as our own.” – Claude Hopper of The Hoppers

“He was like a brother to me, and, like the loss of a brother, I sorrow, but not without HOPE...because his earthly journey is complete and his FAITH is now SIGHT...he's with Jesus. That's the amazing and blessed thing about the life of a believer. We experience such mixed emotions when a loved one departs this earth. Great sorrow and sadness, because we will miss them so much, but JOY because they are HOME and we know we will see them again. If you've ever listened to any southern gospel music, or any choir music, you have heard his work. He was unparalleled as a writer/arranger/orchestrator/producer/keyboard artist, and his genius was even the more amazing in that he never had a music lesson. His talent was God given, and he used it to the max in his service to the Kingdom. His greatness as a musician is only surpassed by his HUGE servant's heart. Born and raised in Cartersville, Georgia, his influence will be felt for generations to come. I miss you my dear brother.” – Kayward Davis

SGN Scoops would like to thank Carolyn Goss, Lari’s wife, and Roni Goss, Lari’s brother, as well as the Hoppers and Kayward Davis for their generosity in providing photographs of Lari through the years.

Be sure to visit the website of Lari Goss for more information: [larigoss.homestead.com](http://larigoss.homestead.com)

# Lesters Hit a Home Run!

By Craig Harris



## Veteran tenor singer Matt Felts joins his hometown brethren

When the Lesters were in search of a tenor singer last fall, the long-time family group couldn't have envisioned all of the pieces to the puzzle fitting together as seamlessly as they did. Into the picture stepped Matt Felts.

"It truly is like coming home," Felts says. "I joke because we're all from St. Louis. We all get each other's humor. We all get each other's food connections. We are watching Cardinals (baseball) games non-stop

on the bus.

"You can watch people how they treat people on and off the bus. The way they treated me and my family coming in has been unbelievable. The ministry is why they do it ... period. I've traveled with lots of great guys, lots of great singers. These are without a doubt the best. Every week feels like a family vacation. I've never had more fun."

Felts spent the previous five years with the Dixie Melody Boys. "When they were looking for a tenor (when the Lesters became a male trio), I heard they

were looking, and I instantly called my wife (Jennifer),” Felts remembers. “I said, ‘The Lesters are looking, and I want to take this job.’ It wasn’t the right season (at that time), so I said, ‘We’ll just wait.’”



“Justin (Wells, the group’s previous tenor singer) actually texted me and said he was resigning. We were in the car, and I looked at my wife and said, ‘That’s it.’ I felt the season (with the Dixie Melody Boys) was coming to an end. I texted Brian (Lester) right then and said, ‘I’m interested in the job.’ He asked me to come up the next week.”

Felts – a St. Louis native – was born less than a mile from the Lesters’ residence. “We were amazed to watch God’s plan unfold as we began to search for a new tenor,” group manager and lead singer Brian Lester – who stands alongside his son Jonathan as the other vocalists in the trio – shares. “Matt and our former tenor, Justin Wells, have been close friends for years, so they already had a connection, which is how Matt first learned we were looking. Matt is not only from St. Louis but lived just a couple miles away from our home. It was truly a perfect fit. He has fit in so well very quickly.”

Felts adds, “The Lesters were in our house. We knew who they were. They were a household name for us. The earliest group I knew was the Lesters.”

Felts’ first experience in Southern Gospel Music

came as a member of the Ohio-based GloryWay Quartet. That was followed by one year with the Skyline Boys, three years with the Monument Quartet and a six-month stint as part of Perfect Heart. Then, he joined the Dixie Melody Boys. Felts admits that those past experiences have helped shape him as an artist.

“I’ve tried to glean vocally – but not just vocally, also life – I’ve tried to look at how they did it in this industry for a lifetime,” Felts shares. “It’s been positive for the most part. Ernie Haase has been a like a brother, and there’s Allison Speer and Mike Allen.

“Ed O’Neal gave me free reign. He said, ‘You have ideas ... go.’ Not everything works, but you learn.” That creative freedom was essential for Felts, who has a background in marketing. “They (the Lesters) knew my background,” Felts says. “I had a great support staff around me, and what we were able to accomplish with Ed was great.

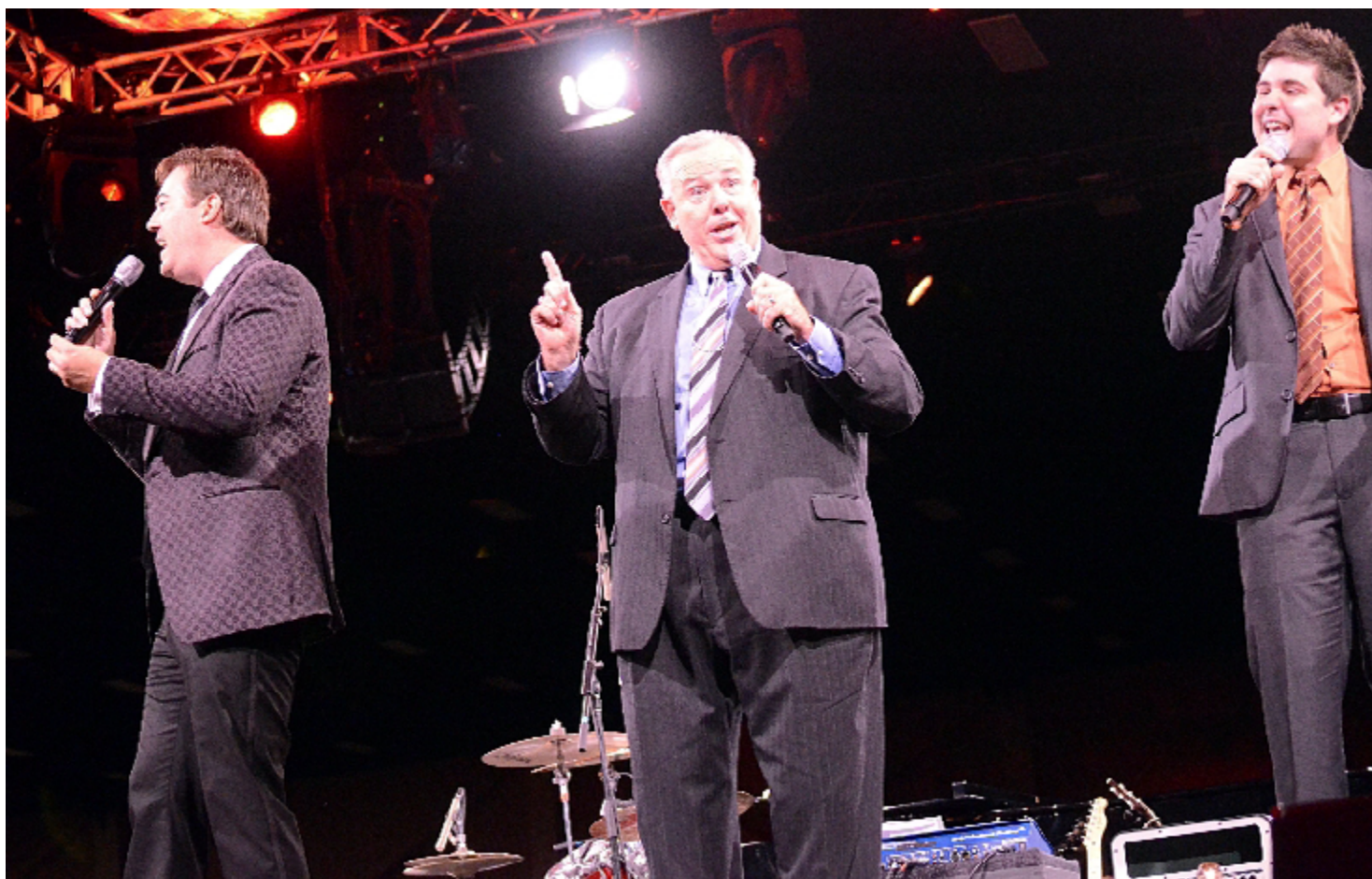
“They (the Lesters) basically said, ‘What are your ideas? What can we do?’ That’s something (positive) for a guy who is in marketing. We’ll just be talking and new ideas will come. There is a momentum swing right now for new opportunities and new growth.”

One of those new opportunities involved the Lesters filming a live CD and DVD in Boston, a project that is now available. “It’s exciting to bring Southern Gospel to Boston,” Felts points out. “They eat it up every time.”

Felts’ marketing foundation was molded while



he was a student at the University of Missouri. Felts also played baseball for the Tigers, graduating in 2001.



Felts – a first baseman and relief pitcher – had the opportunity to play professional baseball, spending time in the minor leagues as part of the Kane County (Ill.) Cougars, Springfield/Ozark (Mo.) Mountain Ducks and Canton (Ohio) Coyotes. Felts is related to former New York Yankee great Don Mattingly – who is now the manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers – and his wife’s family is related to Major League Baseball Hall of Fame member Honus Wagner. “We are a baseball family,” Felts says.

However, that coveted opportunity on the diamond proved to be a trying period of time for Felts. “I grew up a pastor’s son,” Felts explains. “That lifestyle in baseball is very different. I felt that was what I wanted to do, but I knew that wasn’t for me. Music was always at the front. I always wanted to be in music. The Lord was in music.”

Included among Felts’ favorite Lesters songs are “He Is,” “It’s Gonna Be Wonderful,” “My Savior First of All” and “He Didn’t Throw the Clay Away.”

“Clay was my testimony,” Felts points out. “Coming out of baseball, I felt like I had thrown my life away. I felt like I had made too many mistakes. That song just ministered to me.”

While Felts changed careers at that time, he most recently transitioned from a career with male quartets to becoming a third of a male trio now. “It’s stretching your wings artistically,” Felts says. “I love quartets. It’s nothing against that, but that’s all I’ve ever done. In some ways, you become stagnant. The arrangements they (the Lesters) do, it awakens something in you. It’s exciting.”

The 37-year-old Felts admits that the support he has received has been overwhelming. “We are thrilled to have Matt and his family join the Lester family,” Brian Lester shares. “He has already been such a great addition, and our fans have embraced him.”

Felts adds, “It breathes new life into your career. The entire industry, the day I announced I was going over to the Lesters, I had people all over the industry congratulating me. A lot of quartet fans couldn’t understand how excited I was, but I knew there would be a lot of variety to the program. That’s exciting.”

Be sure to see The Lesters when they are in your area. For more information visit <http://www.thelesters.com/>

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## *“Can You Handle The Truth?”*

**Love: Don't Just Say It, Do It!**

By David Staton

February 14! Get the card, get the roses and do everything you can do to make sure your special someone feels loved! I want to take a moment and brag about my wife. For years, I sang gospel music in various groups, gone between 150 and 200 dates a year. I had little or no control if those dates were going to fall on a birthday, anniversary, or any other special day for my wife and kids. It was a huge sacrifice. I missed my family while I was doing that and many people would thank me for making the sacrifice, but I was not the one who made the biggest sacrifice. My wife was the real hero! While I was gone, she was the one who fixed the meals, made sure our kids had what they needed, packed lunches, got them ready and had to juggle her schedule around mine. My wife has been a flight attendant for Delta Airlines for 25 years, so for her to work around my schedule was equivalent to being a magician!

We were married on January 1, 2001 (01-01-01).

This year was our 14<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and due to circumstances beyond her control, she had to fly a long stretch at the end of December and beginning of January. For the first time in 25 years, she found herself flying on Christmas Day and on New Year's Day, our Anniversary. She had a 16-day stretch with only a day off every now and then and not enough time to come home. Our girls and I missed her and she missed us.

A few days before our Anniversary, I posted a photo of our wedding day. The photo was taken of our first dance at the reception. They played a song I had written for her and the look on her face that was captured in the photo was priceless and my favorite photo of her. She looked like every care had just been lifted; she looked so happy, loved and content. Best of all, she had just been asked if she would commit her life and love to me through better or worse, richer or poorer and in sickness and in health and she didn't

hesitate to say, "I do!"

Well, we have been through everything except the "richer" part of our vows. I love her and would literally lay down my life for her if I had to. Flying 16 days, being away from our girls and all of the stress of closing out a really tough year personally and professionally had just about brought her to a breaking point. I looked at that photo and thought, "I would do anything to make her smile and feel like she did at that moment."



I called a mutual friend of ours who is also a flight attendant and asked her to help me get to where my wife was laying over on New Year's Eve. I knew she was going to be in Tampa, Florida, and only for 11 hours; just enough time to get a good night's rest. Flights are extremely full on New Year's Eve. I got up early and flew out of Nashville to New York and then later on to Tampa. I landed about 20 minutes before she landed, grabbed a taxi and went to the hotel. I had a gift bag with an Anniversary gift and some chocolate.

I went into the hotel and asked the lady at the desk for a huge favor, and then I stepped into the hotel restaurant out of sight and waited for her to arrive. At about 10:40pm her crew checked in. She went up to her room and the front desk called her to tell her they had a package at the front desk but they would bring it to her room. Well, I went up and knocked on the door.

When she opened the door, I saw what I'd been hoping I'd see! That smile! The one that lit up the room the night I met her and the one that still makes my world turn!

All the work, the flights, the \$25.00 meals in airports was all worth it! Would I do it again? Anytime! Why? Because I can tell her how much I love her all day long, but when I do something like that, she knows that my actions prove what I say to be true.

The Bible says that we (men) should love our wives like Christ loves the church. We proclaim our love for Him, we say that following Him is our number one priority, but what are we doing to prove that our love is more than words? James said that you can talk about our faith, but he would show you his faith by his actions or works.

So what can we do to show that we really do love Christ? There are many things we can do, but I believe the greatest thing we can do is share the gospel with people. What is our motivation to do this? Nothing but love! The love He has for us, our love for Him and our love for people in our lives.

So during this month when we celebrate love, don't just say you love Jesus and then do nothing to back it up, do what He's commanded us to do and share the gospel with the people you love and even the ones who are hard to love. This Valentine's Day and every day, don't just say you love, but do what it takes to prove it! Sometimes that means a nice restaurant, flowers and chocolate, guys! Happy Valentine's Day!



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## *Wilburn and Wilburn* An All-Year Kind Of Love By Lorraine Walker

*Polite, courteous, and even a little reserved.* That's what you might think of Jonathan and Jordan Wilburn when you meet them. Passionate, joyful and more than a little outspoken onstage, this father-son duo are compelled to bring their message of hope and compassion to audiences across the nation, in their own way. The Wilburn men are committed to their Lord and their family, a trait that has been passed down through generations.

As February and Valentine's Day rolls around, Jonathan talks about love, relationships and his very best friend, his wife Sandra. Here is his story: "Sandra and I met in high school. She played basketball. One day when she was coming from the gym to class, my friend asked me to get this pretty girl's phone number. I told him I would. When I went to get the phone number I was struck! I told her that my friend wanted her number. She gave it to me and my buddy never got it! The rest is history."

Their first date was McDonalds and a movie, but apparently Sandra didn't mind the budget-savvy splurge as they were still together a year later when Jonathan asked her to marry him. "It was a huge snow storm. I was determined to get to her house. We were going to go out but it snowed about eight inches. I asked her

while sitting right on her mom and dad's couch. She said *yes* and I shouted. I almost got ran over by a snow-plow on the way home!

"Sandra and I have found that we both like a lot of the same things. We ride bikes, watch sports and just love being together. Yes, my wife loves sports! We both love the Lord and know He is in control. We are not a perfect couple but we serve a perfect Savior. We trust God together. It seems when my faith is weak, hers is strong and when hers is weak mine is strong." Jonathan says he could not imagine a life without his kind and gentle wife.

This romantic couple celebrates their anniversary every year by renting a cabin in the Smoky Mountains. On March 7, 2015, they will have been married for 29 years. Their son Jordan was married to Lauren in 2013. They had their first child, Marley Lynn on March 17, 2014. The younger Wilburns are also enjoying married life, as shown by the pictures they shared with SGN Scoops.

Jordan recalls, "My wife and I met at the Ford dealership in Gadsden, AL, that her father owns, called *Ronnie Watkins Ford*. I went in to have my truck serviced and ended up with a lot more than just my tires rotated and balanced!" He adds, "Our first date was

at a little hometown restaurant in Gadsden called *The Courtyard*. We had dinner and then sat for the next two hours talking and laughing. We hit it off really well.”

Jordan asked Lauren to marry him during a meal



he prepared for her. They had only been dating for three months, but as he says, “When you know, you know!” Lauren thinks Jordan is funny and the couple continues to laugh together nearly two years later. “Of course marriage is far from easy, but just like anyone else, we work at it every day and make an effort to talk with each other and let each other know what is happening in our lives.”

As we considered the approach of Valentine’s Day, we wondered what this couple finds romantic. “On our last anniversary we actually just chilled at home, grilled steaks, and watched a movie on TV,” says Jordan. However, he does have the heart of a romantic. “If I could do it again I would try to slow things down and take in the moment more, not look so much to the future. And I would have married her sooner if I could!”

Jonathan and Jordan not only care deeply for their wives and families, they also have the love of Jesus that they want to share with others. This is shown dramatically in their video for “Help Me Help Someone,” a song with lyrics that emphatically draw the listener’s attention to the hurting people around them.

“I found ‘Help Me Help Someone’ through a writer named Jimmy Yeary,” Jordan recalls. “It was a song he wanted me to hear, because he thought it was just right for me. As soon as I heard it, I fell in love with the song and I knew I had to sing it! The song has

challenged me to take my blinders off as I’m walking through life, and look around me, because there are so many people that need help and if I can possibly help them I want to and I am going to.”

The Wilburns’ determination to help others, and to focus attention on the hurting and the lost, is appreciated by their friends in the Gospel music industry. “I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Wilburn and Wilburn,” says Donna King of Vertical Sky. “What I learned about this father/son duo from day one is that they aren’t trying to be conformed to an industry. They are striving to be conformed to what *God* desires ministry to look like. And their goal is to see lives transformed, from the audience they are singing to, to the children around the world who find sponsors through their efforts on behalf of the mission work of Compassion International. I am *so* blessed by the heart of Jonathan and Jordan who make up Wilburn and Wilburn.”

Ken Grady of Gospel Music Today says, “We have had Jonathan and Jordan as guests on our show a couple of times and we love them and their music. The energy and joy that they have in person is reflected in their music and in their live performances. We also appreciate their excellent song selection for their recordings and live performances. They pay careful attention to the content and they have enough variety in style and approach to the songs to always keep things interesting.”

“Their sound is fresh with a traditional feel, sure to delight new and seasoned audiences alike,” says Amanda Martin of Daywind. “Jonathan Wilburn,



formally of Gold City, is well known in the world of Southern Gospel music. This venture with his son has made his talent shine even brighter. Jonathan, teamed with the smooth and solid vocals of his son Jordan, is truly a divine pairing. They have enjoyed radio success and nominations for multiple awards in Southern Gospel circles, proving their dedication and staying power. They not only share a love for the Lord and musical talents but they both have such fun-loving personalities that they are an absolute joy to work with. Daywind Music Group is honored to have them on our roster.”

The Wilburns’ unique personalities and diverse taste in music is shown in their concerts, where they will sing anything from “Let’s All Go Down To The River,” Jonathan’s favorite song, to “(You’ve Never Seen) Anybody Like Jesus,” their latest single from the Daywind project *Here Comes Sunday*. From Bluegrass to Country to songs from Jonathan’s days with Gold City, there is never a dull moment. This variety helps to engage more listeners, building their audience base as they reach more people with the music of Wilburn and Wilburn. This is one of their goals, but not their only objective.

“Our main goal is to reach out to people with the hope that we have in Christ Jesus,” says Jonathan. “... To be a light in a dark world.” Wilburn says that a number one song wouldn’t hurt their popularity, however: “We have set many goals as a father and son singing about The Father and The Son. We are like anyone else. We want to be the best that we can be spiritually and professionally. We want to continue putting out good music that honors the Lord.”

From their personal relationships to their professional lives, Wilburn and Wilburn are practical men who strive hard to do their best. They love their families, their work and their Lord. It’s an all-year kind of love that shows in their compassion for others.

Jordan is usually the quieter one on stage, but we asked him to have the last word this time. “Don’t put God in a little box, or make Him something He is not,” says Jordan. “God can bless in many different ways, and it isn’t always on Sunday morning at 11 o’clock in church. Give Him the opportunity to work in your life all day everyday!”

For more information and tour schedules visit <http://www.wilburn2.com/>

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# DJ SPOTLIGHT

ReJeana Leeth of WZCT



By Vonda Easley

ReJeana Leeth is the manager of WZCT in Scottsboro, Alabama on 1330 AM. Be sure to read through to the end for the weblink to listen to the live streaming of this station. ReJeana is also a vocalist with Gospel artists New Grace and she has an amazing testimony of overcoming incredible odds. Read on as we shine the DJ spotlight on ReJeana Leeth.

*Vonda: Tell me about a typical radio day for yourself.*

ReJeana: In a typical day at the station, I fill many roles. Beginning in the morning at 7:30am, I am on the air. I start the day with a welcome and a prayer with our listeners. During the broadcast, I take prayer and song requests. I also update obituaries and opening and closings. Afterward, I work on logging and scheduling as well as bookkeeping and billing responsibilities. Part of my day will include recording service announcements and commercials. Holding and overseeing weekly sales meeting and interacting with the public are also included in my day-to-day activities.

*Vonda: Of all your days in radio, was there one that was extra special?*

ReJeana: My favorite memory in radio would be my first day on the air. Roland Walls was training me at WZOB. I had listened to him growing up and was excited to be working with him. He took me into the booth and showed me how to log, what controls did what and how to answer the phones and then left me by



myself. Phones ringing off the hook and nervous as a cat, I began my radio career.

*Vonda: What is your favorite place to eat?*

ReJeana: I just love to eat, but if I were to pick one place I suppose it would be Cracker Barrel. I enjoy the home cooking and atmosphere. The friendly service is an added bonus.

*Vonda: If you could take a vacation anywhere, where would you like to go?*

ReJeana: I've always wanted to visit Hawaii. I love warm climates and would enjoy spending time in such a beautiful place.

*Vonda: Share your testimony? We would love to hear!*

ReJeana: Born in 1965, with spina bifida and clubfeet, I began my journey at Children's Hospital in Birmingham. I had several surgeries in the first years on my legs, due to the clubfeet. Then at the age of two my left kidney had to be removed due to atrophy. My early childhood was filled with more surgeries, braces, casts and special shoes.

At the age of four I began walking with the assistance of a child's walker. This is also the age I began singing with my Uncle Ray Mitchell, my pastor Shorty Dover and his wife, Susie. Uncle Ray and Shorty would bring the guitar to the house and work with me, teaching me a song during the week to sing on Sunday. They

were a constant source of encouragement.

I began school at age six; in casts, but I was in school - another milestone I was not expected to reach. My school years were filled with change and challenges but also included new opportunities. At 14, I sang by myself at a talent show at school and this began my solo career in Gospel music.

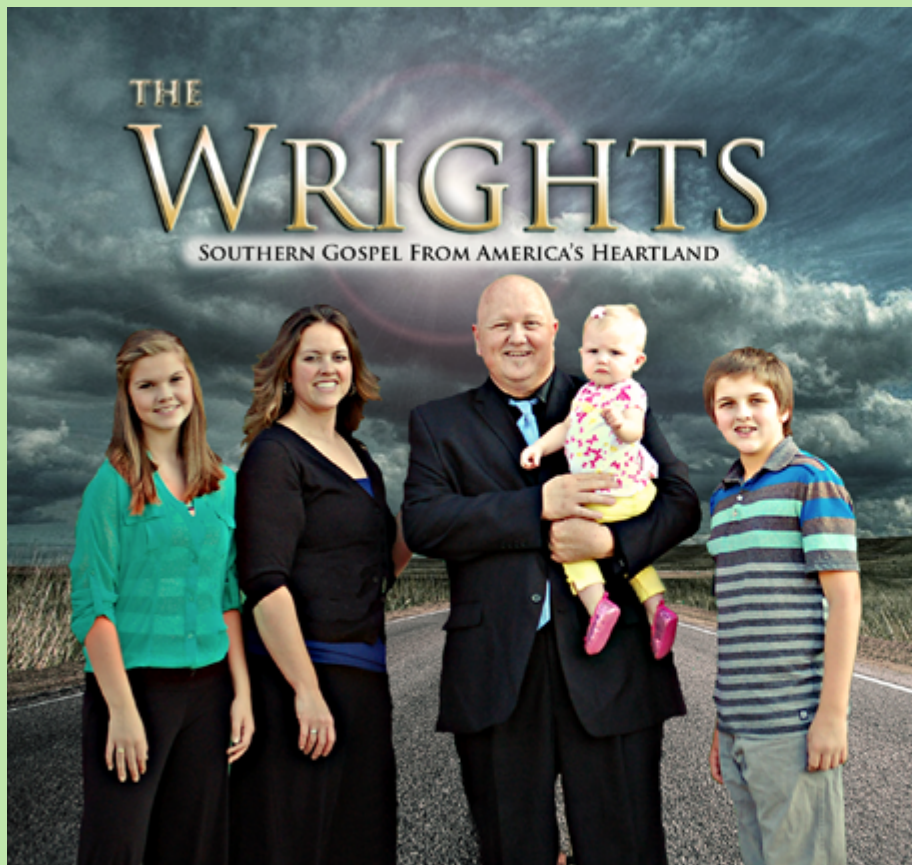
My career in radio began at WZOB in Fort Payne and I've worked in many areas of the business. I've worked at seven different stations through the years. Many of those years were spent at WBSA in Boaz, Alabama, when the Singing News nominated me for *Small Market Radio DJ of the Year*. Radio has been more than a job, it has been a ministry and for that I am grateful. I am currently managing WZCT AM 1330 in Scottsboro, Alabama and enjoying the new opportunity.

I was blessed to complete my first solo project, self titled, in 1984. I continued to travel to churches to sing on my own until joining New Witness in 1994, while also continuing my career in radio. ReJeana and the Blessed was the next group and then I returned to

solo work until forming New Grace around 2009. New Grace has welcomed many talented singers through its span but the message has remained. God's grace is sufficient for every need and worthy of our praise.

In my personal life, the changes and miracles also continued. Doctors had said by the age of 16 I would be in a wheelchair and IF I were still living, I would be in a nursing home, flat on my back by the age of 20. My reply was always, "I don't have time to sit down, for my Lord." I married Charles Leeth in January of 1992 and despite what the doctors had told us, we welcomed our first daughter Crystal in 1993 and our second miracle daughter Samantha in 1999. Thirty-three surgeries, scar tissue and numerous health issues haven't kept me from living a blessed and fulfilling life. My theme song is "Walking Miracle" and that is what I feel I am, by God's grace.

Thank you to ReJeana Leeth for sharing her story for us on the DJ Spotlight. Be sure to listen to ReJeana every day, streaming live on [www.southerngospelam1330.com](http://www.southerngospelam1330.com).



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# We're All Human

By Dr. Jeff Steele



## Three Reasons For Trouble

A lot of people don't like to hear this but sometimes God allows trouble to come into our lives. One need only to look at the life of Job to realize that God does this from time to time. I believe there are three reasons God allows trouble to come to us. One is...He's preparing us for what's coming. Why is there Spring Training in baseball? Why are there Preseason workouts and two-a-days in the blazing hot summer for football? To get the players ready for the actual season that is still to come. Does the military just throw otherwise able-bodied men into the conflict of service? No, they first run them through "basic training" to prepare them for their real service.

I had a friend of mine when I was in high school. His dad owned a jewelry store where we lived. We visited that store often. This guy's dad had solid white hair. I now know (with the perspective of years) that at the time I was visiting his store he was probably younger than I am right now. One day he was talking about the rigors of his basic training in the army. I (being a stupid teen-ager) said, "That must be where that white hair came from, the toughness of basic training." He became very serious as he looked at me and said, "No, Son. Basic training didn't give me this white hair. World War II gave me this white hair!"

The difficult thing that you're going through... that trouble you're facing... don't be so quick to get mad at God for allowing it to come. He could be putting you "through the paces" so you will be prepared for the REAL battle that's much tougher than this so you'll be prepared when it comes.

Secondly, I believe He allows trouble to come in order to test us. When we were in school (if we're honest) our least favorite part was test day. You know what, though? The teacher didn't just give a test to determine whether we passed or failed the subject. They gave us the test to determine whether we had retained what we were supposed to have learned to see if we could move forward. There's no sense going to what's next if we haven't yet retained the knowledge and skill we are supposed to have learned in the previous lesson. Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. Don't put that on your car as a bumper sticker until you have passed the test that lets you know for a certainty that it's true!

Thirdly, God will allow trouble to come to chasten us. Scripture tells us that the Lord chastens those He loves. Now we don't like that but listen; chastening from the Lord is one of the things that prove we're SAVED! I run into people all the time who tell me they're not sure they're saved. I ask them: "Is God chastening you?" If He IS, then that's a sign you ARE indeed one of His children. As His children we are called to live our lives according to HIS will for us. When we began to follow our own desires and leave His will for us then He will chasten us to get us away from where we ARE and take us BACK to where we are supposed to be!

Don't get mad when God allows trouble to come. Just realize that it's all part of His perfect plan for your life and that He's using it to build you into what HE wants you to be.



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# Northern Ireland's REVELATION

## A Discussion with Thomas McCalmont

By Marcie Gray



**Revelation:** [rev-uh-ley-shuh n] Something revealed or disclosed, especially a striking disclosure, as of something not before realized.

What a wonderful message behind the name of this trio from Northern Ireland. How much more *striking* could the disclosure of salvation be? What better way to share the gospel around the world, but through song? That is the mission of Revelation, to take the Gospel to those who have yet to realize what only Christ can offer them: eternal life!

In 2003, David Strange and Thomas McCalmont met with a unified desire to reach out to young people through their music and personal testimonies. Little did they know that God would soon provide a third member with a powerful testimony of how God delivered him

from drug and alcohol abuse. In 2005, Revelation was born when the three men came together, Thomas McCalmont (Tenor), David Strange (Bass) and Andrew Calderwood (Lead), with a common goal to “sing the Gospel to as many as possible – wherever and whenever – to teach, uplift and encourage!”

**SGN Scoops (MG):** Thomas, how did you, David and Andrew meet one another?

**Thomas McCalmont (TM):** I met David in 2003 when he was singing with his family in the Calvary Quartet - three brothers and another guy. They were doing a large singing for a charity concert and invited a lot of singers to come and take part in a choir. First tenors are rare here, so once they figured out who was singing that high part, they dragged me up front and handed me a microphone. David and I noticed then that our voices



blended together very well.

Andrew and I met at an outreach center during a course called “Christianity Explored.” The course outlined our basic beliefs using teachings from the book of Mark.

People from all walks of life came and had the opportunity to hear it and ask questions. Andrew has a passion for the Lord and loves to sing, but had no idea at the time just where God would take him!

David and I both wanted to start a group with a blend of music that would attract the younger audience. We sang all different types of music, praise and worship, Third Day’s “Who Am I,” that kind of thing, and it was well received. One of our most popular songs was “Days of Elijah” using a track from Mike LeFevre. From the beginning, we drew the attention of a younger crowd – and a lot of that was due to Andrew.

**MG:** Your ministry takes you all over Northern Ireland, Wales, Scotland and England, and of course, the United States, is that right?

**TM:** Yes. We have had many inquiries, and look forward to traveling more. We have been asked to come to Norway and Scandinavia, and we’re hoping to schedule a tour there soon. There are many trios and quartets here, so we are always honored when we are invited to sing. We are ready to go where the Lord sends us!

**MG:** You’ve been coming to National Quartet Conven-

tion (NQC) in the US for four years now, so 2015 will be year number five for you. What got you started coming over to the US?

**TM:** David and I attended National Quartet Convention in 2005 purely as a holiday, never dreaming that we would be there as a group! David has an extensive knowledge of Southern Gospel music and the heritage behind it.

In 2010, we signed with Crossroads Music as our record label. We have become friends with so many people, having been to America several times. When we came to the US to record with Crossroads for the first time, David knew more names and history than our friends at Crossroads did! He is passionate about the genre. I’m not as knowledgeable as David, but I do remember the good old days with The Cathedrals and Gold City. The suggestion had been made that we run with airplay on radio in the US and that we consider attending NQC. With us being such a distance away, NQC was the place to be heard and also a great networking opportunity. So we made plans to attend, and now we’re looking forward to our fifth year.

**MG:** I understand you have hosted some of your US counterparts in Ireland?



**TM:** We were invited to tour with David Phelps when he was here in 2010, and it was a great experience. In 2011, we hosted The Taylors and later, we brought them back for our Homecoming. Revelation participates in an annual Homecoming Celebration each year called the Armagh Gospel Celebration. It is held at a local hotel. Though it started out with a small crowd and a few groups, it has grown to 1200-1500 a year. Now, the entire hotel is leased for this event. Revelation is the only artist that has been there every year. Groups will



sing while they're having meals in the dining room and during Sunday morning worship, as well. This year is our ninth year, so Homecoming in 2016 will be our 10-year spectacular and is a big deal for us! Lord willing, Freedom Quartet will be here with us for that event. We look forward to hosting more friends from the US for events like this.

We have some very special friends in the US who have been monumental in helping us over the years. John Rulapaugh, founder of Freedom Quartet, loaned us a bus for our very first tour in the US. He has helped Revelation in so many ways! He even recorded one of our songs on Freedom's last album ("I Will Praise Him Forever," written by Shantelle Faulkner of Voices One), featuring Revelation and a huge pic of us in the inlay of the CD cover! This experience of like-minded brothers in the Lord blew us off our feet! John, along with Preston Garner, Dale Shipley, and my buddy and one of the best bass singers alive, Mr. Burman Porter, are kindred spirits. It's like we are the same type of guys trying to do our thing on different sides of the Atlantic!

God knew what we needed and He allowed our paths to cross. Amazing how God cares for all the stuff in our lives and connects us with people to care for and protect one another, even from such a distance!

**MG:** What is your biggest challenge in ministry in Ireland?

**TM:** We are prepared to stand in the gap, and the challenges we face are the same for us as the groups in the US. The economy keeps us limited. There are very few radio stations here that play Gospel music anymore. There used to be a Gospel program every Sunday, hosted by Ronnie Morrison, who comes to NQC every year and hosts one of Northern Ireland's most famous radio stations. The station was purchased by a consortium group and unfortunately; they axed the Gospel show right away. So you jump in the car in the US and you can pull up a Gospel station right away. That is impossible in Ireland. People have to want to hear it and go looking for it. We've got to work for a living. It would be great to be in a world where people appreciate the music enough that we don't have to work and could support our ministry just by singing. We have to find opportunities in between work and family time to sing.

**MG:** Crossroads is your US label. Have you signed with a record label in Ireland?

**TM:** No, we would classify Crossroads as our label for our ministry both in the US and at home. They work with us and help us in so many ways. They always have our best interest at heart.

**MG:** Has Revelation won any awards?

**TM:** We have won some awards, some under Contemporary and some under Southern Gospel categories. We were nominated for Singing News top 10 Horizon Group of the Year for Best New Trio last year. What an honor to be nominated, especially considering how many wonderful Southern Gospel groups there are in the US. Awards are fun, but the focus of our ministry is reaching out to people with the Gospel.

**MG:** About how many dates a year do you do?

**TM:** We usually do around 85-90 dates per year. Some years, we sing more, some less. On a busy year, we may sing 120 dates.

**MG:** I'm picturing the roads in Ireland and thinking that an entertainer bus would be really challenging to tour in there. What kind of vehicle do you tour with?

**TM:** (Laughing) We travel in what you would prob-

ably consider an SUV, or a work/cargo van. It has three seats in front. It would be very challenging to travel in a bus here, as the roads are smaller, vehicles are smaller, and gas is ridiculously more expensive. We pay by pound-per-liter here, but the conversion makes it about \$8.00 per gallon.

**MG:** You are exposed to many different cultures as you travel internationally and sing. What are some notable differences in your audiences?

**TM:** People are quite reserved here in Ireland, very conservative. There's only a short gap of water between Ireland, Scotland and England, so people in this region are very much alike. Americans are much more expressive in the way they worship. American audiences love music and they are a very passionate audience to sing to. A wide variety of genres do well in America. Here, the trend-setting genre is the Pop world and groups like One Direction. There is another genre here that we classify as Irish Country music. There's one guy that has come through the ranks. He's a good looking' young guy named Nathan Carter and he has taken that whole genre by storm. Garth Brooks invited him to sing on his tour scheduled here this year. There were 80,000 tickets sold every night for three nights and Dublin City Council had approved three concerts, but when they sold out and the promoters approached Dublin City Council about adding two more nights, they declined, saying that residents of the town were just not going to tolerate five nights of the effects of that many people descending on the town. Garth said, "How can I come and sing for the first three concerts and let the rest of the people down?" He cancelled the concert tour. Imagine if we were able to draw that kind of crowd for a Southern Gospel concert tour? That would be a heavenly revival!

**MG:** Can you share something our readers might be surprised to know about you?

**TM:** (Chuckling) I'm not a small lad, so when I lift the microphone, people expect to hear a big, booming bass voice. Everyone seems so surprised when I open my mouth to sing and I've got this little girly voice.

**MG:** What is the legacy you want to leave when you are called up to glory?

**TM:** Recently, we have been listening to a couple of devotional writers who are evangelists who ran the good race, fought the fight and it's been said at their funeral that they were "buried with their sneakers on." That's how we want to be remembered. We are running the race, and we want to finish with our sneakers still

on. We want to be those guys who just never gave up, that every ear should hear the Gospel!

Be sure and stop by the Revelation booth at National Quartet Convention and say hello to David, Thomas and Andy in September. Revelation is booking their 2015 US tour now, watch their Facebook page for a concert near you. Their latest album, *Christ For Me*, was released November 18, 2014 and can be purchased from their record label here: <http://crossroadsmusic.com/revelation/christ-for-me/>.

To learn more about Revelation, or to book them at your church, visit their Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Revelation-Ministry/341344697032>. Don't forget to hit "like" while you're there. Revelation will announce the launch of their new website on Facebook, so check back often!

Thank you, Thomas McCalmont and Revelation, for taking time to talk with us and share a little about your ministry with the readers of SGN Scoops!

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## WISDOM FROM WELLS

by Dusty Wells

### **Finding Rest**

Psalms 91 has been a lifeline and *thread of hope* to me for so many years: “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall find rest...in the secret place.” Just those honest words starting it out, and talking about refuge, a quiet place, a much needed place for all of us weary road warriors (and those of you who are not weary, or think all is good, great and fine: we all know we have those times of weariness, just watch and see!). Ahhh, but rest does come; it really does.

Even though my last two secret *refuges of rest*, writing, meditating and praying places that I have continually escaped to at times, were only a few miles from the hustle and bustle of the city of Nashville, there is something so intimately special about the quiet-peaceful solitude and the lush beautiful surroundings that seem to always bring His ever-loving, His ever-caring. His ever-nurturing and restoring Presence even so much more closer to me than what I feel on a daily basis. Now of course that

really is not true, since the Word says He is always with us, He never changes, no matter what, no matter where, no matter when. I found myself driving today to one of those places all by myself and sitting there, praying for you, for me, for those whom I love and adore and admire.

His presence continually envelops me, and it does you as well. It surrounds me and today I find myself in an unusually quiet and contented place of unashamed surrender (oh, I wish I wasn't so stubborn and selfish at times!). I am desperately acknowledging and accepting a fresh awareness of His magnificent love for me. WOW! HE STILL LOVES ME, and you, my friend, as well. Yes He does! I find myself listening (striving to put aside all of my worries, doubts, fears and insecurities) for His still small voice. I can feel Him. He is standing right beside me, He is holding my hand and I feel His arm draped around my shoulder, like those good friends of ours do at times.

It's nice, it's comforting, and it's peaceful. Right now for me, it is so needed. He who dwells in the secret place of the most High, he finds *shelter*. No, I wish I could

say the touch and feelings I am sensing are tangible, but they are not. But emotionally, I know He is with me. And you.

Lately, peace is a word that I have used many times when asked how I am doing, or while answering the age-old question that we are always asked, "are you ok?" Most of us just lie our way through the honesty of that. After all, who wants to hear our scary fears, that torrential downpour of negativity that in all sincerity we might have reason to have in our lives, the overwhelming burden of loss of whatever it is that we each will have to lose at times, and what about the financial difficulties and trials that seem to nearly bury us alive. Oh, and we all have had those times!

And of course dear ones, what about the uncertainty of what is yet to come for our future, amidst the painful separation of someone whom you have loved and have been loved by. Yes, the flame has flickered (for so many reasons), and the embers are barely visible by the human eye.

So you hastily continue to run, earnestly trying to rid yourself of anything that might remotely offer peace.

Or maybe you have been riding the crest of those

huge never-ending waves of amazing joy, contentment and peace, then all of a sudden, quickly, abruptly, everything comes to a haunted halt and those wonderful fresh feelings have disappeared. They are gone...diminished. You are struggling with every breath within you to once again get back up. You beg to stand, you have to reach and make every possible effort to gain ground. You race after the peace, the quietness, the hope, and the restoration of whatever it is you have lost.

We all go through those times, every one of us! And those of you that say you don't, well you are just fibbing to the rest of us! But that's ok, it really is, because I have done it a few times, just a few....

So today, let me offer you some of my peace, my surrender, my quiet time, and maybe even a little of my contentment. Lean on me, but even more important, please lean on HIM. Let Him lead you to that quiet place, that place that you will find what it is you need to find. Listen really closely; He wants to speak. He wants to hold you. Again I say it: "HE WHO DWELLS IN THE SECRET PLACE." You can and will find refuge and strength! Ask me...go ahead....ask me...I know!



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# CATHEDRAL QUARTET



## From Church to Touring

By Dean Adkins

Some of the better-known quartets spent a number of years as the resident church group. Besides providing songs for the congregation, members of the groups also served as part of the church staff. Although there were a number of groups that started as church quartets, the Weatherfords, Cathedrals, Landmarks, Monitors and Toneys were among those who moved on to become well-known names on the gospel circuit.

In the early 1950's, the Weatherford Quartet were the resident group for WOWO radio in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. They also sang in churches and became acquainted with Rex Humbarnd who was preaching at Calvary Temple, in an old theater in Akron, Ohio. In 1953, WOWO decided to not use live music and as a result the Weatherfords had no radio contract. The Weatherfords joined Rex Humbarnd as the resident group for the Cathedral of Tomorrow, a new state-of-the-art facility. One of the Weatherfords better-known alignments during this time consisted of Armond Morales, Earl Weatherford, Glen Payne, Bobby Clark and Danny Koker. The group

also did some touring but Rex Humbarnd wanted a group that was active in the church. In 1963, three members of the Weatherfords: Danny Koker, Glen Payne and Bobby Clark, decided to stay and became the Cathedral Trio.

The Cathedral Trio performed at the Cathedral of Tomorrow and traveled with Rex Humbarnd. In 1964, they added George Younce and became a quartet. They continued as part of the Cathedral of Tomorrow staff until 1969. Although they were no longer a part of the Cathedral of Tomorrow, they kept the name Cathedral Quartet and maintained their home in Stow, Ohio. From this beginning, they ultimately became one of the best-known Southern Gospel groups.

The Landmark Baptist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio was (and is) a church that utilizes many of the touring Southern Gospel groups. The pastor, Rev. John Rawlings, loved quartet music and so did his son, Carroll. The Landmark Quartet was formed as the church's home group. Although



members changed through the years, one of the better-known lineups consisted of Buddy Liles, Don Norman, Mack Evans, Lorne Matthews and Carroll Rawlings. This group also



did some touring and recorded some quality albums.

The Monitors Quartet was organized in Indianapolis, Indiana in 1957 by Horace Floyd, former member of the Swanee River Boys. He added Bill Nelson as lead, Ned Williman as baritone, Warren Holmes on bass and Din Ritter as pianist. The Monitors were affiliated with the Cadle Tabernacle, a large Christian church in Indianapolis, which seated over 10,000 people. The church also broadcast on WLW radio in Cincinnati and was heard in a multi-state area. The Monitors performed on radio seven days per week. The Monitors continued for several years before disbanding. The group was reformed as a part-time group around 1980 and consisted of Lem Kinslow, Bill Nelson, Hal Morrison, Ray Burdett (former Statesmen bass) and Jeff Stice.

Alden Toney sang tenor with the Blackwood Brothers from 1949 through 1951 and then took a job in the automotive industry in Detroit, Michigan. Alden's brothers, Bob and Kyer were discharged from the Army in 1954. In 1955, brother Jim joined the others to form the Toney Brothers Quartet. Like other quartets that came after them, they became affiliated with a church, Gilead Baptist Church in suburban Allen Park. They began appearing on CKLW-TV in Windsor, Ontario, Canada as well. This group appeared on



the first National Quartet Convention in 1957. When Alden retired in the early 1960s, he was replaced by Ron Booth Sr., father of Michael and Ronnie of the Booth Brothers.

The foundation of being associated with a church was manifested in the ministry and presentation in each of the aforementioned groups.



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# Music Reviews for February

by Jonathan Edwards

Jonathan Edwards is the voice of SGN Scoops Radio and he joins us this month to review new music. Sandi Duncan-Clark has taken a sabbatical and has handed over the CD's to Jonathan to give us his reviews from a DJ's point of view. Welcome Jonathan!



*Darlene Chapman*

*Heart and Soul*

Produced by Calvin Gann

I don't think there is a sweeter, more genuine person in gospel music than Darlene Chapman. I first met her when she was singing with Gold Harbor and we were singing together at a cold outdoor event in October in Missouri. She is classy but she is also very talented and her new CD shows this off.

The first song is a great upbeat number called: "I Wouldn't Trade One Minute of It," written by Angie Hoskins Aldridge and if you close your eyes you might think the voice was Reba McEntire. There are several classics on this CD, which show off Darlene's soulful side.

I think the production and song choice for this project is very good. This is a good showcase for a very talented singer. From a DJ side of things I love, "I Wouldn't Trade One Minute of It"; as a listener I love "Because He Loved Me." Whether in a group or as a soloist I

would recommend you listen to this talented singer.

10 Songs Total Running Time 41 minutes



Watts, Rowsey and Bean

**Turn Your Radio On**

Produced by John Darin Rowsey

To start off with, you have great songwriters and singers coming together to form this group, and when I first heard them two years ago at the Creekside Gospel Music Convention I knew there was something special with this combination. Every song on this CD was written or co-written by a group member.

The title track starts this CD off on an upbeat and uplifting way. This is not your traditional sounding gospel group but the harmony is something special, and to be honest, reminds me a lot of the Martins, which I grew up listening to. They have already had great chart success from the project and I think we will be hearing a lot more out of this group.

While you listen to this CD, you will recognize some of the songs from other groups but it is always great to hear the writers share their version of the song. I as a listener really love "He's In Control," and "Don't Give a Rock a Chance." From a DJ side of things, if your station is traditional, you may struggle to find something you will play; but if you like to push the edge, this CD is full of great songs. Not a bad one in the bunch!

10 Songs Total Running Time 37 minutes.



The Bowlings

**Safe After The Storm**

Produced by Mike Bowling and Troy Peach

This CD is from a great family in Gospel music who to me is a lot of time overlooked. My wife thinks Mike Bowling is the best singer ever and I am not sure she is wrong! He makes you feel every word he sings. When you add in the family harmony and talent of Kelly and the potential of Hope you have a great sound. When Troy leaves his place behind the sound to sing... *wow* is all I can say. Of course, Troy has now rejoined the Perys, which goes to show you what talent he has.

This project starts off with "Somebody's Believing." I love the song and the message in it. The next song, "Drinking From the Well," is a typical Crabb Family/Bowling family sound and will get you tapping your feet. I love so many songs on the CD and to be honest I think the best song is: "That's What I Miss the Most." As a listener I love every song on this project. As a Radio person, I love of course *The Hit* "I Know Enough," and "That's What I Miss the Most."

11 Songs Total Running Time 36 minutes



Goodmans

**Refreshing**

Produced by Rusty and Rick Goodman

I thought I would start reviewing some older CD's or even some LP's that I have laying around in my closet, as it also gives me an excuse to listen to them all over again. So this month I was looking through my LP collection and found this gem from the Happy Goodman Family. When I put it on the turntable, that very familiar sound came to my ears as they began to sing, "That Sounds Like Home to Me." *Wow*, were these guys good or what.

When I got to the third song it took me back to one of my earliest memories in Gospel music as a kid of about five years old. My parents took me to hear the Goodmans and on that night, the lights went out and a spotlight shone on a tenor by the name of Johnny Cook. He stepped out and sang, "The Lord's Prayer," like nobody I had ever heard sing that song. This LP also has two all-time classics on it: "I Believe He's Coming Back," and the Easter Brothers, "Thank You Lord For Your Blessings On Me".

I highly recommend if you come across this LP somewhere you buy it and treasure it as it may be one of the finest The Goodmans ever recorded.

*To have your project reviewed by deejay and Faith's Journey member Jonathan Edwards, send a copy to: Jonathan Edwards, PO Box 2572, Branson West, MO 65737.*



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# YOUNGER PERSPECTIVE

## Austin Whisnant

BY ERIN STEVENS

As faithful readers will remember, back in November of 2013, I had the opportunity to interview Ethan Whisnant. Ethan did such an awesome job that I decided this month to keep it all in the family by asking his older brother, Austin, to be a part of Younger Perspective. He is certainly no stranger to many die-hard Southern Gospel fans. Austin travels full-time with his family's multi-award winning group, The Whisnants. Today, get ready to take an inside look at life on and off the road for this talented friend of mine. Austin, it's all yours...

*Erin: Sometimes roadies take for granted their ever-changing, fast-paced schedules. What aspect of road life do you appreciate the most?*

Austin: I love the fact that it lets me spend time with my family - something that I try never to take for granted. It's a privilege to do what you love, alongside the people you love most. I like how you never know what may happen, so it teaches you to just roll with the punches.

*Erin: For those that follow The Whisnants closely, it's widely known that you've been playing bass with the group for years. When did your recent desire to pick up the acoustic guitar kick in?*

Austin: I've always loved playing the guitar, but when we lost our piano player about three years ago, I started playing the acoustic on stage thinking it would be temporary; yet here I am, still playing, and enjoying every minute of it.

*Erin: As you and Ethan have recently come out with your third duet album, what response are you anticipating from "Live For You Today?"*

Austin: God blessed us to find what we think are some incredible songs for this recording! For every age, every point in life, there is a song on this project that can help strengthen and encourage you along the way.

*Erin: What is the most bizarre thing a fan has ever said to you?*

Austin: Well, there's been a lot, but one of my favorites was one night after a concert, someone came up to me and asked, "How does all that music come from just your guitar?"-not realizing all the other instruments are pre-recorded on a track.





*Erin: When you're off the road, other than sitting in your tree stand, what ways would you be found enjoying your time off?*

Austin: At home, there is at least one day a week that is affectionately known as 'Bus Day' - which is exactly what it sounds like. I work on any fixer-upper jobs the bus is in need of - ranging from small to large tasks. There's never a dull moment at the Whisnant house! With recently getting engaged, I'm sure my definition of 'time off' will soon be drastically changing!

*Erin: As a 20-year-old in ministry, what scripture passage has been your foundational lifeline over the years?*

Austin: Delight thyself also in the Lord: and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Psalm 37:4

*Erin: (My must ask question) Ok, if it's the last day on earth, and you have one choice of what to eat? What would it be?*

Austin: PF Changs for sure! But, if I had two days, McKenzie's Barbeque in Huntsville, TX would be second on my list! What can I say? I like to eat.

*Erin: What artist would you say is your most influential musical inspiration?*

Austin: Over the years, even with all the changes in the industry, there's been one guy's character, integrity and talent that has stood out to me. In my opinion, Bill Shivers is one of the greats. I've looked up to him since I was a kid, and am thankful to call him a dear friend.

*Erin: Your favorite and least favorite aspect of bus life?*

Austin: Favorite part: Spending time with my family and my oh, so special bunk (hey, we're tight)! Least favorite part: I tend to be a clean freak, yet other people on the bus (without mentioning names - cough, cough) can be quite the opposite! (Hope I don't get in trouble for that one!)

*Erin: Do you see yourself long-term on the road, or do you have other life ambitions for the future?*

Austin: Of course I realize God can redirect my path whenever and however He sees fit in the future, but as of right now, I know in my heart that I am supposed to be singing for Him. Until He says otherwise, I'll keep on doing just that.

*Erin: If there was one message you could convey to the readers about what your relationship with Christ means, what would you say?*

Austin: Jesus will be a friend when no one else is around. When life gets tough, I promise you, He WILL be there! He is The Friend that's closer than any brother. If you haven't started your walk with Him, or have let your relationship fall by the wayside, don't waste anymore time missing out on the greatest choice you will ever make!

It's so true. Our Lord is waiting for you with love and compassion. So why not start today? I know life can pull and tug at us in a hundred directions, but no decision is more important to make than the one giving you the peace of mind that your eternal destination is settled. You don't need a college degree to ask the Lord into your life. Speak from your heart; He already knows everything about you. He did, in fact create every hair on your head. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, tell Him you are truly sorry for breaking His heart, and thank Him for giving His life for you on the Cross so many years ago. You will be filled with 'joy unspeakable and full of glory!' Thanks to Austin for joining us today. Also, I'd like to send my own personal "Congratulations" to him and his fiancé, Jordan, on their recent engagement announcement. Praying God's richest blessings over your future together. Until next month, Scoops fans...

And that's my take on it.



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# The *Pastors* Corner With Rev. Bryan Davis

## The Importance of Music in the Life of a Christian

Music: you hear the sad symphony of it at a funeral; its joyful melody dances with the bride as she walks down the aisle to her future. It plays through the speakers of stores to prompt us to buy and in workplaces to motivate employees. We use it in moments of romance and passion, and it plays in our churches as we lift our hands to the Lord to worship and give Him praise and adoration. The melodious sounds of music play such an important role in films that even though few may remember the plot-lines to *Con Air*, *Titanic*, or *Disney's Hercules*, we all remember "How Do I Live," by Trisha Yearwood from *Con Air*, Celine Dion's masterful voice singing "My Heart Will Go On," from *Titanic*, and Michael Bolton's rendition of, "I Can Go the Distance."

Yes, there is just something about music that changes our hearts, captures our attention and reaches to the very depths of our soul. Most sermons are forgotten by the time the church service is dismissed; yet most people can remember what worship songs were sung. Few movie quotes are ever remembered, yet we can quote our favorite songs from memory.

When I was a little boy, my mom and I did a school experiment to discover if plants were affected by music. Interestingly enough, we found that when we played soft music to the plants daily, they grew faster than the plants that were not exposed to music. Another surprising result was that in the same experiment, the plants exposed to heavy metal withered and quickly died. I believe the same is true of how music affects our soul.

One day, I was driving down the road and I was feeling depressed and sad. As I pondered my despair, I realized my radio was on the local Country station playing all sorts of sad ballads. I heard about dogs dying, marriages failing, vehicles breaking down, drinking and every sort of hopelessness you could imagine. No wonder I was depressed! What goes in, is what comes out!

I popped in a worship CD and the difference was startling! As anthems of Christ began to permeate my vehicle, the depression quickly vacated my at-

mosphere and the presence of God Almighty engulfed the interior of my car. This was the moment that I had an epiphany ... people stay depressed listening to other music because the majority of music is about us and our problems; but when we sing songs to Jesus about Jesus instead of singing songs about us, there is a shift from the problem to the Problem-Solver, and that's when He can change our situation.

There is some secular music that I love and my intent is not to bash it, but even the best song without Christ is just another empty song. Music was never created to glorify the things of this world; music was created to worship God and magnify His Son, Jesus Christ! Music is so important that the Bible even tells us that when we enter Heaven and meet our Maker, all the habitants of Heaven will be gathered around the throne of God, worshipping. The 24 elders will be bowing before His throne while hundreds of Angels continually sing "Holy, Holy, Holy..." for all of eternity.

Yes, this is the purpose of music! Not only does



music take us into God's presence, music also helps us get through the hardest of our trials and gives us the hope we need to carry on. When I think of music, I think of the story of Haratio Spafford, who was a wealthy Chicago lawyer with a blossoming legal practice, an exquisite home, a wife, four daughters and a son. He was also a devoted Christian and committed Bible Student. Mr. Spafford was best of friends with the likes of D.L. Moody, Ira Sankey and a myriad of other well-known Christians of the day.

At the highest elevation of his economic and masterful prosperity, Horatio and his wife Anna endured the horrendous loss of their only son. Shortly following their son's untimely death, on October 8, 1871, the Great Chicago Fire destroyed almost every real estate investment that Spafford had.

In 1873, Spafford organized a boat trip to Europe in order to give his wife and daughters a much-needed vacation and time to recover from the tragedy. He was also scheduled to join Moody and Sankey at an ongoing revival service in England.

Spafford sent his wife and daughters ahead of him, while he stayed in Chicago to tie up some loose ends. Several days later he received notice that his family's ship had sunk. All four of his daughters had drowned and only his wife had survived.

Mr. Spafford boarded a boat to take him to his mourning wife, Anna, in England. As the boat hovered over the watery grave of his four daughters, Horatio began to write a melody that would change the world. Its lyrics began with, "When peace like a river attendeth my way, When sorrow like sea billows roll; Whatever my lot, thou has taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.."

Something within Horatio Spafford, even in the midst of life's hardest circumstances, began to bubble up as a musical melody from the depths of his soul; not a melody of hate or hopelessness, but rather a melody of praise in the middle of the pain. Labeled as possibly the greatest hymn ever written, "It Is Well" still touches hearts more than 200 years later. Why? Because not only did grief come from Mr. Spafford's heart, but praise did as well and after all of these years, that same praise still carries with it the power of God Almighty.

If research is done thoroughly, one will find that the majority of Christian lyrics are written out of tragedies very similar to Mr. Spafford's. Yet, we do not hear hopelessness in them, as we do in the songs sung glorifying despair. Instead, we hear praise to the One who is able to heal the broken-hearted.

Although man has perverted music, it was created for the sole purpose of worship and it is still a powerful tool for a Christian. It has the power to lift our souls out of the pit of despair and re-align our heart and thoughts with our Creator. It transcends us from this world of trouble into the presence of The Almighty God.

Rev. Bryan Davis is an Ordained Minister in the Church of God (Cleveland TN). Bryan runs a very successful Facebook ministry called Dwelling Point Ministries and is also very active in his community. Bryan has served as Evangelist Pastor at two churches. Currently Bryan, his wife Rebekah and daughter Brielle reside in Frederic, WI. Bryan is open to bring the word of God to your church. For info contact Bryan directly at [heartofachampion15@yahoo.com](mailto:heartofachampion15@yahoo.com)

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# The Hall Sisters

By Tina Wakefield



Four young women with a heart and passion for God and music mix together to create a transforming experience for any audience. While listening to the Hall Sisters perform, one could close their eyes and feel as though they had been transported back in time to the days of The Andrew Sisters where harmony was queen. Jessica, Natalie, Lydia, and Valerie Hall possess great talent for singing and playing their way into the very heart of their audiences. The Hall Sisters enjoy a variety of musical styles, and perform music from all genres including Gospel, Bluegrass, Folk songs, and Oldies, as well as fiddle and instrumental tunes. There is even an Annie Moses Band influence that is obvious within the group, coming from the instruction the girls received

from this popular band.

Jessica Hall, the oldest of the sisters, plays mandolin, guitar, and piano and is the alto singer for the group. Jessica is also considered the leader of the group and is responsible for arranging the music for The Hall Sisters. Jessica says that in learning to lead, “I had to learn that I was not right all the time. To be a real leader, you need to be humble and willing to accept correction from others.”

Being the one in charge can have its humorous side as well. Jessica was responsible for starting an a cappella song on a specific note. Unfortunately, she forgot the note and started the song too high. The group had to stop and restart the song on the correct note and

that's one moment she'll never forget! Jessica says that while singing she feels the Lord's pleasure and as long as she can sing, she is happy. She adds that their parents have been their spiritual leaders and encouragers and the grandparents have been the prayer warriors praying for unity and safety as they travel.

Natalie Hall is a gifted musician as well as singer, possessing the ability to play the violin as well as the mandolin. Natalie's goal is that others would be drawn to Jesus through the light that shines in her. She is the high voice for the group and Jessica says that her voice is "one of the strongest that she has ever heard."

Music is Natalie's ministry to reach others but it does not define her totally. She enjoys being outside with her dad whether cutting grass, trimming bushes, or working in the garden. If she wasn't singing, Natalie says she would most likely be a Dental Assistant

stage when she begins to minister through song and violin. Her steadfastness is based on the fact that, as she says, "I need Him everyday, and every hour of my life." Lydia continues, "We live in a dark world but music can definitely penetrate the darkness and I want everything I do to point to Jesus."

Lydia would love to perform overseas someday, as music speaks every language and she would love to meet others in different regions of the world. She has a tender heart for orphans and children and loves to understand how they see Jesus. A song that The Hall Sisters perform called: "Some Children See Him," is a favorite of the group because it speaks about children from all nationalities and how they view Jesus.

Lydia's beautiful voice can soar from alto to soprano for the group and her favorite song to sing is, "Brethren, We Have Met to Worship." She describes



working for her father and also at home learning to be a homemaker.

Natalie truly has a strong tie with her family and loves spending her spare time with either parent. Just as she enjoys time with her dad outside, she equally loves to cook with her mom. Natalie has had her share of kitchen disasters and told us how a recipe went wrong. She was baking cookies with her mom and turned the page for the remainder of the recipe, but the page stuck and she ended up with a totally different recipe to finish the cookies. As it turned out, the cookies were mixed with a granola recipe, which was definitely interesting. The family didn't eat very much of that recipe, but they do love her homemade bread.

Lydia Hall has the great ability to light up the

this song as glorious and worshipful and their performance of this song makes this writer smile.

Lydia encourages older singers who may be thinking of retiring and wondering if anyone still wants to hear the old songs to never give up. She feels that people love the old songs for the memories. These songs can recount a time when things were better for most people and the world was not so crazy. Even movies reach back and take songs from The Golden Era because they anchor people and give them a secure hook to the past.

Valerie Hall is the youngest member of The Hall Sisters. Valerie laughs, "It is hard learning to take correction from my older sisters!" She says that learning to pull her share of responsibilities of a singing group



has been good for her, but if she could be the leader for just one day it would be fun to be the one correcting the older sisters. Honestly, she said she would not change a thing about The Hall Sisters because she feels the presence of God when performing and loves “feeling” the music when she plays.

Valerie sings soprano and plays the cello for the group. She says that she loves to relate to the audiences, smiling at them and seeing them smile back, and making sure she conveys the message behind the song. For Valerie, it is hard doing the same thing everyday, but she would never want to stop because she loves feeling the Lord’s presence when performing. To other young people interested in music, she says: “Keep going, don’t ever give up, but make sure that you are doing it for the right reason: to glorify God. It is worth all the practicing. It is definitely worth it!”

We are sure to be hearing more from The Hall Sisters in the very near future, as they are one of the up and coming young groups in Gospel music. The ladies have just finished filming several music videos in Nashville, TN. in January to be aired on YouTube. They have plans to return to the studio this spring to work on a full Christmas CD and another album.

Be sure to see The Hall Sisters in concert when they are in your area and you will be blessed by the music, spirit, and energy of these four young women. You may purchase one of their current projects entitled, *Snow and True Blue Love* on their website [www.hallsisters.com](http://www.hallsisters.com).



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## Reflections with

# Sherry Anne

Who Are You?

Not that long ago, I ran into a very well-respected, famous comedian in the airport. Excitedly, I blurted out “I know who you are!” To which he responded in a personification of his beloved television character: “Well, WHOOO are you?” Following a brief chuckle, I answered, nervously, by telling him what I do—which is not necessarily *who* I am but, rather, just that: *what* I do...

Ironically enough, within months of that encounter, this renowned celebrity of over 30 years or more, began making shocking national headlines with a revelation of his character completely contradictory to what the general public knew and believed about him. I immediately recalled our conversation and couldn't help but to wonder... “Who are YOU, sir?!!”

I know who I am... and... who I am not:

I am not a Democrat or a Republican, but I am for a

“Democratic Republic.”

As one who is a business owner in the free enterprise system and welcomes entrepreneurialism, I commend fellow Republicans...

As one who fell on hard times and limitations growing up, partaking of government programs, I appreciate fellow Democrats...

As one who believes that each person has a right to their own decisions, I understand fellow liberals. I do. For even God has granted us free will. He never forces anyone to believe in Him or follow Him. He does, however, command us to love one another as we love Him (John 13:34-35) and promises us that if we are obedient to Him and His commands that He will “make of thee a great nation” and “will bless thee, and make thy name great; [that] thou shalt be a blessing” (Gen 12:2).

I believe in saving the environment as long as it in-

cludes saving the environment of the unborn child (i.e. womb).

I believe in regulating aliens as long as we don't alienate them in the process.

I believe in the right to love as long as you rightly love God and His Word first (Whose standards of holiness, by the way, do not change).

I believe in extending a hand liberally, spending conservatively, forming government democratically, but governing our lives independently.

As such, I am Republibecrat! If this offends you, I am sorry. Jesus was of no political affiliation.

Does anyone have the truth?

To be sure, there is One who said, I AM the truth... (John 14:6)

What does this truth teach us? It teaches us to: pray for those who persecute us, lend a hand to those in need, forgive willingly (70 times 7), give cheerfully, love sacrificially, discern judiciously, rebuke lovingly, admonish graciously and exhort generously in the word of God.

We are encouraged in 2 Timothy 2:15 to "study to show ourselves approved unto God, a workman who need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." We are to read His word daily and allow the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth (John 16:13). Jesus said, "You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32). Truth, then, is the great emancipator of the soul.

So, no, my friends, I am really *not* a Republibecrat—I *am* a believer in Messiah, the Anointed One, who came not to condemn the world using smear campaign or coy politics, but that the world, through Him might be saved (John 3:16). Perhaps if we all kept this in mind, we wouldn't need sides, debates or fund raising campaigns; but rather, hands to hold in prayer, arms to lean on for support and feet to walk each other forward. After all didn't Jesus command us to be His feet and His hands to a lost and hurting world?

This year, move forward away from past bellicose arguments. Seek higher ground based on the rock hard foundation of Jesus Christ. Follow in the psalmist's cry and allow the truth of God's word to emancipate your soul to be all that God created YOU to be! He believes in you, won't you believe in Him?



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In You, O LORD, I put my trust;  
Let me never be ashamed;  
Deliver me in Your righteousness.  
Bow down Your ear to me,  
Deliver me speedily;  
Be my rock of refuge,  
A fortress of defense to save me.

For You *are* my rock and my fortress;  
Therefore, for Your name's sake,  
Lead me and guide me.  
Pull me out of the net which they have  
secretly laid for me,  
For You *are* my strength.  
Into Your hand I commit my spirit;  
You have redeemed me, O LORD God of  
truth.

(Psalm 31:1-5)

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# sgn Scoops

February 2015 digital

This chart was compiled from a list of reporting stations. Each month we will be adding more stations.

1	Kingdom Heirs	Joys Of Heaven	36	Dennis Cook	One Pair Of Hands
2	Williamsons	It Was The Word	37	East Ridge Boys	Pray Pray Pray
3	Browders	He Took The Nails	38	Poet Voices	He Saw Me
4	Legacy Five	Christ Is Still The King	39	Troy Burns Family	By The Blood Of The Lamb
5	Hyssongs	Still Blessed			
6	Brian Free and Assurance	Unashamed	40	Gold City	Part The Waters
7	Bowling Family	That's What I Miss The Most	41	Whisnants	Glorybound
8	Hoskins Family	Land Of Endless Tomorrows	42	Josh and Ashley Franks	He Promised Me
9	Tim Livingston	I Just Miss You	43	Caleb's Crossing	Isn't The Love Of Jesus Something Wonderful
10	Dunaways	Church In The Kitchen	44	Mercy's Well	I Wanna Hear The Gospel
11	Shellem Cline	Dinner With Jesus	45	Guardians	He'll Welcome Me
12	Greater Vision	The Blood Hasn't Ever Changed	46	Gaither Vocal Band	Sometimes It Takes A Mountain
13	Ernie Haase and Signature Sound	Water Walking God	47	Keith Barkley and Family Tradition	It Will Pass By
14	Debra Perry and Jaidyn's Call	Bottom Of The Hill	48	Wards	Coming Out Of Bondage
15	Karen Peck and New River	Everybody's Going Through Something	49	Perrys	I Can Trust Him
16	Mark Bishop	Pray On The Little Days	50	Primitive Quartet	Empty Me
17	Lore Family	It Shall Be Well	51	Mercy's Reflection	Oh What A Difference
18	Kingsmen	Oh Yes I Am	52	Jason Crabb	Love Is Stronger
19	Steeles	Eternally	53	Heavenly Sunrise	He Died A Savior
20	Tribute Quartet	Everything I Need	54	Pauline Patterson	One Prayer Away
21	Joseph Habedank	Never No Never	55	Watts, Rowsey and Bean	Don't Give A Rock A Chance
22	Isaacs	I Wanna Be There	56	Bev McCann	Smile
23	Jones	Come On, Come On	57	Partons	No More Chains
24	Mylon Hayes Family	There's Still A Refuge	58	Mark Trammell Quartet	Don't Stop Running
25	Zane and Donna King	No One Like God	59	Scotts	I Won't Let Go Of My Faith
26	Mark Dubbeld Family	Face Of The Captain	60	James and Jeff Easter	Jesus Is Living In Me
27	Shellem Cline	That Saving Song	61	Martins	If We Ever Needed The Lord Before
28	Tammy Jones Robinette	I Like Life			
29	Talleys	Hidden Heroes	62	Clay Jacobs	Tough As Nails
30	Porter Family	It Won't Be Today	62	Greater Vision	Don't Try To Tell Me
31	Clyde Felton Jr.	Lord Forgive Me	64	11th Hour	How Will You Plead
32	Kevin and Jennifer	He's Still Doing Miracles Today	65	Brian and Angela Monehan	I Talk To Him
33	Triumphant Quartet	This Blood	66	LeFevre Quartet	Put It Right There
34	Taylor's	Measure Of Grace	67	TaRanda Greene	That's Where Amazing Happens
35	Beyond The Ashes	Over For Good			

68	Barry Rowland and Deliverance	Somebody	90	Gordon Mote	Ain't It Just Like The Lord
		Go Get God	91	Rochesters	My Savior's Love
69	Rick Webb Family	Send Me	92	Sounds Of Victory	How Good God's Been To
70	Doug Hudson	Help Me Find My Way Home			Me
71	Inmans	Here Comes The Bride	93	Bledsoes	I'm Glad I'm Saved
72	Horn Family	Rise Above The Fall	93	Chuck Day	Back Page News
72	Wilbanks	I'll Be Praisin' You	95	Undivided	For Another Day
74	Crowe, Lawson and Williams	Insured Beyond	96	Greater Vision	For All He's Done
		The Grave	97	Exodus	Tell Me Oh Tell Me Again
75	Down East Boys	Holy All Over Again	98	Heaven's Mountain Band	A Cross And
76	Campbell and Rowley	It's Not About You			Three Nails
77	Tony Burchette	Better Hurry Up	99	John Penney	Jesus Is Coming
78	Connors	I Need To Hear From Heaven	100	Valor 3	Hallelujah He Has Risen
79	Amber Nelon Thompson	What Do You Say			
80	Rita Broyles	Looking Through The Bars			
81	Bradys	My New Home			
82	Rod Truman	I'm Gonna Make It			
83	Booth Brothers	I Played In The Band			
84	Hagees	That's What Love Looks Like			
85	Page Trio	I Wanna Go There			
86	Gospel Truth Trio	I've Been Born Again			
87	Southern Raised	Good News From The			
		Graveyard			
88	Charlie May	One Last Stand			
89	Akins	Joyful Joyful We Adore Thee			

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# LES BUTLER

## Listening to God's Call

By Paige Givens



Les Butler has an ear for good music. Whether he's playing an instrument, listening to a song for radio promotion, leading from the hymnal, or just singing from his heart, Les knows good gospel music when he hears it. From an early beginning in bluegrass to a long-standing career in the corporate Southern Gospel scene, Les has had his ear tuned to music from some of the best singers and musicians in the business. Those who spend time with Les soon realize an important thing about him, though -- his ear is first tuned to the Lord, and then to the music. As a result of his careful listening, the Lord is bringing about some changes in the music and ministry of Les Butler.

Southern Gospel music has been a big part of Les's life for a long time. He has played a role in various facets throughout the industry. "I took over as the host of *Crossroads for Christ*, a Southern Gospel radio show in the Chicago market, the first weekend in October 1978; over 36 years ago! I've been a host on the Solid Gospel Radio Network since 1998, winning the March of Dimes AIR award for my Bluegrass Gospel show called *Front Porch Fellowship*. Several years ago I hosted the Southern Gospel radio channel on Delta

Airlines. I've been producing and playing on recording projects since 1979. I was the Publisher of *Singing News Magazine* for several years. Over the years I've held various positions with the SGMA, SGMG and NQC. I've hosted the *Bluegrass Showcase* at NQC for over a decade, as well as stages at Dollywood and Silver Dollar City. I host *Harmony Road*, a Southern Gospel TV show. I also own Butler Music Group and Family Music Group. My favorite thing to do is preach and sing the gospel of Jesus Christ!"

Recently, Les felt the Lord directing him to make some changes for his future service in the ministry. "Well, several months ago I resigned all of my management positions with *Singing News Magazine* and *Solid Gospel Radio*. I still write a monthly article for *Singing News*, as well as host some radio shows for *Solid Gospel*. I am very appreciative for the opportunities that Salem Communications has afforded me over the years. I am their biggest fan!"

Les made these changes in order to shift his focus in the next year, as the Lord led him to do. "Two years ago I surrendered to the call to preach. At that



very moment I knew God was going to make several changes in my personal life, as well as my corporate life. Personally, my emphasis is on the church; preaching and singing. Corporately, my focus is now on Butler Music Group and Family Music Group.”

Personally, Les is following God’s call to preach and sing at different churches. What kind of experience can a congregation expect when Les Butler comes to worship with them? “Well, to start with I don’t use tracks. Although I play about a dozen different instruments, I usually play the piano in services. I sing ‘camp meeting’ style songs from some of my favorite artists like the Happy Goodmans, Primitive Quartet, Kingsmen, Greater Vision, Rowlands, etc. I am working on a new CD of all new songs written by some very talented and Spirit-filled songwriters. I’m also a big fan of the Red Back Hymnal. Most of the time I sing solo, but sometimes my beautiful wife of 31 years, Bev, goes with me, and some select dates our pastor’s daughter, Tenille Hutson-McCay goes with us to sing as a trio. Several times during the year you will find me at the piano playing for Barry Rowland and Deliverance, as well as the Kingsmen.”

Corporately, Les is going to concentrate on his music company. “Butler Music Group is the management and production division of my company. As of this writing I manage the amazing talents and ministries of Eighth Day, Heaven’s Mountain Band, Tammy Jones Robinette, Master’s Voice, Troy Burns Family and the Williamsons. I do consultant work for anyone wanting to penetrate the Southern Gospel fan demographic. I

also produce and play on recordings through this division. Family Music Group is a radio promotion company and label. Hurry-Up/BMI and Hush Jean/ASCAP are my publishing companies.”

The business side of his ministry feels like home, thanks to the family and co-workers who work with Les to make the music group its best. “My wife Bev is my Office Manager. My son Matt manages our studio, engineers and plays on recordings. Roger Spears and Adam Borden work for me in various positions. My daughter works for the Southern Gospel division of Salem Communications. I am blessed to have my family and my friends to be involved with me in ministry!”

With all of these changes in life, Les is keeping his ear tuned to the Word. He notes that his favorite scripture reference is John 14:1-3 (KJV). “‘Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.’ To me these verses say it all. I don’t need to stress. Why? Because God loves me, He’s gone to prepare a place for me and He’s not going to leave me here alone. He’s coming back for me one day. God wants to spend eternity with me--Les Butler. Glory!”

He is also keeping his ear tuned to the One who speaks the word. His prayer for the next year is simple, but profound. “My prayer is for the power of God to be on me and in everything I do. The power of God is what makes the difference between a business and a ministry. My businesses can be profitable and award winning which would make it successful in the eyes of Wall Street. I want my personal ministry and businesses to be successful in the eyes of the Lord. Matt 6:33(KJV) says ‘Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.’”

For more information on Les Butler’s music business and services, go to [butlermusicgroup.com](http://butlermusicgroup.com) and [familymusicgroup.com](http://familymusicgroup.com).

Photographs courtesy of Solid Gospel and TNN.

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# High Notes

By Kelly Nelson Clark



We always make New Year's resolutions and sometimes we fall short of completing them, but with God mercies are new *every single day* of our life. So no matter the day or the year, know that God has a new start for you.

As I'm writing this I'm thinking that someone may be reading this who thinks that they have done so much and been so bad that God will never look their way or ever forgive what they have done.

Guess what? You can never go so far that God won't forgive or love you. I have a present for you today. It's a gift of Mercy from a Savior who loves you. Give Him a try you will not be disappointed!

Many times our family or our friends or people we look up to will let us down. People are human and prone to failure. And on the

other hand, we disappoint our friends and our loved ones, sometimes not even meaning to. With God there are no disappointments. You can always depend on Him!

I am encouraging you, as well as myself, to put our trust in the God who holds the universe in His hands, but also holds our lives and our hearts too.

He loves you, He cares for you! He has every detail of your life in front of Him. You can trust Him!

**Lamentations 3:22-23: 22** It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. **23** They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

That is such a great word from the Lord!

# Brooklyn Tabernacle's Carol Cymbala

## Worship Is Contagious

By Lorraine Walker



The Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir is an internationally known 300-voice choir that has won six Grammy awards, seven Dove awards, charted on Billboard and sold over four million albums. They sang at President Obama's second inauguration ceremony, been featured on the cover of The New York Times and appeared on Good Morning America. This month they release their 29th album *Pray*, through Provident Distribution. Choir Director, Carol Cymbala co-wrote eleven of the fourteen new songs on the CD. Brooklyn Tabernacle (BT) recently released the following interview with Carol, wife of BT's pastor, Jim Cymbala. We bring it to you with permission of the Adams PR Group and Brooklyn Tabernacle.

Why did you make "PRAY" the title of the new CD? "Pray" is a ballad sung by Timiney Figueroa and it inspires people to look away from their problems and give them to God at the throne of grace. We chose the song as the title of the CD because the bible says God's house shall be called a house of prayer. Teaching, music, and worship are all important, but I truly believe we need more prayer in our lives and in our churches. Through prayer, anything is possible and we want to encourage everyone, everywhere to pray.

Talk about some of the new songs.

"At The Cross" is a new praise and worship chorus we have been singing with our congregation. It lifts up the greatness of what Jesus did when He came and died for our sins. I believe this song will inspire a deeper love and spirit of worship in churches which will help us all overcome the anxieties and fear that are so prevalent in the world today. One of my favorite songs is "Come to Jesus" by Brandon Camphor. It's a song that invites people to come to Him just as they are. It doesn't matter what pit they found themselves in, what they've done, or where they come from, Jesus is always there with open arms to receive them and to love them. Time and time again, I see people in our church that come to Him and I see their lives changed dramatically. It is just a beautiful thing to see. Another one of my favorites is "He Loved Me." I can't think of any greater love than what Christ did for us. His love is for all of us. It is unconditional, and I am so thankful that we were able to record a song that can speak of the great love of our Savior. "Christ the King" is sung by Onaje Jefferson. It is an upbeat, uplifting song about surrender and trusting in Jesus. Generally, songs of surrender are written as ballads, but this song communicates just how exciting it is when Jesus becomes our everything.



Church choir worship is becoming less prevalent in many churches today. What is the key to sustaining and maintaining a vibrant choir ministry?

I've been directing the Brooklyn Tabernacle choir for many years, and week after week, I look up at about three hundred people singing with all of their hearts to the Lord, and every time I am moved and the congregation is touched. I see them lift their hearts and their hands and their voices to God in worship and praise, and I see how their hearts are stirred by music. I really believe that it's very important that in the church today, if we are going to have a choir, that the people in the choir need to be committed members, who have a heart for God and a heart for ministry. I also believe that the choir directors need to focus on seeing lives changed through the power of the Gospel in song. There's just something really beautiful and powerful about seeing so many people lifting their voices to the Lord in praise in one accord. I pray that there would be more choirs that would be raised up in the day that we are living in so that we can sing a song of praise and victory to our God because He is worthy of all our praise.

Why is corporate worship so important to a church service and how do you motivate the congregation to participate?

Corporate worship not only lifts up God and glorifies Christ Jesus, but it invites the Holy Spirit to come into our lives. Jesus said the Spirit would glorify Him. When we truly worship, we open ourselves to the

power of the spirit, which helps us open our hearts to hear from God. The praise teams should never perform praise and worship. If we simply perform, our congregations become spectators instead of worshipers, and it is vital that we worship from our hearts in spirit and in truth. Worship is contagious, and when we worship as a choir and praise team, the congregation, in turn, begins to lift their hearts and worship God. I also believe our song selections should be simple enough that young and old, the diverse body of Christ, can lift their hearts in praise and worship together as one.

What events are coming up for the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir this year?

We are very excited about premiering the new CD in February. We are already planning a very special Easter production that we put on every year. We have many outreaches during the year, and one of our most anticipated outreaches is when we can bring in the homeless of our city and are able to minister to them. We have a lot on our schedule and we're really excited to see what God is going to do.

What keeps you motivated as a choir director to find new songs?

I love the old hymns. I love so many songs that were written in the past, but I'm so grateful to the Lord that he can give people new and fresh music that can minister to those that do not know Him, and those that know him can be blessed and renewed. Thankfully, God has



used many of these songs to be an incredible blessing here in our congregation and around the world.

What excites you most about the new CD?  
 One thing that is so special to me about the Pray project is that it focuses on the Gospel. The bible says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes." There is an eclectic mix of songs on this album-- from contemporary Christian to praise and worship to gospel-- but the one thing we're really excited about is that on this project, there are songs reminiscent of the traditional Brooklyn Tabernacle choir sound. As I look at the condition of the world today, I see so many people who are hurting

and looking for answers, and we know that Jesus Christ is the answer. Our prayer is that this new CD will point people to Him.



For more information, visit [www.brooklyntabernacle.org](http://www.brooklyntabernacle.org)

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## All The Way with

# *Higher Hope*

By Rhonda Wooten

In my 35 years of Southern Gospel Music ministry, I have been fortunate to be in church services with some of the finest groups that Southern Gospel music has to offer. Groups that could make the rafters ring with angelic harmonies. Bands that could bring songs to life with toe-tapping, hand-clapping, driving arrangements, and an anointing so strong and so powerful, you found yourself not wanting the service to end. In February 2010, I met one of those groups, Higher Hope from LaGrange, Georgia. I recently spoke with them and now have the privilege of introducing them to you.

Formed in the spring of 2005, Higher Hope has aspired to bring a message of love, encouragement, and salvation to those in need. It is a ministry based in complete faith, preaching hope to a lost and dying world. The group's founder, Jenna Boyd Byers, so graciously gives us a little insight into the group Higher Hope and how it came to be.

When Jenna was 18 years old, she was singing with a local trio in her hometown of LaGrange, Georgia. It was during this time that Jenna began to write original songs. The trio would later go into the studio to record and use five of Jenna's songs on the project. A short time later, the trio decided to disband and Jenna

found herself at a complete loss.

"I felt like the Lord gave me these messages to share and now it seemed that I had no avenue to get these songs out," says Jenna. "I felt like some of these songs had a purpose and a place."

While sitting around the kitchen table talking one Sunday afternoon, Jenna's sister Kylie and Kylie's husband David spoke up. «We'll help you sing, we'll help you get started!» And there around the family's kitchen table, on that Sunday afternoon, what had once been a dream, a vision, was now a new generation of Southern Gospel music. It didn't take long for the new group to agree on a name. Jenna tells us, «When I think about Southern Gospel Music, I think about being an encouragement and uplifting others. I'd like to think that when we as a group go to different churches to minister, that we make a difference in lives, and make their day brighter through Jesus working through our ministry. We have the ultimate Hope to tell them about, the Hope of Heaven and the Hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the highest Hope, the only Hope!» Jenna adds, «And that's how we came up with our name, *Higher Hope*»

Jenna is no stranger to Southern Gospel music.

Her roots run deep. By the age of 20, Jenna already possessed a lifetime of experience in Gospel music. She attributes this to her parents' ministry as singers and local DJ's, along with the fact she began singing in local churches at age six. Jenna was blessed with the gift of songwriting at age 18 and 11 years later, one of those songs would become her first ever charting single. "All The Way," made it as far up on the charts as #55 and remained in the Top 100 for four months.

Jenna tells the story of how she wrote this song and what it means to her. "While attending a revival by myself one night, the preacher bringing the message just stopped mid-sermon and began to sing. He sang the old hymn, "I have Decided To Follow Jesus." Well, on my way home that night, the words to that song kept replaying over and over in my head. The line in the song that says, 'no turning back,' just lingered with me. I really wanted to write a song about not turning back and no matter how hard I tried to title it as such, God kept pushing: *all the way*. This was my inspiration for the song. No matter what comes our way, we're gonna make it! We as Christians are committed to Him. Christ went all the way for us and we need to go all the way for Him." "All The Way" has quickly become Higher Hope's most requested song, touching hearts and blessing folks all over.

Higher Hope is mostly made up of family members. Jenna sings lead and she is the founder and manager of the group. She is married to the bass singer Daniel Byers and they have two handsome sons, Luke who is two and Christopher who is one. Daniel (Danny)

brings a smooth style of bass singing to the group. He and Jenna met at the National Quartet Convention back in 2008 and he joined Higher Hope in November of the same year. He and Jenna were married in 2010.

Gayla Boyd, Jenna's mother, sings alto and brings more than 40 years of faithful service and experience to the group. Gayla and her husband Donald have a TV and radio Ministry called, "The Gospel Connection."

Jamie Daniel is the baritone singer and long time friend. He and wife Brittany have two sons as well and all reside in Trickum Valley, AL. Jamie is a multi-talented musician, playing an array of musical instruments. When given the opportunity and the service allows, he is also an anointed preacher. Jamie spent most of his life on the road with his family group before joining Higher Hope almost two years ago.

I asked Jenna what she would like to see happen for Higher Hope in 2015. She says, "I would really like to get back into the recording studio and do a new project. We are looking forward to the doors God will open for our ministry and are ready and waiting to follow His call. We want to be found doing exactly what He wants us to do, no more and no less and we are willing to go where He leads."

For those who would like to find out more about this exciting ministry, check out one of their concerts, or to book them for your church or next concert event. You can go to their website [www.higherhopeonline.com](http://www.higherhopeonline.com) <http://www.higherhopeonline.com/>



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# Transform Your Workouts Into Worship!

By Laurette Willis, CHC

Have you ever said this, “I don’t have TIME to exercise”? Some of us have said that more than once! In reality, it’s not about *having* time to exercise as we all have the same 24 hours each day; we need to *make* time to exercise if we want to be healthy.

Think of some of the things you already make time to do each day. Some of these things have been part of your daily routine since childhood and have become second nature, such as brushing your teeth, washing your face or fixing yourself something to eat. There are other things you do on a regular basis which have become habit, yet require a bit more preparation, such as going to church, remembering to acknowledge friends’ birthdays, and shopping for groceries.

Making fitness a part of your regular routine can become a habit—especially if you combine it with something you are already doing, such as prayer, reading the Bible, or worshipping the Lord.

## How Can You Combine Faith and Fitness?

Here’s a quick example: Take a brisk walk for 10 minutes praying for your family, our country’s leadership, the peace of Jerusalem, God’s will for your life, and however the Lord leads you. At the end of 10 minutes, turn around and briskly walk home praising the Lord.

There, you’ve just transformed your workout into worship! Tell me what part of your life the Lord does not want to make part of His life, and add worship to that part. After all, He is the Author of Life. I believe that Jesus wants to be Lord over all parts of your life; even exercise!

The Surgeon General recommends 30 minutes of exercise a day to remain healthy – and more if you want to lose weight – so why not use that time to build your relationship with your Heavenly Father?

The foundation scripture to our PraiseMoves Fitness

Ministry reminds me of the responsibility and opportunity we have to invite God to help us become what I call a “Fit Witness for Christ.” First Corinthians 6:20 says, “You were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God’s.”

## What Can You Do Today?

No matter what time of day you are reading this article, you can do *something* to move your body and honor God at the same time. Even if it is just to reach your arms up right now as high as you can, take a deep breath and say with all your heart, “I praise and thank You, Lord!” There, you’ve done it! You have just transformed a workout into worship! Sure, it took less than a minute, but it’s a start.

If you have more time, take a walk, get on the rebounder (mini-trampoline), or treadmill. Work out to an exercise DVD (such as PraiseMoves, where the Scripture and worship are already provided for you – just join in!). Ride your bicycle, jump rope, dance and praise the Lord – the choices are limited only by your imagination. Add prayer, singing praises, reciting Scripture, purposefully counting your blessings (“name them one by one!”); anything that helps center your focus off the world and onto the Lord. He is worthy, able and faithful – and His Word will *not* return to Him void (empty or unfulfilled)!

Make the decision today that you will transform your workouts into worship!

*Christian Fitness Expert and Certified Health Coach Laurette Willis is the Director of PraiseMoves Fitness Ministry with DVDs, Training, and Classes by Certified PraiseMoves Instructors on six continents (<http://PraiseMoves.com>).*

**Photo courtesy of .:Axle:**

# EVENT PLANNER

## LEGACY FIVE'S CELEBRATION NYE

By Lynn Mills



The Gaylord Opryland Resort is the world's largest non-gaming hotel that boasts nine acres of gardens under glass, and during the Christmas season it is ablaze with multiple life-sized and larger than life nativity scenes and millions of lights. In the few days surrounding New Year's Eve, the Opryland becomes home to Legacy Five's Celebration NYE.

On the day of our arrival, after checking into the Gaylord Opryland Resort, we had the afternoon to roam the nine acres of lush gardens. Each year the resort does an amazing job of decorating! At 6:15 PM the doors opened to the Governor's Ballroom, where NYE was held, and the concert began at seven o'clock. This year, the first evening was a combination of the hosts, Legacy Five, and special guests Triumphant Quartet, Tim Lovelace and the Collingsworth Family. The newest addition to the Collingsworth Family, Emma, stole the spotlight when she was introduced on stage – at that

time, only six weeks old!

The following morning we gathered back at the ballroom for another round of the Collingsworth Family, preaching from Scott Fowler's pastor, Rick White, amazing testimony and singing from the Freedom Singers and more singing from Legacy Five. The session was scheduled to end at noon, but with a line-up like that; you'll understand why they went over just a little bit!

New Year's Eve was the night we had all been waiting for. Considering that the concert was going to ring in the New Year, which meant staying up until midnight, this session began at 8:00 PM. In tradition with the last few years, the artists featured were the famed Jubilee Gang: Legacy Five, Greater Vision and the Booth Brothers. The first half of the evening each group sang individually. The second half was dedicated to the

Christmas Jubilee program; everyone said, "I've never laughed so hard in my life!" after the concert.



Each year, a few new elements are added into the program and are designed to make folks laugh. The highlight for this year was definitely when Gerald teased Jim about a few people who wanted to audition for Jim's trio. He claimed that they were "cousins" and each one was equally convinced that once Jim heard them, they would be hired! Gerald then announced that these three just happened to be over at the Bass Pro Shop looking for huntin' gear and agreed to come to Opryland and sing for Jim. So, McKinley, Dudley and

Percy walked on stage with a toy shotgun, decked out in camouflage and blaze orange hats. They sang a tune called "I'm Going Huntin' For Christmas," and fought for the spotlight. (Of course, McKinney, Dudley and Percy were Rodney, Chris and Scott Fowler in disguise.) The comedy was priceless.

Another highlight of the NYE is what Scott accidentally kept calling "lunch" throughout the week. It is actually breakfast with Legacy Five in the Delta Ballroom. Once we picked up our china plates, added some food and sat at a table with linen tablecloths and napkins, we felt very well taken care of. Buffet lines sat in three places across the room with fruit, pastries and beverages on their own tables. Never have such tasty biscuits and gravy entered my mouth! And the fruit danishes melted in your mouth...

The Jim Brady Trio was the highlight of the last morning. When Jim announced his soon to be departure from the Booth Brothers last fall, questions abounded. The trio's official debut that morning answered them all. Jim, Melissa and Tim have a smooth sound that caters to the traditional sound of Southern Gospel. There was a song or two borrowed from the Booth Brothers repertoire, such as "The Half That's Never Been Told," but since Jim's writing has been so entwined with the Booth's music, that was to be expected. There were also new songs and if you're seeing them in concert, you'll hear Tim tear up the piano like he did for us on "Keep on the Firing Line!" Jim proved that morning at NYE that he is perfectly comfortable with the additional job as emcee, as is Melissa, and both are bound to delight



audiences across the nation.

If you're making plans to purchase some new music this year, Jim's trio has a brand new CD that released January 27th, entitled *A New Chapter*. I'm very sure once you hear it; you'll want a copy for your own collection!



Now, this is from your Event Planner! Legacy Five is hosting another NYE Celebration December 31 – January 2, 2015/16! On New Year's Eve, you will sample a portion of one of the most popular events

sweeping through Gospel Music: The Cathedrals Family Reunion. This session will bring back many memories of The Cathedral Quartet as Scott Fowler invites former members Gerald Wolfe, Mark Trammell and Ernie Haase to the stage. Then on the evening of New Year's Day, a selection of yet another event will come to NYE: Quartets Across America. Daywind Music Group (DMG) has constructed this event to relive the early days of Gospel Music; how it started and progressed up to present day. This session will feature The Blackwood Brothers, Legacy Five, Brian Free and Assurance and Tribute Quartet. Each quartet will not only sing on their own, but switch members and make new combinations and harmonies you've yet to hear! This NYE will be like attending three events in one: Legacy Five's Celebration, The Cathedrals Family Reunion and Quartets Across America!!! Visit [celebrationnye.com](http://celebrationnye.com) for more information.

A promotional advertisement for Drew Zeringue. It features a portrait of a young man with short brown hair, wearing a dark shirt, looking directly at the camera. The background is a soft-focus green outdoor setting with some branches. Overlaid on the image is bold yellow and white text.

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# Contributors

## SGN SCOOPS



Rob Patz is the President and CEO of Coastal Media Group. Rob has an 18 year history in radio hosting the nationally syndicated radio show, "The Southern Styles Show" since its beginning in 1993. Rob is also the owner of the internet's #1 Southern Gospel station, [SGMRadio.com](http://SGMRadio.com). In 2009, Rob Patz acquired [SGNScoops.com](http://SGNScoops.com), including the all-digital Scoops Magazine and the Diamond Awards. Rob has taken part in several Christian television projects working in front of the camera and also has helped create several syndicated television programs as well. Rob does voice work for various outlets including fortune 500 companies as well as emceeing concerts and special events. Email Rob at [rob@sgnscoops.com](mailto:rob@sgnscoops.com).



Lou Wills Hildreth appears on the Gaither Homecoming Videos, and is a founding member of Texas First Family Of Gospel Music, the "Singing Wills Family." She helped pioneer Christian television as host of "Wills Family Inspirational TV." After moving to Nashville in the sixties, she was the first woman to own an artist management agency. Lou is an inductee of the Texas Gospel Music Hall Of Fame, GMA Gospel Music Hall Of Fame, SGMA Hall Of Fame at Dollywood, and the Christian Music Hall Of Fame. She is a recipient of an Honorary Doctorate Of Sacred Music from Louisiana Baptist University. Recently, Gaither Homecoming Magazine named Lou in the "Hall Of Honor" series, and the Southern Gospel Music Guild gave her a "Lifetime Achievement Award." Lou is celebrating a 65th wedding anniversary in 2011 with Howard, and they live in Houston near son Dr. David Hildreth and daughter Kathryn Mumaw, and 4 grandchildren. Visit Lou at: <http://louhildreth.com>



Christian Health & Fitness Expert Laurette Willis is an author with Harvest House Publishers, and the Director of PraiseMoves Fitness Ministry with DVDs, a training program and PraiseMoves

Instructors on four continents (<http://PraiseMoves.com>), on Facebook <http://on.fb.me/PraiseMoves>. Laurette invites readers to get started on the road to better health and fitness for spirit, soul and body. For a free, easy-to-follow 21 day program visit: <http://ChristianFitnessKit.com>



Stephanie Kelley is a public speaker and owner of Queen-O-Q, a blog featuring coupon match-ups, freebies, samples and information on frugal living. She is married, has three children and lives in Washington State. [QueenOQ.blogspot.com](http://QueenOQ.blogspot.com)



Canadian-born Lorraine Walker has a love for Jesus Christ, music and writing. The combination of these passions has produced artist features and monthly columns for Southern Gospel publications including SGM Radio website and SGN Scoops Digital magazine. Lorraine desires that the power of the written word will glorify her Lord and bring readers closer to the love, peace and majesty of the Almighty. Email Lorraine at [lorraine@sgnscoops.com](mailto:lorraine@sgnscoops.com)



Jennifer Campbell is a singer, songwriter, musician, and middle school English teacher from McAlpin, Florida. Along with her passion for teaching, she has an even greater passion for ministering to others, sharing her testimony of how she was born lifeless and how Jesus raised her up to live for Him. Jennifer is a member of the Florida Worship Choir and Orchestra and has performed with them at Brooklyn Tabernacle, Carnegie Hall, Central Park, and Times Square. She serves as a group leader for Women of Faith, designs websites, and writes an inspirational blog at [HYPERLINK "http://jennifer-campbell.net/blog.htm"](http://jennifer-campbell.net/blog.htm) and a food and travel blog at <http://jennifersjourneys.net> Learn more about

# Contributors

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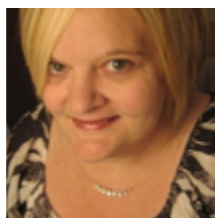
Angela Griffin is an International Field Representative for Love A Child, Inc., a 501 c 3 humanitarian organization to the island of Haiti. A rich Christian family heritage guided her path to minister in song to the broken, to feed the hungry, and lead others to Christ. On December 31, 2002 she married Tim Griffin, an accomplished Southern Gospel pianist. Tim and Angela then combined their musical talents and formed the group "The Griffin's." They have traveled throughout the Southeast spreading the love of Christ.



Dusty Wells is a man of many talents and multiple skills, from his speaking engagements across the country, to traveling and encouraging various artists in the Christian music genres. Dusty has a passion that is evident from the moment you meet him.

Dusty is a man who remains passionate and secure in the calling and destiny upon his life. He has come to realize the importance of finding purpose and clear direction for not only his life, but also the lives of those he comes in contact with, no matter what stage of life they may be in. Growing up in a very dysfunctional home, surrounded by all types of abuse, Dusty had every excuse to be a failure in life. He grew up on welfare, having to steal his daily necessities of life at times, being surrounded by drugs, alcohol and pornography. He was raised by a mother who was married multiple times, living in a housing project on the wrong side of town. But in the midst of what seemed to be complete devastation, God had different plans of success for Dusty. At the age of 14, a precious couple took time out of their own lives to invest in Dusty...thus leading Him to the Lord. His life is a testimony of God's relentless love and deliverance, and is one of the most triumphant stories told in modern Christianity. Dusty is confident in the fact that if God can do it for him, He can do it for anyone, no matter the situation.

Dusty and his wife of 33 years have four children, and two grandbabies with one more on the way. They make their home in Nashville, Tn.



Joan Walker grew up with music in the house and first heard Southern Gospel in her early teens. With almost a quirky (some may say 'weird') need to make sure words are spelled correctly and the apostrophes are in the right place, she enjoys proofreading the articles for the SGN Scoops magazine each month...and looks beyond the letters and commas to the wonderful words each writer has written. Joan counts it as a blessing in her life to be part of SGN Scoops!



Pete Schwager is a web developer and graphic designer with a passion for Christ. He was born in Santa Rosa, California and moved to Oregon where he spent most of his life. He now lives in the quiet town of Ringgold, Georgia and enjoys living in the country with his family. You can find him online at <http://peteschwager.com>



Staci Schwager helps with marketing and communication with her husband's web design company, Cre8able Media. Together they make a great team! Staci being the "talkative" one, loves being able to communicate one on one with clients and organizing ideas. While Pete on the other hand is diving into the design and coding aspects to make the real masterpiece! Most of Staci's days are filled with preparing homeschool lessons for her kids, couponing, gardening, tending to her chicken flock and spending as much time on the beautiful, country land God has blessed them with.

# Contributors

## SGN SCOOPS



My name is Tina Wakefield and I am currently Music Minister for Amazing Grace Worship Center in Alabaster, Al. I have led worship for over 18 years as well as teach adults how to live everyday life in Victory as a Christian. I enjoy playing and singing Gospel Music whenever and wherever I am

invited. I currently have three Cd s available on my website at [www.tinawakefield.com](http://www.tinawakefield.com) and just released my first music video with Godsey & Associates called, "The Choice" available on YouTube. I write a lot of the music we sing at church and also record my original songs. My family is very ministry oriented with Pastors, Teachers, Musicians, and Singers. My heart's desire is to spread the gospel of Christ through any and all open doors that I receive.



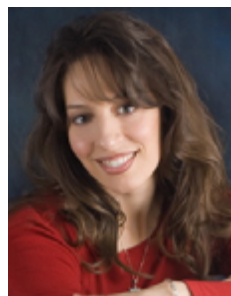
Dr. Jeff R. Steele is a pastor, conference speaker, singer, songwriter, husband, father, grandfather and friend. He is currently the Senior Pastor at Faith Baptist Church in Cullman, Alabama. Their services are webcast worldwide; they have a weekly television program and host

an annual Jubilee each August that attracts hundreds from around the southeast. Dr. Steele is beginning his eighth year there. As a songwriter Jeff has been credited with 17 Number One songs in Christian music as well as four BMI Gold Medals for Great National Popularity as measured by Broadcast Performances. He has also been recognized by BMI as Christian Songwriter of the Year on several occasions. The group, The Steeles was featured across the nation and was seen on numerous magazine covers, feature articles, television and radio programs during their ministry on the road. Jeff is still writes songs and articles, sings on occasion and speaks in conferences and revivals. Jeff is married to Sherry, his wife of 31 years and they have three grown children. Visit Jeff on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and at [www.jeffrsteale.com](http://www.jeffrsteale.com).



Erin Stevens is a uniquely talented 18 year old shutterbug, singer, guitar player, writer, blogger, social networker and shooting coach. She is the owner/operator of Photos For Keeps By Erin. She also travels in full-time Gospel music ministry with The

Stevens Family. Photography is her passion, and singing for Christ is her calling. Check out her photography website [www.photosforkeepsbyerin.com](http://www.photosforkeepsbyerin.com) and her ministry website [www.stevensfamilymusic.com](http://www.stevensfamilymusic.com).



Sherry Anne Lints, a Doctor of Chiropractic, singer, speaker, actress, writer and fitness trainer, was born with a bilateral hearing and speech impairment. She appeared in the films, Clancy and The Perfect Gift and was a special guest on 100 Huntley Street, in Ontario, Canada. She is a contributing author for the book, Modern-Day Miracles and released her second CD, Keep on Prayin', July 2012 and has

opened for many of the Gaither Homecoming Artists. Additionally, Sherry Anne helps lead worship and drama at her church. For more information, visit: [www.SherryAnne.com](http://www.SherryAnne.com).



Vonda Easley is the owner of Hope's Journey Christian Ministries and the voice of "The Strictly Southern Show" at WPIL 91.7 in Heflin, Alabama on Fridays

# Contributors

## SGN SCOOPS



After graduating from Middle Tennessee State University with a Mass Communication degree, Craig Harris has been in the journalism field for more than 15 years, working daily as both a photographer and writer at one of the largest non-daily publications in the state of Tennessee. He has experience in feature writing, news writing, action photography, portrait photography, web-site maintenance and layout. Craig has been a part of numerous awards, both collective and individual honors in the journalism field. He has had articles published in numerous newspapers and magazines on a variety of subjects, most notably in the world of sports.

Craig's Southern Gospel interest dates back for approximately the same time span, having closely followed the industry since the later portion of the 1990s. He also performed for seven years with a local trio prior to joining the SGN Scoops staff.

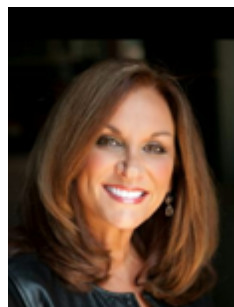


David's distinctive sound and his ability to blend perfectly with a variety of vocalists has made him a valuable commodity on live events as well as in the studio. His compassionate and gentle spirit makes him more than an artist, it makes him a great friend!

David began singing at age 6 with family. In 1990, he filled in for the Speer Family and later that year he became the lead vocalist for The Trailblazers. In 2002, Staton filled the lead position with Priority. While with Priority, the group was the resident gospel group at the Silver Dollar City theme park in Branson, MO and they performed for over one million people in one year. After the group disbanded in 1995, David continued to write for artists in many different genres of music while occasionally performing solo. It was during this time that his song, "Every Knee Shall Bow", recorded by Dottie Peoples, was nominated for a Grammy Award. His song, "Together We Can" was adopted as the national theme song to bring awareness to violence in schools. The music video (Together We Can) that featured many Atlanta based artists was shown at the 1999 Grammy Awards show, which helped launch the careers of artists like R&B's Jagged Edge, India Arie, and 4.0. In 2004, David partnered with Mike LeFevre to form The LeFevre Quartet. During the seven years that he was the lead vocalist, the group had many hit songs and won many awards. After leaving the LeFevre

Quartet in 2011, Staton began working on a solo project and also began singing with Palmetto State Quartet. The group appeared on television and toured with country music superstar, Wynonna Judd while Staton was there.

Through the years, artists like Gold City, Jeff & Sheri Easter, Kingsmen, Singing Americans, Dixie Melody Boys, Imperials, Dottie Peoples, Ball Brothers, LeFevre Quartet, Palmetto State Quartet, Priority, Trailblazers, The Greens, Ivan Parker, Brian Free and many more have recorded David's music. From 2005 to 2013, Staton was the Executive Vice President for Song Garden Music Group in Nashville, TN. In recent years, the National Quartet Convention has asked David to be a part of an industry advisory panel to help artists who need assistance and training. Not only has David made a mark as an artist, he is passing on his talent and knowledge to new artists, influencing and shaping the future of Gospel music.



Kelly Nelon Clark is the daughter of Gospel Music icon, the late Rex Nelon. As part of her father's group, The Nelons, she blazed a musical trail bringing a fresh new sound to the traditional Gospel quartet style. That sound and style influenced a generation of Gospel music performers and can be heard today in the styling of

groups like the Martins, Point of Grace, The Crabb Family and more.

As The Nelons broke new ground, the Gospel Music industry repeatedly recognized their excellence. The group won four GMA Dove awards as well as multiple awards from readers of Singing News Magazine. Kelly was named female vocalist of the year on four occasions and received favorite alto vocalist award 3 times. At one time, Kelly was the most awarded artists in the history of the Singing News Fan Awards. The music industry at large also recognized The Nelons with 3 Grammy nominations.

Today, Kelly currently performs throughout the United States, Canada and Europe with her husband and two daughters as The Nelons. The group is featured in hundreds of churches and concerts each year. The Nelons have been part of Gaither Homecoming concerts sharing their music with thousands of Gospel Music fans in sold-out arenas across the country. For more information, visit <http://www.kellynelon.com/>.

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Hannah Webb is the soprano of the Rick Webb Family and director of radio promotion and relations for Song Garden Music Group. Hannah and her family have shared the platform with noted personalities such as Governor Mike Huckabee, Dr. David Jeremiah, George Beverly Shea, William Graham, Kathy Ireland just to name a few

and has made multiple network appearances with the TCT Network. Talent winner at Miss North Carolina 2013, Hannah also appeared on Jeff Foxworthy's "The American Bible Challenge" season 3. An advocate and spokesperson for Compassion International, she is completing her Business and Communications Major through Liberty University Online.



Marcie Gray was born and raised in sunny California, yet always dreamed of moving to Tennessee. She had planned to move to the south as a young adult and sing with a gospel group, after being inspired to do so by her Great Uncle, Alphus LeFevre. Though it took longer than she had expected, in 2011, her dream of moving east finally came true when her husband, Don, retired

from the CHP. They packed up their two youngest daughters, three dogs and two horses and headed east. What a blessing to finally be where the tea is sweet, the Southern Gospel music is plentiful and there's a Cracker Barrel on every corner!

Spend ten minutes with Marcie and you'll learn that she is rarely lacking for something to say. Her passion for Southern Gospel music, combined with her instinct to be behind the camera, makes journalism a very enjoyable outlet for that "Type A" personality she has been affectionately labeled with by her family and friends.

Marcie is a worship leader, vocalist and songwriter. She has directed choirs of all ages and given voice lessons for many years. Her solo CD, "Carry Me Home" was released in September of 2014.

Having family in ministry has given Marcie a desire to support those who are on the road sharing the gospel through song. Visit her website at [www.graydoveministries.com](http://www.graydoveministries.com) to learn more!



Lynn Mills is a talented writer who has a passion for music, specifically Gospel music. Lynn authors the site Lynn's Chronicles where she shares her experiences attending various concert events and what people can expect should they want to attend. Also featured are CD & DVD Reviews, Devotionals, Photos, Video and News

tidbits. Keep up with Lynn online at <http://lynnschronicles.com> or on facebook @ <http://facebook.com/lynns.chronicles>



Melissa Joy Wright is a vocalist/musician/evangelist with the Southern Gospel music group The WRIGHTS. She is a wife, mother of three, and servant to the Risen Savior. Melissa is a blogger, focusing her attention on Spiritual and Physical Fitness and her passion: all things Southern Gospel! She enjoys watching her kid's activities, running, scrapbooking and crafting, and traveling with her family.

Most importantly, Melissa's calling is to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ and further Southern Gospel Music to a hurting world.



Chris Clay is an evangelist and the baritone singer for the Southern Gospel group Hope's Journey. He resides in east central Alabama with his wife Salina and daughter Cadence.

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## SGN SCOOPS



Hi, my name is Dean Adkins and I am honored to be a part of the SGN Scoops family. Perhaps some background information would be beneficial. I am sometimes called "Professor" because I was a Biology professor at Marshall University for 31 years and I retired in 2004. I grew up listening to gospel music (or as it is now termed Southern Gospel Music) and many of my relatives (Adkins, Toney, Booth families) are gospel singers/musicians. I collect records, primarily LPs, and SGM related items. Over the years I have studied the history of this genre. I would like to use these articles to describe events and the mind-set of the 1950s and 60s – sometimes called the Golden Age of Gospel Music.



Alpha Source Media Group is lead by Candi Combs and was born out of a strong desire to support the ministers who share the gospel on the highways and byways of life. Combs says, "These artists and their families spend their days selflessly bringing the life-changing message of Jesus to crowds large and small. We want to do all we can to support them!" In 2015, Candi will have a law degree from Liberty University and will provide a full range of legal counsel. This component will bring the highest level of support to those who also desire legal representation.



Paige Givens is a Christ follower, wife, mother of two boys and kindergarten teacher to 18 five-year-olds. She is a writer, reader, singer, studier, and teacher of words. Paige lives in Hayden, Alabama with her husband of 10 years, Chris Givens, and their sons Parker and Peyton. Paige loves to blog about faith, writing, music, and teaching. Her goal is to serve the Lord by inspiring others to be who He has called them to be. You can listen to her music and read her devotionals at [www.paigegivens.com](http://www.paigegivens.com).