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Southern Gospel's First All Digital Magazine **digital**

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2010
Diamond
Awards!

Home of

The
Diamond
Awards

Vibrant Female Voices Debra and Lauren Talley & Women of Southern Gospel

IN THIS ISSUE: ♪ LaBreeska Hemphil ♪ Wendy Word
Branson's Lynda Lynn ♪ The Real Wives of SG
♪ Introducing Hinson Revival ♪ How Love Songs Lie

THE PUBLISHER'S PERSPECTIVE: A VIDEO MESSAGE TO READERS FROM ROB PATZ

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2010 SGN SCOOPS DIGITAL DIAMOND AWARDS



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OF THE YEAR | CHRISTIAN COUNTRY GROUP OF THE YEAR |
CHRISTIAN COUNTRY FEMALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR | CHRIS-
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SGN Scoops exists to showcase what is distinguished, intriguing, and real about southern & country gospel music. We seek with our stories to shed light on people fulfilling a call to minister - to make or support the making of music that excites an audience and glorifies God.
And we seek to do it interactively.

BLESSED IS SHE... BLESSED ARE WE.

I always figured there are two types of women (and probably people) in the world: The Doers and the Done-To's. I strive, sometimes way too hard, to be part of that first category. I teach it to my daughters and sometimes preach it to my mom and often discuss its necessity with my Gen-X, type-A friends.

But as I grow older, I can clearly see that all types come with sub-categories. Let's look at the matriarch of our Christian faith, for one example. We can hardly say Mary the mother of Jesus was a Doer. In fact, in a worldly view, she was practically a victim, having an unwanted pregnancy and possible scandal bestowed upon her. Today's Roe vs. Wade activists might say she had her right to choose taken away from her. Mary- blessed, peaceful Mary- went with the flow, so to speak. She accepted God's call and His gift and became the ultimate Done-To. We can hardly say, though, that she was passive or weak.

I wish I could be more like her.

The striking thing about Mary's story, about the stories of many of the great women of our faith – some chronicled on the pages of this month's magazine – is that regardless of the category she fell into, she was used and she was blessed.

God – for all His mysteries – is pretty simple that way. He wants to bless us and use us.

Consider one of the first stories we read about Mary. In the first chapter of Luke, she goes to visit her older cousin Elizabeth. We don't get much detail about Elizabeth, but I see her as a Doer. She gets a miracle pregnancy and rejoices in it. She's proud and – the Bible says it – loud! And when she sees her little cousin, likewise brimming with the miracle of life, she "exclaims." And she calls

Mary out, and she tells her something really wonderful:

"Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!" (Luke 1:45)

So perhaps Mary's "only" great accomplishment up until this point in her life was the seemingly-simple act of believing-and-receiving. If that act had not involved carrying the manifest Son of God, we'd probably dismiss Mary as a plain old Jane Christian, a Done-To, not worthy of a second thought.

We'd let her be our Facebook friend but have her in our 'hide' filter.

I'm grateful God chose someone like Mary, someone so unlike me. And I am glad His word gives us this glimpse into her meeting

with Elizabeth. I recently heard a teaching about it at the (wonderful, amazing, spirit-refreshing) moms' group that I attend, and I could look around the room at all the different women there and see how God keeps building upon Mary and Elizabeth's relationship of affectionate contrasts.

See, just across the room was my friend Martha. When I am rising at 8am making coffee with my eyes half-closed and settling with my Princesses in front of Mickey's Clubhouse until we get it together, Martha has already been up for hours, nursing her sweet newborn daughter and likely playing some kind of game of chase with her adorable and active two pre-school age sons. Martha is content and super-gifted at being a full-time, stay-at-home mom, whereas I am so restless I'm *always* looking for other things to do (be it with my kids at my side). We often chide with each other about our different takes on a parallel life. She is a blessing to me, as I hope I am to her.

When our speaker began to ask questions, Martha was the one who pointed out Elizabeth's very important role in Mary's very important life, how much it must have meant to a young and very nervous Mary to have her older, wiser cousin speak confidence and blessings over Mary's life and situation.

After the meeting, I walked immediately to Martha and reminded her about a very specific time she played Elizabeth to my Mary. And I hugged her tightly.



KELLY CAPIOTTI BURTON,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

GOD, FOR
ALL HIS
MYSTERIES,
IS PRETTY
SIMPLE... HE
WANTS TO
BLESS US
&
USE US.

continues~



As women, we spend a lot of energy sometimes fretting about what Sister So-in-So does better than we do, or why she got blessed with something we didn't. Can I tell you, I am learning through experience and some serious butt-kicking that God gifted us with *exactly the gifts He wants us to have for the call He has placed on our lives*. When I am at home, I am surrounded by friends who seem to do it all better than I do – nursing their babies, losing their pregnancy weight, sewing costumes (or buttons), using coupons, having – Lord help me- craft time. When I'm on the road with my singing husband, I am surrounded by friends who seem to do a whole different set of things I can't do – they sing like rock stars or angels, they dress like glamour girls, and they don't seem to worry about how their kids will destroy a pew or a studio sound board this week.

But at the end of those days that feel like utter failures, God sends the whispered confirmation – through my husband, my kids, friends like Martha, or the very words of His book:

He tells me I am blessed!



Sisters, I repent of the Doer versus Done-To mentality. The way God really divides us seems to be 'those who will carry the symbols of His glory' and 'those who hold up and encourage the carriers.' (And I believe those roles can be switched and meshed at any time).

If you're a part in some way of gospel music, you know women who write, produce, and/or sing songs. They might ride in shiny buses and grace the covers of magazines. You might know women who work behind the scenes, staying up half the night to design a CD cover or a website after they've worked a full day or cleaning those grimy buses once they return home. You might know women who sacrifice their weekends either leaving their families to go on the road or waving goodbye to their husbands and taking care of their homes on their own.

As is our mission at *SGN Scoops*, we bring you a bit of all those this month:

All of them are believing in what the Lord has said will be accomplished.

Blessed are they!

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Southern Gospel has many wonderful Godly women involved in every facet of our powerful music, both the artists onstage and those dedicated women working to promote it. Our editor, Kelly Burton, is a beautiful example of behind-the-scenes commitment to spread the good news of the gospel. She is a blessing to all who love gospel music, and her influence is strong and growing stronger. By Lou Wills Hildreth

Most of you know LaBreeska Hemphill, one of the great ladies of Southern Gospel. In the years we spent in Nashville, Howard and I spent many hours in the home of Joel and LaBreeska. At that time, the Hemphills were one of the foremost family groups, singing with their children Joey, Trent, and Candy, and were already recipients of six Dove Awards. Joel Hemphill's songs were popular the world over, and he had received more than 10 nominations as the GMA Songwriter Of The year. With all the fame, Joel and LaBreeska Hemphill remained consistent in their love for people and their "calling" as ministers of the gospel.

LaBreeska's mother, Gussie Mae, was a sister of Howard, Rusty, and Sam Goodman. She grew up around the church and was traveling with the Goodmans when she met and married Joel in 1957. Joel pastored a church for years in Louisiana, and LaBreeska was a devoted pastor's wife. When they moved to Nashville, she traveled, sang, kept a warm atmosphere in their home, and is loved by all who come under the umbrella of her ministry.

Now, Joey, Trent, and Candy have families of their own and all are shining examples of their Christian upbringing. LaBreeska and Joel are still traveling, singing and ministering worldwide.

LaBreeska has recently written her second book entitled "My Daddy Played The Guitar" about her journey in Southern Gospel Music. Order it at Trumpet Call Books, P. O. Box 656, Joelton, TN 37080

Read it and learn why this Godly woman is a shining light in the world of Southern Gospel.

LaBreeska Hemphill, a great lady of Southern Gospel



LaBreeska Hemphill with Lou Wills Hildreth at Lou's Induction into the GMA Hall Of Fame in 2005. *Photo property of Lou Wills Hildreth*



Every Love Song You've Ever Heard Has Lied To You

By Tom Holste

I recently passed by the magazine rack at my local store, and I noticed that the cover story was about an actress who had recently broken up with her boyfriend.

I found the article deeply (unintentionally) ironic, since after the same actress had split from her husband the previous year and found the new guy, this same magazine said in a cover story at the time: "How she finally found true love!"

Really, magazine folks? You really have the nerve to say that? She dumps her husband like a hot potato, doesn't even care about the child that's getting hurt in the process, and hooks up with a new guy faster than anyone can blink—and that's "true love"? Methinks they do not even remotely understand what that phrase means.

I'm not actually here to pick on that actress. I certainly don't know all the ins and outs of her situation. My issue is with the mentality behind so many of these breakups. And it's a mentality from the spirit of this age, not from above. And nowhere can you hear it better than in love songs.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying that you can't ever listen to secular radio. I'm asking for people to listen with discernment—something that doesn't seem to apply to people's behavior all that much.

Think about the types of phrases that you hear in many love songs: "You're all that I need, and so much more"; "You're perfect in every way"; "My soul belongs in your hands"; "Now that I have you, I'll never need anything again"; "You are the be-all and end-all of life"; "You're my salvation" (yes, I have actually heard that in songs before!); and "I know you'll never

make me unhappy, as long as we both live."

I ask you: who could possibly live up to any one of those expectations, let alone all of them? We're all human. We're all bound to fail sometimes. But these songs endlessly set people in the mentality that the other person has to behave flawlessly at all times, or

otherwise, you have sufficient reason to walk away from them.

And by "flawless," of course, I mean "always waiting on you hand and foot, and never disagreeing with you." That's not so much "flawless" as it is being a drooling sycophant. At any rate, the other person has heard all the same songs and expects you to be the mindless slave. Is it any wonder that most relationships—and

about half of all marriages—go up in flames?

Another thing that I noticed over the years: Lots of singers sing songs about how someone is absolutely perfect, then sometime thereafter, they come out with a song about a nasty breakup, talking about how their ex is the worst, most hateful person that ever lived. One wonders why the singer would ever go out with such a person in the first place. Here's the thing: What if the muse of the first song is actually the target of the second song? What if the singer had all these unrealistic hopes and expectations in the first song, and the second song is about how everything blew up in the singer's face?



If so, that should give the listener pause. People tend to accept songs as reflections of real life, but most love songs are unsustainable lies. But no one ever makes the connections between how euphoric and (later) how miserable the singers are—not even, seemingly, the singers themselves.

Therein, perhaps, lies the real tragedy: The deceivers are as deceived as anyone else, so the same cycle keeps repeating itself endlessly.

A main reason why the romantic expectations listed

above can never be fulfilled by a person is because only Jesus can ever fulfill every one of them. Non-believers are trying (in vain) to fill the God-shaped hole in their lives with other people (and things) that can't keep them happy. Meanwhile, believers should know better, but we (yes, myself included) get sucked into the same way of thinking.

Another reason why so many romances fail is that the question people ask is always, "What can this person do for me? How will he or she make me endlessly happy?" When one is more heavily focused on loving oneself than on loving the other person in the relationship, the relationship is inherently doomed. The question should be, "What can I do to make the other person happy?"

I'm not saying that no one should ever listen to love songs, or that all songs should be about God explicitly. But I would like to hear a better quality of love song someday—a type of song that reflects the way love is described in 1 Corinthians 13.

If you get along with someone until you have your first big argument, then toss the other person aside like yesterday's tuna, that's not love. Simple physical attraction isn't love either. The gushy feeling you have towards your mate (as nice as it is) isn't love. Love is a commitment. Love is what happens on the day when the other person is driving you crazy, and instead of walking out, you say, "I'm sticking with you, and we're going to work this out, because I made a promise." Until a person has crossed that threshold, I would say that he or she doesn't even know what love is.

Love is the father running to embrace his wayward son, and when the boy tries to ask to be the servant, the father gets the best garments and kills the fatted calf for him. Love died for us when we were at our absolute sinful worst, as far as away from God as possible. Love cheers for us when we're running down the field kicking the soccer ball, shouting, "Yeah! Go for it! That's my kid!" Love picks up when we fall in the mud, no matter how many times, cleans us off, tells us that He's still on our side, kisses us and sends us back out onto the field again.

I know all of these things not because I've been fortunate enough to have a female romance in my life. I know these things because the great Romancer has shown me Himself.

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Rhonda Frye's Faith Boost >> Why Do We Do It?

The time is now 7:00. I'm sitting on the front row of First Baptist Church waiting for the pastor to welcome me to the platform. As soon as the introduction is given, I energetically run up the stairs, grab the microphone, smile and begin to sing. Little do "THEY" know I've just broken a nail, ripped my panty-hose, lost an earring, swatted my child, and exchanged words with my husband. Nor do they know my feet are killing me because they are squashed into spiked, pointed toe shoes, and I've unbuttoned my "almost too-tight" skirt. I'm sure they are clueless as I try to push thoughts like: have they noticed my bad hair day and the extra seven holiday pounds I gained? It's not always like this, but thank goodness only God knows how weary I am and the reason I'm asking this one particular night "Why am I here?" and saying, "I want to go home!" No sooner than I get the word "home" out in my mind that my Father reminds me "home" is exactly the reason I am there.



I would love find an Israelite mom and ask her if she had a hard time keeping her kids hands out of the walls of water as the scurried through the Red Sea on dry ground.

As Christian artists, there are many good reasons why we sing, but probably all could be traced back to the words found in John 14:1-3. "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms if it were not so I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you may be where I am." Although the Bible doesn't tell us everything about our eternal home, it gives glimpses to energize and motivate us to take others with us. The problem is, because of situations and circumstances we easily get distracted and lose our focus, joy and goal.

When we find ourselves burned out or discouraged it could possibly be a good time to evaluate what we're dwelling on in our minds. Col 3:1-2 says: "Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the REALITIES of heaven where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven not the things of earth." We are

to set our minds on the reality of heaven. Setting our minds on heaven can also mean using our imaginations too. We can't truly desire something we can't imagine, but we can begin by imagining what scripture actually says about our eternal home.

Scripture indicates we will have the opportunity to meet and fellowship with other Christians in heaven. I love to get lost in thought imagining conversations I will have some day. Like everyone else, I imagine myself talking to heroes such as: David, Esther, Joseph and Moses. I want to hear the details of all the great familiar Bible stories. Maybe unlike everyone else, I want to talk to common people and hear their versions as well. I would love find an Israelite mom and ask her if she had a hard time keeping her kids hands out of the walls of water as the scurried through the Red Sea on dry ground. I want to meet my personal guardian angels and find out what really happened in all my "close call" situations. I want to ask Moses how all the Israelites heard him speak without a microphone. My list of people I want to meet and questions I have for them is at least ten miles long. I'm certainly looking forward to the day of hearing "the rest of the story."

Scripture promises heart-warming reunions with loved ones and indicates relationships will continue. It's amazing to think about being together for eternity with loved ones in a perfect environment. Praise God, the curse of sin will be lifted. No tears, violence, jealousy, greed, injustice or hatred. No pollution, destruction, sickness or good-byes. The list of "no-mores" could go on and on and should make us all look forward to the reality. The "will be list" is enough to make us start shouting now! God's music will be unleashed, unrestrained as we've never heard before. The celebrations, feasting, joyous laughter and the corporate worship will be more glorious than we could ever dream, hope for or imagine. Words can't ad-

equately describe what the Lord is preparing for those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ.

John 14:3 tells us what is going to be the very best part! Yes, we're going home to be WITH HIM! Being in God's presence is going to be the most amazing part of all. How many times do we leave an awesome church service and wish it didn't have to end because of life responsibilities? In heaven, there will not be any distractions and we will be able to soak up the beautiful presence of God continually. Dwelling with God means we will have encounters with Him. I often let my mind wander about my very first encounter with Jesus face to face. It's been said the eyes are the window to the soul. Can you fathom what it will be like for perfect eyes to lock and gaze deeply into His? Wow, what purity and perfect love! I can hardly wait. I also love to think about touching Jesus. It almost seems irreverent to think of touching holiness, but I remember how touchable and approachable Jesus was on earth. He led people by the hand, picked up children and He did not stop the worshiping woman from kissing His feet. Considering His history on earth, excited is an understatement as to how I feel about taking His hands

into mine, losing track of time while I attempt to get "thank you" out of my mouth.

Our eternal home is why we keep singing when the times get tough. This earth is not home to anyone. Sooner or later, we all will end up in our final destination. I agree with Randy Alcorn - author, teacher and expert on the subject of heaven. "Heaven is not a default destination." Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:14, "Small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life and only a few find it." Unless our sin problem is resolved, heaven will not be our final destination. It's not God's will for anyone to miss heaven and perish, but it is His will for everyone to come to Him through repentance and faith therefore obtaining eternal life with Him in Heaven. Until then, "Take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees." (Hebrews 12:12) and "Look straight ahead and fix your eyes on what lies before you." (Proverbs 4:25) And remember, it will be worth it all when we see Jesus. Life's trials will seem so small when we see Christ. One glimpse of His dear face all sorrow will erase, so bravely run the race till we see Christ. – Esther Kerr Rusthoi

It is the Lord's desire- and ours here at *SGN Scoops Digital*- that you become one of His followers. God has promised eternity in Heaven with Him for all those who accept Him as their Personal Savior. It's as easy as "ABC":

A: Admit that you are a sinner.

Romans 3:23- For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

B: Believe that, because of your sin, you deserve to spend eternity in Hell. However, Jesus shed His blood and died on the cross of Calvary to pay the debt for our sin. He then rose from the dead three days later, proving His victory over death, Hell, and the grave. He offers this as a free gift to anyone who will accept it in faith.

Romans 5:8- But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 6:23- For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Call upon Jesus and ask Him to come into your heart, forgive your sins, and make you one of His children.

Romans 10:9- That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

Romans 10:13- For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

If you would like to accept God's free gift of salvation, then all you have to do is pray and ask Him. Your prayer might sound something like this:
Dear Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I know that I deserve Hell because of it. However, I believe that you died on the cross and rose again in three days to pay for my sin. I ask you to come into my heart, cleanse my sin, and make me one of your children. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

Please remember that simply saying a prayer doesn't save you. You must believe this in your heart as well.

If you have any questions about salvation, or if you just prayed to receive Christ, please e-mail us at sgnscoops@gmail.com. We'd love to rejoice with you! God bless you!

There are probably few music lovers on earth that aren't familiar with "The Lighthouse," written by Ronny Hinson and made popular by the Hinson's. The history of this Southern Gospel powerhouse is a story within itself. Phenomenal success with hit songs and sold-out crowds followed the group, beginning in the late 60's and covering several decades. The fan base of the Original Hinson's not only included concert-goers, but included a vast number of Gospel groups who aspired to be more like these songwriting songbirds. The Hinson sound generated mega business within the industry,

as groups rushed to record the chart-busting songs written by the siblings, and especially by Ronny. The uniqueness of the Hinson style included their ability to quickly set the audience at ease, with the quick wit of siblings; Larry, Ronny, Kenny, and Yvonne. Several personnel changes took place during this exciting time for the Hinson's. Nephew, Eric Hinson, who had been traveling extensively with his father's ministry since age 14, went on the road with the Hinson's in the early 80's. He replaced Larry, as Baritone, when Larry felt the call into the ministry. Chris Hawkins-Freeman replaced Yvonne for several years and stole the hearts of fans, before marrying Darryl Freeman and starting a successful family group, The Freemans. Bo Hinson, Ronny's son, also traveled for a time with the group, making fans happy and making dad proud.

This writer, who well-remembers sadness and disappointment on the announcement of the original group's retirement, also remembers the exciting "One More Hallelujah Tour," but as the tour began to wind down, yet another wave of heart-wrenching emotions hovered over the group's dedicated fan-base. All good things must come to an end...or do they?

Eric and Bo had both proven that talent could possibly be a blessing bestowed on entire families; that gifts can be passed down through bloodlines. Bo formed the New Hinsons and Eric was front-line with the group for several years. Bo realized much success

with charting songs and continues that success with his latest, "Favor" project.

The late Kenny Hinson passed his gift on to son, Weston, who formed Weston Hinson & By Faith. Weston's group is winning fans quickly, and their music is being embraced everywhere. Larry Hinson is now "Dr." Larry Hinson and Pastor of SouthPoint Church in Millersville, Tennessee. Ronny Hinson is still writing his award-winning songs, and as usually blessing the masses. Yvonne Hinson-Johnson has never lost her gift to sing and bless hearts with her amazing voice.

The siblings present a sweet message...a message of hope and encouragement.

As the heritage of the Hinson's flowed from the older generation, Eric Hinson realized that his desire to continue the legacy had only magnified. Although

he went through several years of trials and discouragement, he felt the overwhelming call back to the road and back to his place: the music ministry.

At the Branson Gospel Music Convention, June '09, Eric enlisted his friend, Rod Burton to join him onstage and many of the Hinson classics were performed. The blend of their voices and the overwhelming response of the crowd gave way to the birth of the new, exciting group; Hinson Revival.

Hinson Revival is a trio that includes three amazing and successful soloists:

Eric and April Hinson, and Rod Burton. April Nichols-Hinson has traveled and sang professionally all her life with her family's ministry out of Springfield, Missouri, and more recently, as an international solo artist and speaker at women's conferences. She has been featured as a regular at Silver Dollar City and quickly reaches fans with her sweet, humble spirit. Eric has several projects that include Hinson classics and popular original material, including his, "Homeless Man." Eric's strong vocal similarity to his beloved uncle, Kenny, has drawn to his corner many classic

Hinson Revival: New Beginning for Old Tradition

By Evie Hawkins



continued>



Hinson Revival made its public debut on the stage of Branson Live at the Little Opry this January.

Hinson fans, as well as many new ones. Eric's testimony is one of humility, and its theme makes a statement of renewed strength and second chances.

Rod Burton is a native of Harlan, Kentucky and has been traveling and singing Gospel music most of his life. He and wife, Kelly Capriotti-Burton own YMR Music Productions, the parent company of the Branson Gospel Music Convention. Rod has seen much success with his projects and especially his latest charting song, "Take a Stand." His ministry is one of Grace and restoration.

Individually, Eric, April, and Rod, will continue their powerful solo ministries. As Hinson Revival takes to the stage across the country, they will start their program with some individual solos from each member, showcasing the variety and versatility that each brings to this group. The second half of the program will be dedicated to the Hinson classic sound with such favorites as "Hallelujah Meeting", "That I Could Still Go Free" and of course, the all time favorite "Lighthouse". The group would like to breathe new life back into those classics and further the Hinson sound with fresh new material.

"Our desire is to reach the lost with a message of hope and salvation", says Eric. "We want to use the

incredible ministry of the Hinsons to reach out to fans from the past and present. Rod continues, "Being a part of this leg of Hinson ministry is a dream for me. The songs and message are as fresh today as they ever were, and I'm excited to see God move in our services".

Eric, April, and Rod were recently in the studio with Gregg Hutchins working on their brand new project to be released later this year. The excitement of the group and enthusiasm to carry on the Hinson tradition has put smiles on their faces and spread like wild-fire through their already established fan-base. The group will be doing a tour in Alabama, starting March 19, at the Cullman, AL Civic Center. That night, they will be special guests to the Huntsville based New Vision Quartet. They will headline the Branson Gospel Music Convention in late June and be performing in showcases in Branson.

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Talented, strong, visionary, feisty women have graced the Southern Gospel stage for years and the modern divas are no less iconic than Vestal Goodman or Eva Mae LeFevre. In a world that favors Hollywood fluff and circus acts, gospel ladies like Debra and Lauren are role models for their peers. They are two reasons why you just have to love the women of Southern Gospel.

For more than three decades, Debra Talley has been known for her rich, expressive alto vocals and classy style. When she began her career, women were just beginning to make their place and become accepted in Southern Gospel. It was starting to move away from being a male-dominated industry; a transition many secular workplaces are still going through today.

"I think maybe years ago when it was primarily quartets, it may have been harder for women to have a career in Southern Gospel," says Debra. "But then the family groups came along and kind of opened it up. I have been traveling for 36 years and God just kind of picked me up and set me down in the middle of it. I think it's harder for women to have a career in it now because there are fewer family groups and mixed groups. But I think women are fully accepted and honored and I love that. I know that's not the way it is in a lot of industries."

Lauren Talley was born into the family business and doesn't take that legacy lightly. For her, bearing the Talley name was not a burden but a pleasure. She is seeing God expand her territory in any number of directions. Being a female in a Southern Gospel world has helped Lauren touch the hearts of her female audience.

"I think women can have a special relationship with the audience that possibly men might not have," shares Lauren. "Women relate to each other on the levels of

being moms and being wives. Women develop closer relationships with each other. I think we have a great opportunity as women to show a soft side of ourselves and to help each other. We can get onstage and say, yes, we are going through the same things; we are worried about our families and our homes, and those are our priorities."

I wouldn't really say it's harder or easier for women in Southern Gospel, as opposed to men, but it's different. Different isn't always bad; it can be very good. I think each gender can relate to the audience in its own way."

The industry has changed a lot since Debra first began singing in 1970s. Still, it is often hard for women to break into a field full of established artists and long-standing traditions. Lauren realizes that being a Talley has been a blessing for her as an artist.

"I've always looked at my family heritage as a positive



stepping-stone for me to build on," says Lauren. "When I was growing up, I never really thought of it as anything that was abnormal or even particularly special, it was just what Mom and Dad did. Of course as I got older, I understood more and more what it was all about, and God placed a desire in my heart to do the same thing. But God has given me another ministry, which has branched off of my family, and I embrace that. I truly believe that it's because my family has paved the way for me that has made a lot of opportunities possible for me. So I don't look at that as something to live up to, I look at it as a launching pad."

Lauren continues, "This is the place that I've begun my ministry but I know that God's going to take us all into areas that we have never dreamed of before. I know that at the same time that He is working out my future, He also has something for Mom and Dad

as well. There's always another season, there's always another step. I look forward to that step because I know it will be a time of change. Change can be scary, but it can also be good. Change can help us to grow, not only as Christians but also as a family and as individuals." Some of the changes in Lauren's life include a new book and a new website at www.laurentalleyonline.com.

As their careers and the industry changes, female artists often seek to bond with and mentor other women in their field. Both Debra and Lauren have been a part of the Steve Hurst School of Music based out of Lee College, Cleveland, Tennessee, for many years. Here they connect with students learning the craft and pass along their knowledge and skill to the next generation.

"This next year will be my 17th year to teach at the Steve Hurst School of Music," says Debra. "When Lauren was 11 years old, she went as a student, so I began to teach. I find that is a way for me to give back. It's not just about teaching vocal techniques, it is about encouraging. It's about teaching women about the ministry part of Southern Gospel. We have some wonderful young ladies that have come through that school of study."

"I love to teach at the Steve Hurst School," Lauren states. "I was a student there from age 11 to 17. When I was 18, Steve asked me to join the staff. I teach vocal technique and performance for individuals and organized groups. I love doing that; it's one of the best weeks of my year. I feel like it's a way for me to give back to something that had a great influence on me when I was just getting started. Steve has been a mentor for me, so if I can help provide someone else with a little bit of guidance, then that is a great blessing for me."

"It is funny for me to see these young girls that come into my studio and they are singing my songs. It's still hard for me to comprehend that there are people out there in the world that I've never met that know who I am. That's just weird to be honest! So when a girl brings in one of my songs, I think, 'How do you know my song?!'"

Lauren continues, "But it's neat for me because I'm more aware of how in need the generation behind me is for positive role models. I hear that so often from parents, who say, 'Thank you for being a role model for our daughter because we don't want to see her emulating the things that she sees on television'. I take that as a great responsibility and a great honor. At the same time, I just pray that I would always be

continued

Two Reasons We Love Southern Gospel Women:

Debra & Lauren Talley

The female members of this beloved family trio discuss being Godly, being musical, and being role models in today's Southern Gospel world.

By
 Lorraine
 Walker

in God's will, that I would always be what He would have me to be, that I would always be doing what He would have me do because I know that others are watching. We are all human and no one gets it right all the time. I just pray that somehow, something that I do or say or write leaves a positive mark."

Lauren had several female role models in Southern Gospel as she was growing up. "When I was just starting out, I was probably the biggest fan that the Martins ever had and I still am. I know all of them really well. I've spent many an hour in my bedroom with my hairbrush singing Joyce and Judy Martin's part on all of their songs."

Debra mentions that she didn't look up to any specific women singers when she was little. "When I first started singing professionally, I came from singing in a church which I did from the time I was two years old. I saw people on television but it never occurred to me that you could emulate someone. I never tried to sing like anyone else because I thought, 'what you have, is what you have.'" Debra adds, "But there are a lot of people that I did admire. One of them was a lady with the group I started with, The Songmasters, by the name of Marcie Kelsey. Many people know Marcie. She is in her eighties now. She is a lovely woman, she can still sing me off the stage, she is a phenomenal pianist, and still is doing what she loves to do. I have to look back and admire strong women like that."

"There were so many strong women in Gospel music that were traveling when I was a child, women that were traveling in cars, before they got busses," Debra continues. "Some of them had school-aged children that they had to leave behind, because you didn't take your children then. Eva Mae LeFevre is one. You look at those people who really blazed the trail for those of us who have come along behind them, and you have to respect and love them. It's not so much about their singing, but it's about their commitment and the fortitude that they had to persevere."

Much of the fortitude and commitment of the Southern Gospel women stems from their love of God and their deep, abiding faith. Keeping that faith strong and their relationship with the Lord vital and healthy is just as much a challenge for these ladies as it is for any women with careers, families and homes.

"You have to stay in the Word, that's the key," shares Debra. "I find that that is my biggest struggle, the daily study of the Word. And that's what Satan wants. I really have to focus on keeping that fresh and new every day. Sometimes it's reading the Word, sometimes it's reading a devotional and the Word. Sometimes it's

reading a book that gives me encouragement. Usually I end up back in the Word anyway. I think you just have to find those things. Also, I get a lot of encouragement from my peers. I have wonderful people in my life. Connie Hopper is one of the dearest people in the world to me and she has been a great influence in my spiritual life, probably second only to my mother."

"In what we do, we feel like we give and give of ourselves all the time," Lauren says. "Very rarely do we have the opportunity to just sit back in a church service or a concert and receive from somebody else. I asked somebody the other day, 'How do you keep giving when you feel like you don't have anything left inside?' I don't know how this works, but somehow the Lord finds a way to meet you where you are and give you what you need. It has always happened for me, every time. Whether it is something I see on TV or something that I read in the Bible myself, even a conversation with somebody else; God always finds a way to give you that little extra something that you need."

Lauren continues, "I try to set aside a certain amount of time every day, usually right before I go to sleep, to read my Bible and talk to the Lord. We live out in the country and our little gravel road that connects with the main road is about a half mile long, so I take walks out there and talk to the Lord out loud. I talk to the Lord and the cows and just let it all out!"

A strong commitment to the Lord, family, ministry and music keeps Lauren and Debra fortified to step on the stage every night. These women are not afraid to venture into new musical territory or bring back old favorites with a new female twist.

The song "The Broken Ones" has garnered a lot of response for the Talley Trio. The writers felt there was a need for song about broken people. Lauren says, "Jerry Salley wrote it from the perspective of a young girl. His daughter is named Maggie, and Jerry says she is one of the most tenderhearted kids you will ever meet. She is always taking in stray animals. He wrote it with the character of Maggie in mind."

Lauren continues, "It has just been amazing to see the response that the song has received. It means different things to different people. I talked to a lady one time that said, 'I'm not a Christian, but that song really meant a lot to me. Do you mind if I sing that song in a bar sometime?' I said, 'Honey you go right ahead!' Those are the people that need to hear it."

"Another lady that we met in Kentucky found that song on You Tube right before she was going to commit suicide. She heard the song and she says that the song saved her life. Even though her life was broken at that

moment she decided that she was going to let God fix her. It was so humbling for me to hear that because I just sing the song. I'm just the vessel that delivers the message. But God is the one who accomplishes those things. God is the one who takes broken people and broken lives and puts them back together again."

Another song that has been given the Talley treatment is the old favorite "He's Alive." Audiences all over are being touched by the message in this resurrected hit. The twist given to it by the Talley Trio is the telling of the story in the female voice. "We rediscovered that song about a year ago," says Lauren. "We love the story and we think it's a great song, but to be honest, it's also a challenging

song! It's one of the most difficult ones that I've ever had to sing."

Lauren continues, "It is so exciting to watch people come alive when we get to the chorus. Not

'I know that God's going to take us all into areas that we have never dreamed of before.'
 - Lauren



'I have been traveling for 36 years & God just kind of picked me up & set me down in the middle of it.'
 - Debra

long ago, we sang at a church in North Carolina that's a very lively church. They were on fire for God! We sang that song on a Sunday morning at that church and the whole place just went crazy on the chorus. They were jumping up, screaming, carrying on and clapping. They were having a good time. All of a sudden we saw this teenage guy come running down center aisle. He ran all the way around the sanctuary, ran up and hugged the youth pastor, ran all the way around the church. Then when the song was over, he went back up the center aisle and we realized he was the cameraman. I told him after that I was really glad he took his headphones off before he started running up the aisle because he would have dragged that camera with him! He said, 'I just didn't know what else to do. I just couldn't hold it all in!'"

Lauren's peers look up to her as the role model for the young female artist. Debra comments that there are several artists coming on the scene that will also make their mark for the Lord.

"We have some great young people that are really committed to the Lord," says Debra. "I do feel that God has placed His hand on Lauren, and that is something that she and I talk a lot about. Although she has done this her entire life, her path may be different. God's will changes through our lives and sometimes we might have tunnel vision. We have to be willing to follow where He leads. I think as long as our young people stay focused in that aspect, we will have some great young women leaders."

Debra continues, "We have a group from Georgia that we are great friends with, one of the most spiritual young groups, called CS&K. Their singing is great but that love is what drew me to that group. There are a lot of young people that folks may not be quite as familiar with, but I would encourage them to listen to these groups and go hear them if they are in your area. Just because their name is not out there yet, doesn't mean they are not worth hearing. They really have some great things to say."

"I'm proud of the young people in our industry," shares Debra. "They have things to offer that are different. God is taking them in different ways, ways we could never have dreamed. So I say, 'Go for it!' If I can encourage them at all, I want to do that." With young people who are skilled in their craft and filled with the desire to make a difference for Christ, this industry shows no sign of stopping.

"I don't see Southern Gospel dying," states Debra. "I think it's going to change. But that's good. You have to change with the times. God has given us some great tools. Everybody talks about how the internet is so scary, but it is the most awesome tool. Our music is literally going around the world and places we haven't even been yet. It's incredible."

Strong, talented Godly women of substance will always be a light among their peers and a witness to the faithfulness of God. Ladies like Debra and Lauren ensure the female voice in Southern Gospel remains vibrant.

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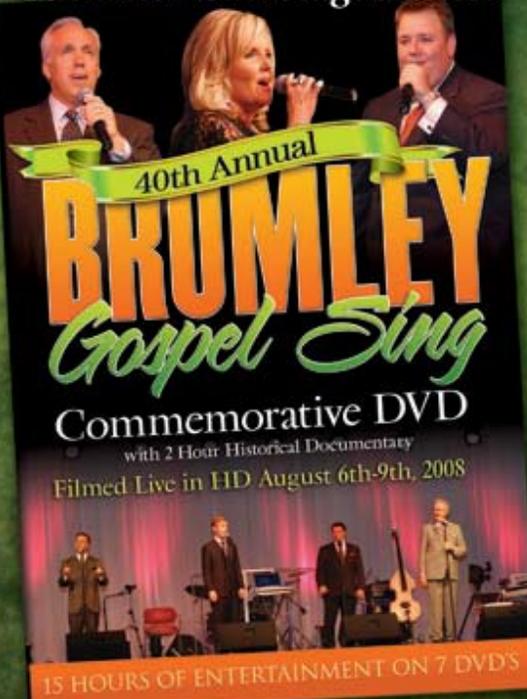
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SCOOPS: You have been singing "all your life." Your website says you were brought home from the hospital one day and loaded on the bus the next. If you weren't 'on the road' for the Lord, what would you be doing?

Wendy: Wow! I can't see my life not being on the road. If that did happen, though, I would be involved in ministry to young, unwed mothers. I have seen my song, "Lowest Time," reach so many from young to old that have been affected by teen pregnancy, and my heart really goes out to them.

You have a 'tribute' song written about your Granny. Tell our readers more about "You and Jesus."

The song, "You and Jesus," is very dear to my heart. My Granny was always there for me and was a great influence and inspiration in my life and in my ministry. Whether I needed her to pray, come over, or help get something done I could always count on my Granny. They placed my Granny in a nursing home on April 18, 2007, and I thought my world would come to an end. I knew at that time that it was my turn to be there for her. The last chorus was my prayer for her that God would turn her gray skies to blue. Sure enough, on June 11, 2009, she had the ultimate victory as God brought her through. I want this song to remind people of the ones that have been there for them. Through remembering, I hope that we all can be that Godly example and help to others in our lives.

You write for you and Tony. Do you write songs for other groups?

I haven't written for other groups specifically, but I have been contacted by other groups wanting to sing my songs. It is a great honor when this happens. I thank God that He birthed songwriting in me at the tender age of thirteen. My first song was titled "Willingly" and is still one of our most requested songs.

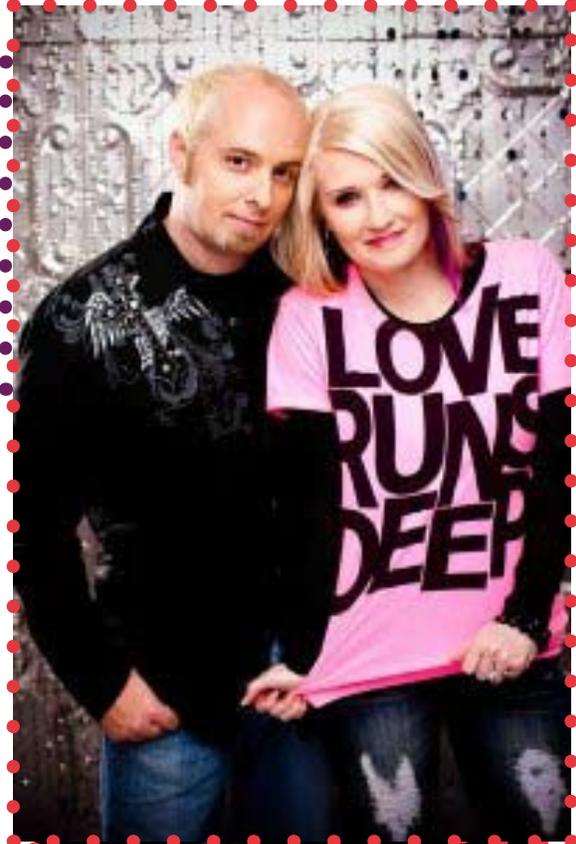
You and Tony are "Wendy Word + Forgiven". What's it like heading up your own ministry? Tell us about the everyday running of a group and what barriers, if any, you may face as a 'woman in the ministry'?

Having your own ministry is an honor, but it is also a great responsibility. You are working for the Lord so you have to give it everything. Every day I am busy with phone calls, mailouts, planning trips, working on songs, emailing, and even homeschooling. Whew! I have to take a breath after just saying all of that. Being a woman in the ministry, as God has called and I have stepped out to follow His lead, has been a wonderful journey.

On your website a short time ago, there was a comment you made about genres of music and the seeming discourse between them. It seems to be contemporary vs. southern gospel, southern gospel vs. country

Wendy Word and her 'Forgiven'

Interview by Jerry Tinkle



Wendy and Tony Word in a publicity photo (top) and in Branson 2009 (below). Courtesy of Wendy Word.

Christian, country Christian vs. praise & worship. Why is this, do you think, and how can we all work together for good?

I feel that God makes everybody unique. All the different styles of groups are great tools to be able to reach those that God has for us to reach. No one person can do it all, but we can all do our part using the styles and talents that God has given us. We need to think about others and realize that there isn't just one style of music that brings people to Jesus and encourages the hurting. After all, that is what it is about.

I saw where at NQC last year you had a bingo game going on. How did that go?

Our Bingo Night was an absolute blast with fans, artists, promoters, and others joining in to make it a night to remember. Now the way we play bingo, there is a pile of wrapped prizes and, when you bingo, you get to pick one out. Everyone walked away with several prizes. At the end we got a great group photo and prayed over them before they left. We plan to have it again this year so be looking for it.

You are a prolific songwriter, one sometimes considered Christian Country. When you write a song, do you write it in a certain style from the get-go? Explain to our readers how a song comes to be.

Thank you for this great compliment. I don't know about being primarily Christian Country, but being from the deep south I am definitely country. I have been very blessed to have had success in both Southern Gospel and Christian Country. They are both great avenues of ministry.

A song may come to me any time or place, but a lot of times it is when I'm in a quiet place either riding down the road or alone at home with the Lord. I write a lot from my own experiences, things I feel will encourage someone else. With my songwriting, I always get a tune first with a few words and then off we go. Sometimes the song comes really fast, or over a few days, or even over a couple of years. The main thing is to pray that the words you write will change lives.

How did you meet Tony?

I met my "Forgiven" at church. He was playing in their church band and he asked for my phone number. He called....asked me out....I went one time....and said I would never go out with him again. Within the year we were married! I always tell folks that every wife needs a "Forgiven," and Tony is mine.

Tell our readers about your salvation experience.

I was raised in church and around ministry. With that I got saved at an early age and have had a wonderful journey with the Lord.

What would you like to say as a woman in the gospel music industry to others contemplating starting their own ministry?

Oh my, now this is a big question. There are so many things that I would say to people, and do say to people I meet, to help them on their journey in ministry. The one thing I would say here is don't try to follow someone else's path. When you do that you just end up in their ruts. God has a perfect direction for your ministry and you have to have confidence in Him.

Carol Sanguinette-How

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It is good to praise the Lord and make music. - Psalm 92:1

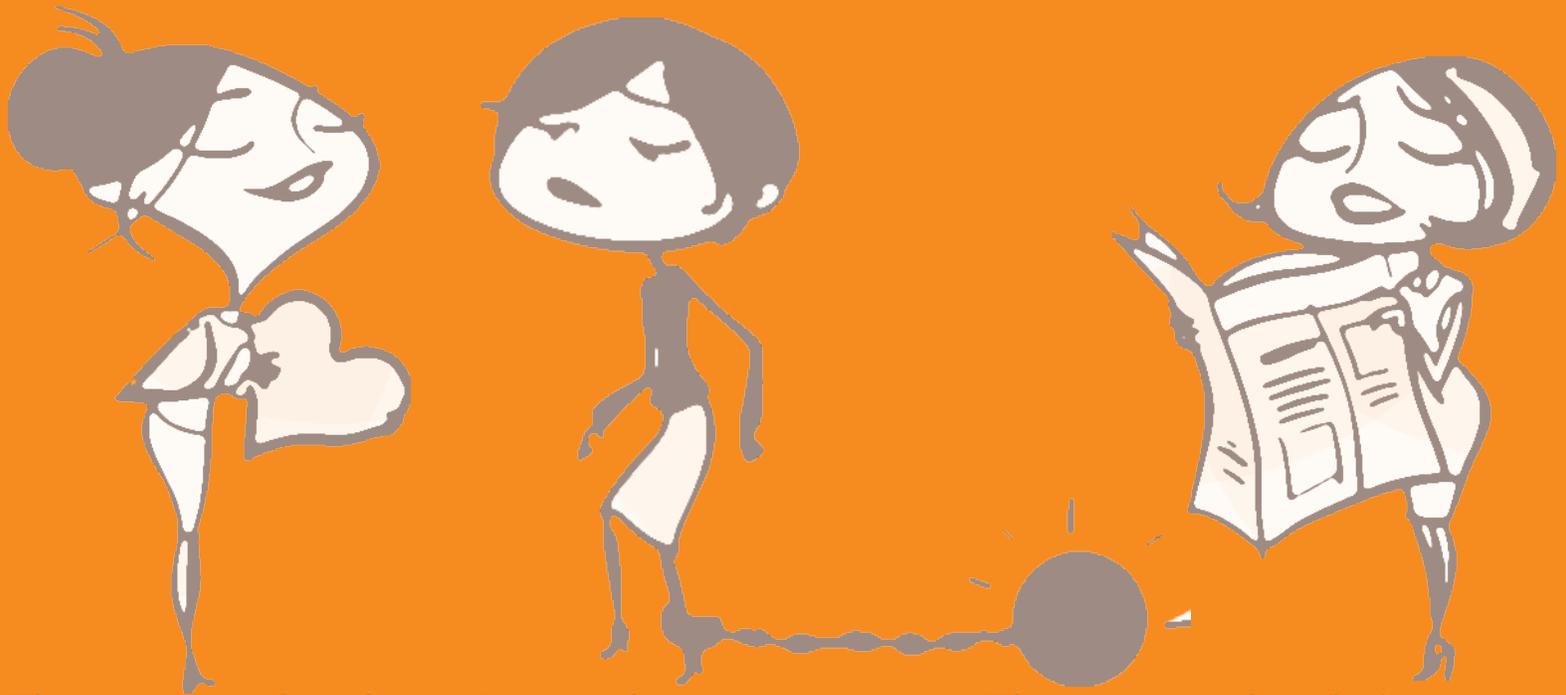
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The Real House Wives
of **SG**



This was originally published in Tori's award-winning blog, babybloomr.com

I don't write a lot about Russ here.

It's not really on purpose, though there probably is a part of me that thinks I'll give him a break since (ironically, considering what he does for a living) he really isn't that comfortable with a lot of attention focused on him. But also, the reason I started this blog was really to write about my life from my perspective, and to give my views and opinions, etc.—because we all know how fascinating that can be, right?! However, the fact that he isn't mentioned here as often as say, the girls, the dogs or my birdfeeder doesn't mean that he is an incidental part of my life or heart.

We have been married 33 years.

I'll pause a minute to let that sink in. That is a crazy long time to know someone, much less share living space with them! Sometimes when I look at those early pictures of us together in high school and as a young married couple I feel like I don't even know those two people. We were babies! So idealistic and fearless, so sure of ourselves and each other... I was madly in love with him. I couldn't wait to jump headlong into our life together—didn't know what all it was going to be exactly, but I was so ready to experience it with him. I looked up to Russ, I trusted him and knew that no mat-

THE WIFE, STILL: TORI TAFF

- Married to Russ Taff

ter what, he would love me and take care of me.

I'm still in love him. But not 'madly'.

More like sanely.

Realistically.

Peacefully.

And before you start feeling sorry for me and what must sound like a lackluster love life, believe me when I tell you, I much prefer this version. Because the thing is, this is the real deal. This is a love not built on dreams and promises, but deepened by shared experiences and time-tested commitment. I know so much more now than that bright-eyed twenty-year old who thought she'd found her prince. He's not a prince. He's a man, with all of the flaws and contradictions that come with being human. He has fallen down, and gotten up. He has succeeded and failed. He has far exceeded my expectations, and sometimes fallen short of my ideals. And he could surely say the same about me!

THIS IS A LOVE NOT BUILT ON DREAMS AND PROMISES, BUT DEEPENED BY SHARED EXPERIENCES AND TIME-TESTED COMMITMENT.

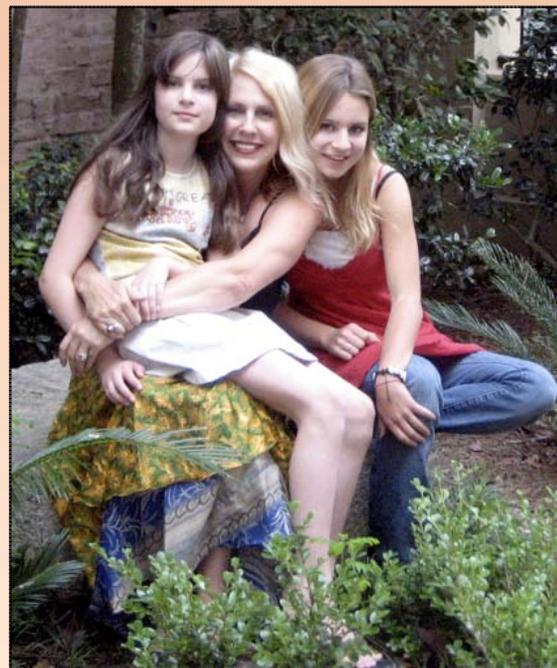
I've learned some surprising things about myself in this relationship. I've learned that I don't need Russ to live, but I choose to live this life with him. I don't have to be-

lieve in him, but I choose to always believe for the best in him. And though I sure do appreciate having him to lean on and talk to and co-parent with, I really can take care of myself. Trust me, these are good things for a woman to know. I want this love and this marriage, and I am willing to work to keep it. If there is anything that has been made abundantly clear to me in these last 33 years, it's that love comes at a price. But that price should not cost us everything. Real love—passionate, nurturing, healthy love—will never cause us to lose ourselves in someone else, it will help us find out who we really are. Living with and loving Russ has done that for me. I know who I am, I know what I believe, and I know what matters most. That knowledge didn't always come easily or painlessly, but it is well worth it.

That man I fell in love with, as a teenager, with all of the humor and talent and faith that make Russ who he is— that man is not only still in there, he has grown and changed into someone I love even more. This past year in particular I have seen him face down the demons of his past and do the work it takes to move beyond them. He has opened himself up in ways he never has before, and though it has been scary and unfamiliar emotional territory for him, he didn't back down. I respect that, more than I can tell you.

So on this Valentine's Eve, I want to say out loud (in print) that I love that raggedy ol' husband of mine with all my heart. He is a good man, a loving father, and can still make me laugh until I get the hiccups.

We were made for each other.



Some of Tori's favorite photos } Opposite page: She and Russ in London, summer of 2009. Clockwise from above: Russ and Tori at the prom; Tori with the couple's teenage daughters, Charlotte and Madi Rose, in Savannah; Tori herself; Tori and Russ rock the '80s.



The Story of a Baby Bloomer ~

Tori's list of claims to fame in the world of gospel music vary from being a Grammy-nominated songwriter to a contributing editor of *Homecoming* magazine. While her name rings a bell - she is married to Russ Taff, winner of five Grammy awards and nine Gospel Music Association Dove awards and hailed by Billboard Magazine as "the single most electrifying voice in Christian music" - it's her unique

voice as an acclaimed 'Mommy blogger' that has made her known and accessible to a whole new generation and demographic of fans.

Get to know this passionate writer, wife, and mother at BabyBloomr.com



THE BUS MOM/TINY CHILDREN VERSION KELLY CAPRIOTTI BURTON

- Married to Rod Burton

In the early spring of 2008, my husband Rod and I took three babies on the ride of our lives: our 17-month-old Miranda, our 2-month-old Kaity, and our 40-foot bus, Gracie. We traveled from our home in Chicago to a concert weekend in Alabama, with stops both ways in Nashville. We spent days planning strategy. Surely, we could handle it together...

Were we ever in for a shock. The first enemy that reared its head was centrifugal motion. When we took our first circular ramp, our well-stocked refrigerator went flying open, and a full gallon of milk crashed to



the floor and spilled everywhere. My instinctive response was the panicked crying of, "Pull over! Pull over!" But after I remembered that asking for help makes me weak (sarcasm, friends), I somehow managed to clean it all up and keep the kids safe and content (and Miranda from wading in her favorite beverage) while barreling at 70 mph down the road... although, looking back, I have no idea how. Sometimes, I still find a spot of milk hidden in some random, inconspicuous place.

That was the first of our adventures that weekend. I do not use the word adventures with any lightness. We had no idea what we were doing. The other mishaps we faced included Miranda falling out of bed, getting scared, and crying until she threw up, getting stuck in the mud and needing a tow, running out of water (right after we were digging in the mud and kind of needed it), my own dehydration (unfortunate when you need to

From top: Our wiped-out family of four at Hilltop Studios; Rod owning the highway; Miranda owning the dining-room-on-wheels; Kaity sleeping in the sunshine.

feed an infant!), and the discovery that a travelling washer/dryer unit does not quite work like the Whirlpool at home, especially on the bedspread! And

don't even get me started on the experience of trying to keep "two under two" children occupied and quiet in a recording studio.

The first bus trip certainly goes down as one of the stories woven into our family history. I know Rod and I will never forget it, and I am thankful that we were pretty quickly able to laugh about it. There were more than a few times on that trip when we asked ourselves what we had gotten into, when we wondered, quite seriously, if we could return Gracie for a refund-minus-restocking fee. But somewhere along the line we decided that we are, in fact, right where we need to be.

Even with that realization turning into a foregone conclusion, it still amazes me sometimes that a girl from the Chicago 'burbs can casually say things like, "My other SUV is a bus" or send invitations every August to her husband's "homecoming." (In Chicago, we have homecoming dances and football games, but concerts? That takes some explaining). Mind you, I have taken a picture of the XM radio display when Rod's songs are playing on Enlighten, and I still feel like a two-year-old on the set of Elmo's World when I get to sit in on a studio session, for all intents and purposes, the southern gospel ministry and music world has become folded not just into my Kentucky husband's life, but into mine as well.

Even so, since I could have never visualized myself making BLT sandwiches at 11pm in a West Virginia Wal-mart parking lot while buzzing from a great service and talking with my husband about how many CDs were sold while my children sleep soundly on their Princess cots and M*A*S*H rings out from the DVD player, I have to figure that my local family and friends and colleagues can't picture it either. Hence, my chronicles were born. My adventures – those of a "southern gospel wife" – are sometimes funny, rarely glamorous, occasionally educational, but always a glimpse into the unpredictable and rewarding life of a ministry partner, a wife, and a mommy... who is learning with every road trip to embrace the ability to laugh at herself and accept the curve balls God likes to throw. My catcher's mitt is ready, and I'm grateful for every single friend I can take along on the ride!

Originally published at SGMRadio.com, February 2009
 Kelly's 'chronicles' appear monthly at SGMRadio.com and in her own blog, MyLifeAsTheGlue.com

SG Wives in Action



Esther Liles is the wife of Gospel Music Hall of Fame singer Buddy. Those who attend Buddy's concerts know that she is an integral part of his ministry - and has a ministry in her own right. Esther's confident delivery of favorite songs such as "Little Is Much" often brings audiences to their feet, even as their hearts are warmed by the obvious mutual support and affection between this gospel music couple.

Kathy Godsey does it all. For her husband Alan's group, The Northmen, she is a constant support in ways emotional and tangible. You will find Kathy on the keyboard, behind the product table, and when needed, singing tenor. Pictured her



with Alan (right) and their son, singer/producer Scott, Kathy's joy is as evident as her important role in The Northmen's ministry.

THE CEMENT WIFE: SUSAN UNTHANK

- Wife & Business Partner to
 Deon Unthank

I have been a wife of a Christian music singer for over 32 years. I was lucky in that I already loved gospel music before I married Deon [Unthank of Sunday Edition and SoGospelNews.com], so at least I didn't have to learn to accept his music like some wives do. That being said, our children didn't always share our love for southern gospel as we did. Our daughter, Amy, was the only want who loved it from day one, but our other children all preferred the more modern sounds of contemporary Christian and gospel music during their teens and early twenties. Interestingly enough, they have come to love it and are now or have been involved in the business in some way or another.

I haven't ever felt like I had to juggle anything. My family has always been intricately involved in our business in some form.

And, I never see my roles as wife, mother, worker as being separate from each other. They are all necessary parts of what makes me who I am. I can't imagine being a wife who wasn't involved in her husband's passion. I can't imagine being a mother who didn't involve her children in that same passion. Being a worker in this industry came naturally and is simply another facet of my life.

I can't imagine being either a wife, mother or worker without the other two, or being two of the three without the third. I don't juggle them but I do cement them. I cement them with the only glue worth using, my faith. My faith is simple. I believe that what God puts together, He holds together.

THE BUS MOM/QUARTET VERSION: SHARON BARES

- Married to Greg Bares of Praise, Inc.



Being in the ministry as the wife of a Southern Gospel singer has been a terrifying, exhilarating, humbling, powerful and faith filled experience for me. My husband Greg sings bass with Praise Incorporated. We were saved

together, baptized together and we serve in ministry together as I travel along with the group and manage the product table, media, and website for the group. I also serve in the highly regarded position that the guys call "The Bus Mom." I guess they don't mind it when I feed them once in awhile.

When we were saved together in 1996, God placed a desire in our hearts to one day serve Him in music ministry. At the time I thought that wouldn't be a very good idea for me because I hurt people's ears when I sing. But I knew that my husband had a special gift that God could use for His glory and so we began to pray that after the last of our 5 children graduated we could both somehow serve Him in music ministry.

In May of 2006 our last child Shane graduated and enlisted in the Navy. In September of 2006 we found ourselves on our way to Texas so my husband could audition with Praise Incorporated. This was a terrifying time for me. I knew my life was about to change completely but I was not sure how. After the audition they asked him to join the group as soon as possible and I could travel along and help at the product table and anywhere else I could. I was overwhelmed with so many emotions at one time that it was hard to think. Yes, God had answered our prayer and we were humbled that we were about to go and do His work in ministry but I suddenly realized that there were so many other things that were going to happen that I did not prepare for in such short time. We had to close our retail computer and electronics business. We had to leave our home. We had to leave our friends. And, oh Lord, we had to leave our children and our Grand Children.

I cried for 2 days. I know that serving God is the most important thing we can do with our lives and it is the obvious choice to make because it has eternal benefits. We were empty nesters, available and called to do His work. We said goodbye to our customers as we liquidated our business. We said goodbye to our friends who sent us off with tears of joy. We said goodbye to our farmstead in the North Dakota countryside. And we said goodbye to our children and grand children who sent us away with tears of pain and abandonment. As we cried with them we assured them that we would still be a big part of their lives, but it would be in God's way and not ours. We see them several times a year during our break times and when we have concerts scheduled in the area.

I thank God that He is allowing me to travel full time with a bus full of Godly men doing His work. These eyes of a Quartet wife see these men serve when they can hardly stand on the stage because of back pain or they can hardly speak because of some illness and yet they serve, with joy because there is always room at the cross for just one more. We are a family, leaving our families behind, to bring the good news about God's family to those without hope. When you experience the salvation of someone who was once dead and is now alive forever, because of Jesus Christ, you can say with confidence that all the sacrifices are worth it, even if it were just for one.

THE BUS MOM/FAMILY
 GROUP VERSION:

RENEE ENGLISH

- Member of
 The English Family



Since I am traveling with my family and ministering with them, being a "southern gospel wife" is a little different for me. The rules of support still apply though! I am sure all of the wives and moms know that we are unofficially commissioned to repair all problems, find all clothing items, and make sure meals are on time-whether on the road or at home! It never ceases to amaze me before a concert that all members of my family want to know where they have put their clothes!

We have quite an adventure getting ready for a service or a concert! Try keeping house on a 40 foot bus! However...no matter how crazy it gets on the bus...the minute we step off of the bus our minds are completely on

CONTINUES>



THE STAY-AT-HOME QUARTET WIFE:

MYRNA SAM

Married to Steve Sam of Praise, Inc.

Last August on a typical Texas day, I was driving down the interstate to a wedding when the car's air conditioner just quit! Being a mechanical moron myself, I had myself a little pity party - tears, the whole bit. Praise, Inc. had been gone on the road for quite a time, and I was really missing Steve. The air conditioner was just the icing on the cake. Sweating like a cat in room full of rockers, I finally arrived at the wedding with make-up dripping off my chin and looking like I wear way too much blush. Car trouble and plumbing problems seem to arrive during the quartet's longest trips.

I believe that the music ministry is Steve's calling just as teaching is mine. So I keep teaching after forty years, and he keeps on singing. This is our life. But it is not for the faint of faith or of heart. It takes a lot of prayer and several "come to Jesus" moments.

Likely the biggest problem for us is the lack of time spent with our children and grandchildren. Birthday parties and ballgames are usually on the weekends; of course, Steve is on the road on the weekends. One of our new "traditions" is that Steve takes the little ones out to Chuck E. Cheese's for a private birthday celebration. But then three of our grandchildren live three hours away in Oklahoma, and it's really hard to see them with all their activities. [Our] kids are really good about bringing them to Praise Inc. concerts and services within driving distance. I pray that they will all grow to understand and appreciate his dedication to God.

My advice to the wives and husbands left home to work to pay the bills and to keep the homefires burning? Pray hard. Work hard. Don't forget to pay the cell phone bill. And for heaven's sake, learn how to check your own Freon!

THE HELPMATE: PENNEY TALLEY

- Married to David Talley of The Crusaders Ministries

THE STORY IS STILL THE SAME

My name is Penney Talley, I live in Magnolia, Arkansas. My husband founded The Crusader's Ministries in 1988. (www.gospelgigs.com/thecrusaders-quartet) Long before that day, God had begun to prepare my heart for the service, He was calling us into.

At the age of 16, while turning down a little country road, to my boyfriend's home, I prayed and God revealed to me that this man was going to be my husband. At the age of 17, I married the love of my life, David Talley. We began building a home around serving God. God began to use us, to serve as youth ministers in David's home church, Western Baptist. Through the years, we continued to grow in the Lord.

David was called to serve as a deacon. Just as Eve was given to Adam as a helper, I knew God had intended for the spouse to be a help mate unto her husband. God said, *"It's not good for the Man to be alone; I'll make him a helper, a companion. Genesis 2:16.* So, I promised the Lord, and David, that I would help him, by being supportive in anything God directed.



In 1988, David and I attended a Cathedral concert, in Magnolia, Arkansas. We lived just 20 minutes away. During those years, David would play the piano, at a small country show, once a month. We would leave

those concerts fighting about the songs. But on this night we found ourselves searching for direction from God as we left. We talked and knew God was preparing us for something Big and of Him.

As I lay in bed that night, David continued to play the grand piano in our home. What started to be a loud banging soon turned into a sweet mellow sound; the sound of assurance, acceptance and surrender.

On the next morning, as David and I talked, I began to question the difference in the playing of the piano. He told me God spoke to him. He was giving his life to sing and play music for the Lord. I humbly thanked the Lord. Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" Isaiah 6:8. Once again, God had confirmed the calling on our lives. By the way, we can stand on the front porch of our home now, and see the auditorium where God spoke to us that night, at the Cathedral concert.

At this point, The Crusader's Ministries was formed. God has opened many doors in our lives since that

RENEE, CONT'D

ministering to the souls seated in that venue.

Since we have been in ministry for so many years together it may be easier for me than others. I did have to train myself to turn off all things in order to minister to the people. There used to be an old song about leaving your burdens on the outside and entering in to worship...that is what I do. All other things must be left on the outside in order for God to be able to use us as He chooses in a service. It is also an almost indescribable thing to see our children minister right there with us on that stage. One thing is for sure...life is as hard as you make it...so I'm still learning to just "lighten up"...it always works itself out in the end!

night to share Christ. After thousand miles and concerts, services, revivals, cruises, festivals and conventions, *The Story is Still the Same...* a phrase that is the title song, which David wrote, of our newest CD, released in January 2010.

As a wife who could not sing in tune if my life depended on it, I began to search out my part in the ministry. If God wanted me to be my husband's helper, then what did God really want me to do?

I found for myself that God wanted me to be faithful to pray. *Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

He wanted me to be faithful to support. One aspect of this was to offer hospitality to all groups and ministers of the Word who come to our area. It is my heart's desire to make our home available to each and every one. There has been hundreds to sing around our piano and eat in our home. Many have also stayed overnight in the home the Lord has blessed us to own. *...and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the saints, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds. 1 Timothy 5:10.*

I was to encourage and to help in any aspects I could. *May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus. Romans 15:5*

The ministry God had called us into was one of the highest callings. We are called to The Great Commission. *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20*

The best advice I can give to any spouse is to pray and support the Lord first, in His work, then the rest is easy. I share this nugget with wives in the Deep South

Quartet Convention www.dsqc.org that we host: When your husband goes to sleep at night, pray over him. Take your hand, and lay on his back, ask God to anoint him with His Spirit. Ask God to lead him, protect him, guide him and anoint the ministry. Ask God to anoint his singing, his thoughts, and his actions. It will not only change your spouse, it will change you. It will also change your love for the Lord and your spouse.

My days are filled with writing The Crusader's Ministries news letter (which you can receive by sending your email to d-talley@sbcglobal.net). I write it from a loving, supportive wife's view of the services. I recap the events and promote upcoming services. I also do the promotional packets and websites for The Crusader's Ministries. I coordinate with churches and invited groups the Deep South Quartet Conventions. God has allowed us to grow this ministry of nine years from one convention to seven for 2010.

God has given me the desire and vision to minister along side my husband at conventions, praying and sharing Christ with the women of the church, groups & communities. I have found boldness in Christ I didn't know I had.

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. 2 Corinthians 2:14-15

I have started a group on Facebook, Reading the Bible 2010!, in which we are encouraging people to read the Bible Chronologically with discussions posted everyday. My days are full and I love being a part of God's Work.

If God has called your husband into ministry, He also has a place to serve along side him. *Pray and ask God to reveal that special place of service to you. Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. Colossians 4:2.*



Clockwise from top: Front view of chapel and donated door; A 'church army' puts up trusses; the Cedar Ridge Baptist Church Army (they build and move churches) with Lynda standing in the middle; a foundation is lain. Photos by Bud Lynn

The Chapel Story:

For fifteen years I have wanted to build a Chapel on our property. We have fifteen acres that join a beautiful walking trail in Branson West, Missouri.

The desire in my heart to build a Chapel came to me because I wanted a place for visitors to realize the presence of God as they walk along the beautiful walking trail that joins our land. I wanted them to be more in tune and energized by God's beauty. Some folks never enter into a church, but the Lord told me when they enter the doorway of this chapel He will "God zap" them with an anointing that they've never had before.

At first we hired a man to build the Chapel, but funds ran out because he went over the budget that he had presented to us. The result was the roof wasn't on, only the walls were up. It was raining every day. So Bud, my husband, and I would go to the Chapel every day to shop vacuum the water that accumulated on the floor, praying that the floor would hold.

The Lord told me to go to prayer warriors on the internet and ask for divine help to put up the beams and add the roof. This was midweek. I immediately got a response. The following Saturday, the Cedar Ridge Baptist Church Army loaded up their tools and ladders. Clay Mosier, a young carpenter, directed the men. The men's ages ranged from 16 to 75. They all worked together and by the end of the day they had constructed the trusses, the decking and the roof. In addition Clay knew a family that would donate some big, beautiful windows. Soon, here



Dr. Lynda Lynn is an ordained minister and has her Doctorate in Sacred Music Ministry. She has been awarded 13 ASCAP Awards, Branson's Songwriter of the

Year, Female Vocalist runner up of the year and CGMA Songwriter of the Year for the central United States. She and husband Bud are CGMA's International Media Personalities of the Year. Lynda's songs have charted #1 on many gospel charts throughout the US. Bud and Lynda were recently ordained as ministers by the Sanctuary of Hope in Branson. Bud is the former Shepherd in the Shepherd of the Hills Outdoor Theater and publisher of the Ozark Mountain Trails Magazine. They are frequent guests on many Christian television programs aired on Sky Angel Network. Their next scheduled Sky Angel program will be Babbie's House April 7, 2010. If anyone would like to donate their time or make a donation to this God project, please send your information to the following email address: onangelswings@centurytel.net or contact us at Bud & Lynda Lynn, P.O. Box 2258, Branson West, Missouri. Our corporate telephone number is 417-338-4331 (Ozark Trails Magazine, Inc.).



How God Called 'Lynda Chapleseed' to Showcase His Wonders Throughout Missouri

he comes with the two side windows and a huge picture window, a window he placed in the back for a view of God's beautiful mountain ridge for all to see.

On Easter 2009, God told me to go ask a lumber yard for a donation of material for the Chapel. I was really shocked that the Lord would ask me to do that. I give money, but never ask for money. But nevertheless, I stepped out in boldness and asked, and received \$1500.00 from Meek Lumber in Kimberling City, Missouri! They also said any materials needed after that would be at cost! I was so shocked.

Then the Lord told me, "Go to the Carpet Shop and ask for wood flooring." So I stepped out in boldness again and asked Stoneridge Carpet in Branson West. I walked out of the carpet shop with solid oak, lap and groove wood flooring!

Then God said, "Go to the grocery store (PriceCutter in Branson West) and ask for a community donation." They too were obedient and sent a gift card for food. So that provided funds for the dedication of the Chapel. We decided to have a precious "Jesus Hootenanny," and serve food at our grounds among the spring flowers and dogwood trees.

Since then we telephoned our neighbor, Silver Dollar City, one of Branson's major attractions, to ask for "Chapel help". Because Silver Dollar City has a National Handcrafters Organization that constructs everything out of natural wood, I thought it would be a perfect opportunity for them to be a part of Chapel Woods. So

here comes the Director of Publicity, Lisa Rau, with her friend Steve Varner, on their motorcycle. They stepped into the unfinished Chapel and Lisa said, "Yes, we can donate a handmade wall mantle or cross." Then her friend Steve said, "I own a landscaping business, I'll donate the bushes and flowers." I thought, Oh Lord you are amazing!

Since all this wonderment of God, we've have had so many people donate their time and artistic tal-

God told me the people who walk in the Chapel will never be the same after they walk out.

ent. A friend of ours, Kenny Goodman, who is Chief of Security at another of Branson's major attractions, Sight & Sound, is making a cross that replicates the true Cross, rough, not smooth, similar to the cross Jesus was crucified on. Another close friend, Cindy Keely, has asked her brother to make a free standing cross. Our Country Gospel Music Group was singing at a church when I saw this beautiful wood cross on a stand with the crown of thorns around it. My friend Cindy said, "If you love that cross, my brother can make one just like it." She took a picture of it. A neighbor down our road, Rueben Sullivan said, "I can make the bronze cross for the steeple."

So many people have stopped by to see the Chapel being constructed. One Sunday some of our Country Gospel Music Association members came over to see the chapel. We all stood in a circle and sang

"How Great Thou Art." Wendell Johnson, an International Award Winning singer said, "This Chapel has perfect acoustics for music!!" Well, wouldn't we know our God would make the Chapel perfect for His glory??

I told Wendell how badly I wanted a pulpit made of a real oak tree. He said, "Lynda, my parents cut down the two trees I played in as a child. They were going to cut them up for firewood. I asked them if I could have them. They are in my yard now. I know what to do with the large one - make the 20" trunk into the pulpit top and the small tree into the pedestal for the pulpit." Wendell is a

craftsman. He said "I'll put a polymer finish on the top." He added, "I have extra sheet rock, nails and insulation too!!" WOW!

Now our only thing missing is the pews. We advertised for six five foot pews on Craig's List. Instantly we got a call from Sam Reardon. He has six pews (oak) for sale for \$50.00 each. He said he could cut them to five feet. I said, "Sam, where are you located?" He said, "I'm at the Glory Barn in Branson, Missouri!" I couldn't believe it that the pews, (oak which I was hoping for) were just ten miles away from the little Chapel. Then he said, "God gave me a vision to beautify all churches and chapels God put in his path." He is a carpenter. I said, "Come over and see the Chapel and I know God will put it into your heart how to beautify it even more."

continued >

On and on the Chapel Story goes. There's a small church around the bend called Notch Community Church. I minister there when needed as they don't have a permanent pastor yet. I shared my vision for the Chapel and immediately various people offered to come over and do the Jericho Walk around the Chapel and write scripture on the inside walls before the sheet rock goes up. One individual offered to faux paint the walls to make them look old, another said she could arrange the flowers, and another offered to help clean. They all said they were with us in prayer.

We needed a door. Our "Chapel Man", carpenter Clay, told us to go to Herman Lumber in Branson and ask them for a door. I thought, "OK God here we go." One hour later we were loading up a beautiful steel constructed door we will paint. The windows can also be stained to look like stained glass.

One big, big man came over and got on his knees by the chapel and said, "I want to come over and help finish the inside."

Our CGMA family are planning to come over to have "a stain the Chapel party".

Now that the weather is getting better we can start all the sheet rock, staining, beautifying and glorifying the Chapel.

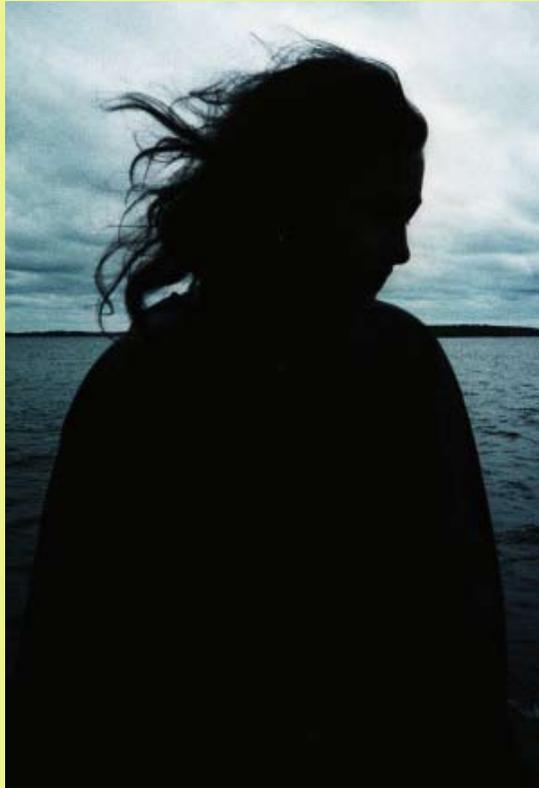
God told me the people who walk in the Chapel will never be the same after they walk out.

The Chapel is called Chapel Woods. The Lord also put it in my heart, if we can swing it, to put a Chapel in every county of Missouri. Instead of Johnny Appleseed, He's named me Lynda Chapelseed. Since all this has happened, we have captured the name Chapel-Trails.org which is in the process of becoming a 501c3 organization. To God be the glory!

Facing the New Year Alone

Practical Advice for Widows and Widowers

By Beth Chilcoat



As I approach the beginning of a new year, I reflect on the fact that it has been over three years since I faced the trauma of losing my beloved husband of 37 years to Lou Gehrig's Disease. After this length of time, one might assume that I am finally feeling better. But to be honest, the grief journey has been both relentless and painfully difficult. I don't ever again want to hear the advice that "you should just get through the first year and you'll be fine." It simply didn't happen that way and as I have polled others in similar situations, they have said the same. But I have learned many things as I have walked

this unwelcome journey. For those people who are facing 2010 alone, I offer some observations about the grieving process.

Be gentle with yourself. Say no to things that are going to be overwhelming to you such as uncomfortable invitations or demanding tasks, but at the same time, don't hide. Be with those whose company you enjoy and who can understand your situation. Don't sit back and wait for life to happen, but give yourself a lot of latitude. I attended my grandchildren's soccer games because it got me out of the house but demanded very little emotionally. People there weren't asking me a lot of questions about how I was doing. I took really long bike rides (that's a passion for me), and sometimes when I just needed to get out, I would go for long drives, occasionally antiquing. Do not be afraid to take time to do things you enjoy.

Stay connected. Take the initiative in getting together with others. Grief groups were helpful since we were sharing the same daunting adjustments in our lives. The world revolves around pairs, and it can make you feel very alone. Groups became a good source of friendships with people who knew what I was going through. Don't try to be noble or do it on your own. Don't be afraid to draw strength from friends, family, and church.

By all means cry when you need to. Let it out and don't keep a stiff upper lip. At times, this was very cleansing for me.

Give yourself the luxury of TIME. A loss takes a lot more time to get over than you might expect. The relationship you had with your loved

one didn't develop overnight and the grief won't disappear instantly either.

Seek the God of all comfort. He says He will be the husband to the widow so I sought Him when I needed a listening ear or the comfort and strength to keep going. Bring your needs to Him and then remember who He is. Focus on all His attributes and place your pain and grief in His mighty hands. Work at leaving it there and resting in Him. Then wait for Him to act in His time. Pray scripture. He keeps all of His promises. If you find you can't even pray, go to a friend and ask them to pray for you. God understands exactly where you are and loves you tenderly. He promises that He will never leave us or forsake us. He also promises that He uses all things (even death) for good for those that love Him.

Live one day at a time. This helped me especially in the years during David's illness. We relied on this wisdom so that we would not ruin the days we had together with either worry over what might happen or a constant focus on what we were losing. That gave us freedom to live each day and appreciate it for the gift it was. This same focus helps me as a widow. To dwell on the future years of being alone only immobilizes me from adjusting to the new life I have. I do not yet know the blessings that the Lord has in store for me. But I have learned to get up in the morning and fully participate in the day God has given me, leaving the future in His capable hands.



*Beth Chilcoat recently published the book, **NOBODY TELLS A DYING GUY TO SHUT UP**, edited down from over 1000 pages written in her husband David's journal. David's jour-*

ney through ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) from his diagnosis to just before his death was chronicled online through his personal blog and followed by thousands of people. Beth is now featured on the New York Times' Healthguide for ALS: Patient Voices. She has been featured on numerous national television and radio shows including Moody Radio's Prime Time America, CTN, and others. For more information, visit www.BethChilcoat.com.




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Oklahoma's Jenny Engle

Interview by Chandel Dobbs

Jenny Engel from Bartlesville Oklahoma is a Southern Gospel Sweet Heart. Jenny genuinely loves people and truly searches to find the good in everyone-which she admits is one of her many downfalls. She loves to laugh and enjoy life and is always up for an adventure. She says her family teases her about planning her next vacation while still on a current one. God has great things planned and Jenny wants to be right in the middle of it. She can be reached through www.jennyengel.com or www.godsblissinginaction.com

Above: Jenny Engle by Ray Tingler.

Below: Pictured with singer Chris Hester when opening for The Isaacs, by Judy Whitechurch



McEntire.

CHANDEL: How would you describe your style of music?

Jenny: Southern Gospel with Country flair...I love singing power songs that have a little bit of an edge. Some of my greatest influences were actually country artists such as Martina McBride, The Judds, and Reba

CHANDEL: What is your favorite song off your new project, *Greater Faith*?

JENNY: Actually, I have a few favorites off of the project. But the song that touches me the most is "Greater Faith." I wrote it not too long after losing someone very close to me. There are many times in life when we are lost and we just need to know God is there. This song gave me the strength I needed during those tough times. It is my hope that it touches people's lives and gives them hope as it did me. It is so easy to allow things of this world to shake our faith but if we will just hold on and keep pressing forward then we will see that even in the tough times God is still there. He will give us the "Greater Faith" we need to make it!

CHANDEL: Tell our readers about your family.

JENNY: I am married to one of the coolest guys in the world named Brian. He is one of the most generous people I have ever met. He has a sincere heart for the Lord and has been an excellent support to me as both my husband and my partner in ministry.

We went on our first date two days before I left for college and he left for the Army. The rest is history... we will be married 18 years on January 4th!

I am officially a "dog mom." My kids are miniature dachshunds. They are so spoiled.

CHANDEL: How old were you when you realized your calling into the ministry?

JENNY: Well, I was in my twenties. I was living in Nashville pursuing my dream to be the next big country music superstar. Boy, haven't we heard that before. One night, I was driving home from working at the Opryland Hotel and there was a revival at the Hermitage Hills Baptist Church. I pulled into the church not realizing my life would be changed forever. That night I gave my life to the Lord. The desires of my heart began to change. Not too long after God started dealing with me about ministry. Several times, I would say "God, I am not equipped to be in ministry." Then one night, I passed a billboard. God literally sent me a sign. It said "God doesn't call the equipped, He equips the called." There it was in bright lights...my ministry destiny!

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Our SGN Scoops Staff is are comprised of professional writers, singers, speakers, publicists, and ministers. Please visit their websites for more from them. **| CONTRIBUTORS**



Ms. Lou Wills Hildreth is always smiling, is married to Howard, is a member of the legendary Wills family, a member of the Gospel Music Association Board, and a television host, songwriter, publisher, journalist, an industry leader. Get to know her at louhildreth.com



Rhonda Frye is a full time minister of music serving the Lord in at least three different ways: teaching a pre-school music program, serving her local congregation as worship leader and associate pastor, and as a singer/songwriter/recording artist. Rhonda lives in Ringgold, Georgia and is supported by her husband, Eric and their three children. rhondafrye.com



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Born and raised in southern Ontario, Canada, Lorraine Walker has been interested and involved in Southern Gospel Music since the mid-80s. Since 2005, she has also authored the popular 'Reality Check' column and other features for sgmradio.com.



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Jerry 'JT' Tinkle is the baritone for the Ministers Quartet from Muncie, IN. He hones his writing with their weekly newsletter, which he fills with inspirational stories from the road and from life. His mantra stands, "Just one more soul, Lord Jesus, just one more soul." ministersquartet.com



Jimmy McMillan is a singer and songwriter who, with his wife Liz, owns the trio McMillan and Life. They are based in Symrna, TN and travel full time in gospel music ministry. jimmy@mcmillanandlife.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 and has two children and lives in Washington State. queenoq.blogspot.com



Evie Hawkins's love for writing spun many articles that were read by music industry professionals and lead to the development of the Evie Hawkins Agency, in Nashville. Evie keeps residence in Alabama and Tennessee, and enjoys as much time as possible with her husband, their family, and the musicians whom she loves very much. eviehawkinsagency.net



Chad Hayes is a pastor, husband, and father to an adorable one year old. He is also the resident CD reviewer for SGMRadio.com



Too Late to Start Exercising Now?

The answer is precisely what you hope it's not!

"Christian Fitness" by Laurette Willis

Perhaps you haven't exercised in a l-o-n-g time.

Maybe your schedule at work or home demands too much of your time or you simply fell out of the routine. I have good news for you! If you haven't exercised in months, a year or ever—it's never too late to begin making fitness a part of your life.

I know. For most of my life I hated exercise and did not follow a sane food plan. I fought excess weight and overeating since I was a child. As a teenager, I tried lots of kooky diet. I even went on a water fast for 10 days (and believe me, there was nothing spiritual about it; I just wanted to be "skinny."). I became skinny all right. I also developed pneumonia and looked horrible. The weight piled back on shortly thereafter, with an extra 10 pounds on top of it!

After I came to Christ in my late 20s, the Lord delivered me from alcoholism, helped me quit smoking, redeemed my life from the deception of the New Age movement (metaphysics, mysticism and yoga), and brought a loving husband into my life. But overeating and lack of discipline continued to plague me.

"Father," I prayed, "You have removed so many negative things from my life. Please help me overcome this, too."

Victory in this area did not come as quickly for me as it did for the other addictions which had held me captive. In fact, the fruit of self-discipline is something I must be conscious of walking in every single day in order to experience the freedom the Lord promises us.

"Stand fast therefore in the

liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage (Galatians 5:1)."

For me, freedom from "couch potato-ism" and overeating is a choice I have to determine to "stand fast" in daily. Thankfully, the more I "exercise" self-discipline, asking for God to help me, the more I find myself actually wanting to be more active, eat more healthful food and saner portions.

Do we have to exercise?

Well, that's up to you. If you want to be what I call a "fit witness" for Christ, have a healthy body ("the temple of the Holy Spirit," according to 1 Corinthians 6:19), full of energy and strength to do all the Lord is calling you to do, it is certainly advisable.

You may already know some of the problems associated with not exercising:

- weight gain
- decrease in flexibility, strength and balance
- increased blood pressure and cholesterol levels
- aches, pains and other medical issues

Hey! You told me there was good news...

There is!

Even if you've not been consistent in years, beginning some regular exercise now can help in a number of ways:

- reduce the risk of heart disease and osteoporosis
- relieve stress, anxiety and depression
- achieve and maintain a healthy weight and fitness level



continued

- strengthen bones and joints
- strengthen the immune system
- increase energy levels
- decrease risks for various diseases (including diabetes, colon cancer, plus high blood pressure, stroke and degenerative diseases associated with age)

While plastic surgery is only skin deep, exercise benefits us inside and out. Some encouraging news for those of us over 30 years old is that more mature women appear to gain the most benefits from exercise. After the age of 30, the body responds quite well to the overall “tune-up” exercising brings.

So, why don't we “Just Do It”?

I could tell you all the things the world tells us to do to motivate ourselves—all of which boil down to a Nike-inspired, “Just Do It!”

It's not that easy though, is it? That's probably why research from Johns Hopkins is predicting that there could be a 75% obesity rate in America by the year 2015.

But we don't have to be part of that statistic. As Christians, we can lead the charge to change. We can be “fit witnesses” for the Lord, leading others to health in spirit, soul and body through a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Does the Bible have answers to help us with weight and exercise? Yes!

Galatians 5:22-23 lists the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Patience, faithfulness and self-control are the three fruit of the Spirit I've found most helpful in going from being a “couch potato on a slug-fest marathon” to someone who actually enjoys walking and getting some exercise in every day.

You already know how to yield to the Holy Spirit and the fruit He is developing in your life in some areas.

For example: When someone on line at the grocery store is taking a long time paying for their purchase, you don't throw a wall-eyed fit anymore, do you? You don't stomp your feet, jump up and down and bang your shopping cart into the register, do you? Of course not!

You've learned to yield to the Lord and the fruit of patience. “Okay, I'm letting patience have its perfect work in me. The Word says it's by faith and patience

that I inherit the promises of God. All right! I'm up for that!” You may not do that spiffy a job of it, but at least you're trying.

Why not plant some seeds toward developing the fruit of patience, faithfulness and self-control in the area of exercise, too?

Here's an idea:

1. PLAN: Tomorrow—or today—plan to take a brisk walk for 20 minutes. Or do a quick workout (there are several quick exercises and workouts with accompanying scriptures online which you can do at home or the office at my website www.PraiseMoves.com).

2. TIME: Choose a time you will get some activity in.

3. ASK: Speak to the Lord and ask Him to help you keep your commitment to honor Him by taking good care of your body (the “temple of the Holy Spirit”) by doing some physical activity for 20 minutes.

4. DECIDE: Make the decision now that when the time comes to fit the activity in, you will NOT yield to any excuses, but yield to the Lord.

5. YIELD: When the time comes, dedicate the time to the Lord, and go for that walk, Christian Fitness workout, or whatever you've purposed to do.

6. PRAISE: Praise the Lord for His faithfulness to you as you have just begun a new habit. Go through the steps again for the next day, and the day after that.

With time and practice, the fruit of faithfulness, patience and self-control will become more fully developed and you'll find yourself actually looking forward to moving your body and praising the Lord! By giving your time and yourself to the Lord in this way, you'll find His grace sustains, maintains, contains and re-trains us to be all He's call us to be.



Christian Fitness Expert and author Loretta Willis is the Director of PraiseMoves, offering fitness programs, DVDs, books and training for those interested in a Christian alternative to yoga, and fitness for spirit, soul and body at <http://praisemoves.com> To follow Loretta, go to twitter.com/Fit4Christ & facebook.com/praisemoves

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Pam's World Famous Bread Pudding

Pre heat oven @ 350.

Prepare a 10" springform pan with parchment paper on bottom and foil around the sides to prevent leaking. Melt 1 cube butter and 1/3 cup oil in small skillet, when mixed, dip slices of white bread to mixture, on one side and line the sides of the spring form pan. Do this all around the sides then use the heel on the bottom. In a large bowl mix, 14 eggs, 2 cups half & half, 2 cups whole milk, 1 cup sugar, and 2 Tbs. vanilla. Beat well and then tear up 3 slices of bread and add to mixture. Pour the mixture into the prepared pan and place onto a cookie sheet to prevent spillage on bottom of the oven. Bake at 350 for 2 hours.

When the pudding feels firm, remove from oven and cool.

Prepare hard sauce: 1 cube butter, 1/3 cup half & half and one cup confectioners sugar, bring to a soft boil and cook till sauce thickens, about 10 minutes on low heat. Use a pastry brush and brush onto top and sides of bread pudding.

You can garnish with any fruit and or nuts. Serve warm or cold "Bon Appetit"



Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In buttered 13-by-9-inch baking dish or jellyroll pan, lay fillets in single layer. Do not stack fillets! Brush top of fillets with lemon juice.

In bowl combine cheese, butter, mayonnaise, onions and seasonings. Mix well with fork.

Bake fish in preheated oven 10 to 20 minutes or until fish just starts to flake. When done baking, spread baked fillets with cheese mixture and broil until golden brown, about 3-5 minutes.

When March madness comes, what will you serve during the big games? Send your favorite snacks and appetizer via [facebook.com/sgnscoops](https://www.facebook.com/sgnscoops) or kelly@sgnscoops.com

This month we feature recipes from The Catering Divas, Branson's premiere gourmet caterers. The family-oriented foodies of this new company offer impeccable custom service and a wide range of recipes they are happy to share! Here are a few favorites for your romantic Valentine's date night-in! www.CateringDivas.com



Mock Champagne Cocktails

4 servings

1 1/2 cups sparkling white grape juice, chilled
1 1/2 cups apple juice, chilled
1 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice

Fresh Red Raspberries for Garnish

Combine white grape juice, apple juice, and lemon juice. Pour into champagne flutes. Garnish with fresh red raspberries!

Parmesan-Encrusted Tilapia

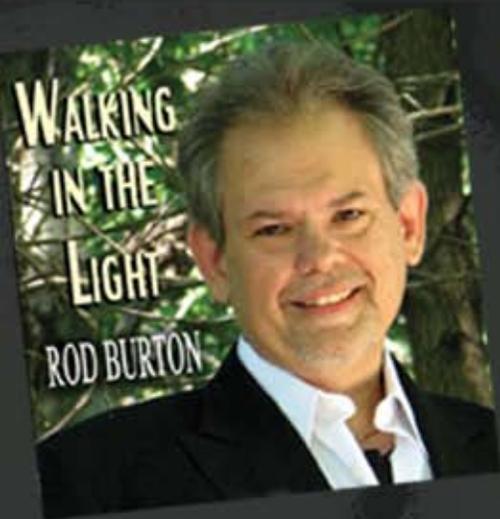
2 lbs tilapia fillets (orange roughy, cod or red snapper can be substituted)
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/2 cup fresh grated Parmigiano-Reggiano
2 tablespoons butter, room temperature
3 tablespoons mayonnaise
3 tablespoons finely chopped green onions
1/2 teaspoon seasoning salt (I like Old Bay seasoning here)
1/2 teaspoon fresh basil, minced
fresh ground black pepper
1-2 dashes hot pepper sauce



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The Act of Forgiveness

By Jimmy McMillan

Forgiveness, the very idea of it, what does it really mean, and how does it affect our lives? Is it a noun?

A thing that can be handed to someone?

Or is it a verb? A precious, invaluable gift that in itself is action. I truly believe it is the latter.

Recently, I had got the chance to reunite with a friend I had not seen in over twenty years. The subject of forgiveness came up and we spent a long time discussing it. It all began when I apologized to her for some past offences and without a moment's hesitation she said, "oh that has all been forgiven long ago."

My apology stemmed from a situation where my youth and idealistic mindset caused me to hurt this person and her family very deeply. For years I felt I had been completely justified in my actions and believed I had been right to say and do the things I did. However the older I get, the more I realize just how great and vast the love, forgiveness and mercy of our heavenly Father is. I've seen how guilty I've been of judging those around me. I have realized how it's hurt and even ended valuable friendships as did this one for a season.

My friend began to tell me how over the years both her and her family had been hurt by people and even church

families where they were on staff. She told me that many times they found themselves of crying out to God in the middle of a dark and tear filled hour, asking Him to let them truly forgive the person or situation. She said He had always been faithful to answer their prayers. That eventually in every situation they had received an apology, and they were able to give the same response, "That was all forgiven long ago."

This is what makes forgiveness a verb. It is an action, a motive and condition of the heart that allows someone to extend it before they are ever asked. Many times circumstances can make it hard to take the first step toward forgiving, but it is a vital "action" if we want to live a successful and peaceful life.

This situation just served as a powerful reminder to me that I should never wait for someone to say "I'm sorry." How that even when it's painful, and an apology may never be a reality, we must forgive.

It made me think of Jesus. Not the sweet pictures of Him with the children, or holding a lantern knocking at our hearts door. No, it made me think of the Jesus that willingly allowed Himself to be mocked, spit on and beaten until he was unrecognizable. I imagined the torn and shattered body of a savior as He hung on a rugged cross. What if He had said, "I am going to wait for an apology before I finish this act, before I forgive." I am so grateful He didn't do that! Grateful that when we do finally ask Him forgiveness, we can be sure

continues>



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'Forgiveness' cont'd >

that we will hear Him say "That was all forgiven long ago."

To my friend, thank you. Thank you for forgiving before it was ever asked of you. Your forgiveness allowed our friendship to be restored. What a great example of how the Lord's forgiveness is the key to restoration of our souls.

To all the rest of us, what is it that we can learn from this? I believe we can all learn a several lessons that will better our lives and the lives of those around us. We have the opportunity to base our lives on love rather than hate or bitterness. We can chose to live the act of forgiveness. We have the ability to let go of hurts and anger by turning them over to our Father and letting him replace them with peace. Lastly, we can learn to always remember that forgiveness IS a VERB!



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The Church and the 'Why' Generation

Second in a series
by Lorraine Walker
Originally published at SGMRadio.com

Generation WHINER?

Southern Gospel appears to be embracing more youth while the Church appears to be losing this generation. The "Y Generation", those born after 1981, are putting their own stamp on gospel music but appear to be leaving the established Church in droves.

According to a recent article on the Christian Post website, Mission America and the National Network of Youth Ministries met in Orlando, Florida last winter to discuss this phenomena. The statistics cited at this meeting were staggering.

The article states, "Researchers found between 69-94 percent of Christian youths forsake their faith after leaving high school. The Barna Group reported 64 percent loss after college graduation. The Assemblies of God conducted a 10-year study and found 75 percent loss of their students within one year of high school graduation, while the Southern Baptists found that number to be even higher at 88 percent loss. And Josh McDowell Ministries reports 94 percent fallout within two years of high school graduation."(ChristianPost.com)

Is this fallout a response comparable to the hippy movement of the Sixties or the Jesus People of the '70's? What does the Y Generation expect to find in today's church that they aren't seeing? Are they looking for a Church where they can be fed and also serve their family in Christ, or are they just seeking entertainment? Is this actually "Generation Whine"?

Ronald Moore, Southern Gospel artist with Valor III, says, "The Y Generation is looking for a church

where they can experience a real movement of God in the services. I don't think that true Christians of the "Y" generation can really be compared to the hippy movement because a true Christian is hungry and searching for a personal relationship with God.

"It is time that we as Christians who make up the true church teach the youth of today that being a Christian does not mean you are a member of a social club where we go to services that has a form of godliness but denies His power," Moore states. "It is time that we teach the Y generation that salvation is a personal thing between them and God. Also we need to teach them that after accepting Christ they must put Him first in their life, live for Him daily and worship Him in spirit and truth."

Moore does not take the pressure off of those still in the pew. "It is time that we as older and mature Christians put God back as priority one in our own life and show the Y generation there is joy in knowing Jesus and that God can give more than the world could ever offer."

Susan M. Kirkland, Christian author and speaker, understands the need for Generation Y to look outside of the established church. Susan also left the church when she was in her early 20's. She says, "This age bracket is marked by a major milestone: adulthood. Legally, they are



adults, but they are still young; not necessarily immature, but full of youthful idealism. I left the church because college was a chance to learn, explore, and see if what I was raised to believe held true. Of course there were other influences -- some traumatic events left me angry at God, fueling my need to explore other avenues."

In Susan's opinion, "Organized religion doesn't really offer what this group, or any group really needs. We all have the same basic needs - a relationship where we feel loved and valued, where it's okay to mess up. Think about it, kids spend their

life in youth group. They develop a relationship with the youth leader and their peers. They go off to college and the youth leader moves on to the next group of kids. There's no real relationship there. There's a lot of hypocrisy in church and young adults see that. The church doesn't really want to address the issues faced by these young adults. Often their answer is: 'You just need to pray more. You need to come back to Jesus and live right.'

"It was years later, when I came back to Christ, that I realized I had people praying for me during those years," shares Susan. "They never once preached to me. They let me find my own way, hurt my own way, and live my own way. And I think that's what young adults need: constant prayer and unconditional love without heavy-handed preaching. I knew who to go to when I couldn't face my problems; even though I didn't like the fact that they were 'Jesus freaks', I knew their advice would be solid and helpful. And if I didn't want advice, I knew their shoulders were strong enough for me to cry on."

Michael Bailey, songwriter and producer, is making music that reaches Generation Y. He agrees that this age group is searching for reality. "To be honest? There's just a lack of boldfaced truth-telling in the churches these days," says Michael. "That is, no 'boat rocking'. Everything is just a little too smooth and that gets people falling asleep in the pews. Another thing is that there are far too many choices of how to spend your time. It can be very distracting."

Michael continues, "Everybody is hungry for something that is real to them. God created us all, so it's going to be in there for all of us. Yet, not everyone is going to search for truth and righteousness. Our rebel-

lious nature can hinder us from a smarter path."

How much should the Church do to reach one age group? Should all of the resources and ministry personnel be focused on just this one Generation? Michael says, "You can only do so much. Sometimes the harder you chase, the harder they pull away. Also, I believe trying to water it all down to make it cool may not be the answer either. I think if the Spirit of God is in it, it is powerful enough."

"It is a prayer of mine and my concern to draw the Y's into sincerely accepting the Lord Jesus in their lives," says Michael. "I would love to produce Christian films with Y actors and also produce Christian albums with Y singers. God knows if that will ever happen. I know there are others out there, other music and film producers who feel the same."

Certain 'seeker' churches and the Emergent Church have focused largely on this Generation and found they are able to reach Y's for Christ. Other churches and minis-

tries see the need for truth and reality as something that crosses all barriers, whether it is age, culture, sex or color.

Gerald Wolfe, Southern Gospel artist with Greater Vision, believes that an artist that is true to his giftings can reach the heart of anyone, young or old. "We have never done anything to try to appeal to any specific age group," says Gerald. "We are who we are, and ultimately, I think all of us are better off when we figure out who we are and then stick with it. Consistency is a virtue that has been abandoned over the last couple of decades."

"The type of music we do has always been music for a more mature audience," states Gerald. "When I was in high school, I could count on one hand the number of my peers who listened to the type of music we sing. If you go back and look at photos from the early days of the National Quartet Convention, you'll see the same amount of gray hair in the audience that you see today. Surely, it's not the same people; most of those folks from the early days have long-since died, so every year, they are replaced by new mature folks. It's always been that way, and I'm convinced it always will be."

Gerald has also seen that the Church is experiencing the falling-away of the 20-somethings, and has an interesting perspective about the cause. "I think the church is losing our High School graduates and College-age folks because of the decision years ago to separate people in the church by age groups," Gerald says. "Most larger churches today have Pre-school church, Children's church, Youth church, and regular worship. We've actually segregated the church according to age. The kids are growing up with the idea that church is always about fun,



When [kids] get old enough to go to 'big' church, they find it too serious or boring.

If they fall in love with Jesus, they'll be there.

programming, and entertainment, with a little Gospel message thrown in to make it church."

Gerald continues, "When they get old enough to go to 'big' church, they find it too serious or boring. Too much talk about commitment and sacrifice. It becomes more about God and less about me. Then, given the opportunity, they're out the door, looking for a better show or something that appeals to their wants."

"In essence, we've sold the next generation a bill of goods by making them believe that Christianity is a 'what's in it for me' religion, instead of 'what can I do for God to thank Him for what He's already done for me'", says Gerald. "We've brought this mass exodus on ourselves, and there's nowhere to point our finger, other than at the mirror."

As Generation Y seeks to find a church that will supply its needs, there is the perception that it has

become Generation Whine. Does that mean that the needs of this generation are different from those that have gone before? Gerald says, "The root concerns of people have never changed, really. Given the opportunity, and with no clear direction, we always choose ourselves and what makes us feel good about who we are, and therein lies the problem. If we're already good and we feel good about ourselves, why go to church if it doesn't reinforce our opinion of ourselves."

Gerald continues, "That's why motivational speakers are popular, they make us feel better about ourselves. Gospel preachers make us aware that, apart from Christ, we can never measure up to God's standard of holiness. That's why we need a personal, intimate relationship with Christ. We simply can't live right apart from Him. He is the source of our joy. What we need is to realize how helpless and hope-

less we are without Him."

If Generation Y and anyone seeking truth outside of the Church are truly looking for what makes them feel good and a sense of significance, is there a way today's church can truly reach the lost? "Absolutely!" says Gerald. "Preach and sing the simple message of the Gospel. Point people to the cross. Jesus gave us the prescription to build the perfect church: 'If I be lifted up, I will draw all men (and women) unto Me.'"

Gerald continues, "We don't need to worry about lifting up the music, or the show, but rather concentrate on lifting Jesus up, making it all about Him. If we could re-learn to do that, we wouldn't need to have any more discussions or conferences on 'how to keep the Y Generation in church'. If they fall in love with Jesus, they'll be there. God help us to get back to the simplicity of the Gospel."

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What to do while you wait on God

I waited and waited and waited for God. At last he looked; finally he listened. He lifted me out of the ditch, pulled me from deep mud. He stood me up on a solid rock to make sure I wouldn't slip. He taught me how to sing the latest God-song, a praise-song to our God. More and more people are seeing this: they enter the mystery, abandoning themselves to God. Psalm 40:1-3

I love the Message Bible Translation of this scripture! This is one of my favorites and I've even written a song about it called "He Set My Feet On The Rock" and if you've been to one of my concerts or ladies events within the last several years you've heard me sing it! To wait on God does not mean to sit idly by, twiddle your thumbs and do nothing. To wait on God is to spend your time seeking His will for your life, continuing to serve Him, worship and obey Him.

I have always felt as if this scripture is my testimony of how God saved my soul. I was bound for hell until He came and lifted me up and saved me. But NOW this scripture has taken deeper root in my soul!

I've spent many months waiting and seeking God's will for my life and this ministry. God has looked on me, listened to my cries and answered many prayers, pulled me up out of the ditch and cleared my mind!

I've come to realize that being in the ditch is not always bad but it is an uncomfortable place to be and it is always for my good and God's glory that I'm there!

It's in the ditch that we seek God. It's in the ditch that we cry out and look to Him. It's in the ditch that we learn to wait on the Lord and grow spiritually so that when the time comes that He should pull us out, we have the strength and power to STAND FIRM on the Solid Rock!

Praise will swell up within us and explode from a fresh relationship with God and many people will see it and be drawn to the Lord.

Be Encouraged to know that if you are in a ditch right now it's your time to wait on the Lord, seek His will for your life and obey Him. Remember that people are watching you to see how you react in the ditch. Let them see Christ in you and you will be an even greater witness after He pulls you out!

Annette Herndon is a singer, writer, and founder of Encouraging Today's Women. Subscribe to her devotional of encouragement at www.annetteherndon.com



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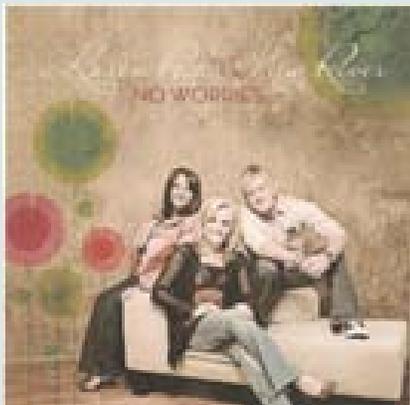
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Who's making new music...

CD Reviews by Chad Hayes

KAREN PECK & NEW RIVER

No Worries

karenpeckandnewriver.com

Karen Peck and New River has been singing Southern Gospel music since 1991. They are easily a household name amongst fans of Southern Gospel. Currently, the group consists of Karen Peck Gooch, her sister Susan Peck Jackson, and newcomer Jeff Hawes.

No Worries is the follow-up to last year's "Ephesians One" album. According to the liner notes in the CD cover, Karen says, "I knew it was time to get serious about recording a full acoustic driven album." The album is produced by Mark Fain, who is known for his work in bluegrass music. However, *No Worries* is anything but bluegrass. Also, since Jeff Hawes just joined the group, the third vocalize besides Karen and Susan is Devin McGlamery, now the lead vocalist for Ernie Haase & Signature Sound.

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The album begins with a remake of a song the group did on an older album. "Bend In The River Of Life" can also be found on the album called "A Southern Gospel Decade", only this one is even more up-tempo and has a jazz flavor to it. Next up is the medium-tempo "Why Can't All God's Children Get Along". Karen gets the feature on this smooth song, and the group turns in some nicely-done blending on the choruses. Susan gets the feature on Song #3, "This Is Living". I really like the occasional minor keys throughout this song's arrangement. The fourth song is a solo by Devin McGlamery. "While I Still Can" is a beautiful ballad that speaks of the importance of parents spending time with their children and not letting other things get in the way. As a relatively new father, this song resonated with me in a special way.

The fifth song is another slower song called "Why

Should I Worry". This is followed by a song that one wouldn't normally expect to find on a Gospel album- the Johnny Nash classic "I Can See Clearly". The group's mid-tempo arrangement features some very interesting chord progressions and a sort of Jamaican feel that give the song a new flavor. However, as a personal preference, I would rather a song like this be a bonus track if it's going to be included on a Gospel album. Song #7 is another slower song called "Special Love". This one seems to really concentrate on the group singing together- there's only one verse of solo work done by Karen.

Devin gets another feature on the up-tempo, driving "Ready For The Ride". This is a song that fits Devin's voice perfectly, and it's a lot of fun to listen to. Song #9 gives us another opportunity to hear Susan featured. "In The Meantime" is a mid-tempo song that is simple, straightforward, and very well-done. The album ends on a slower note with a duet by Karen and Devin called "The Hour I First Believed".

While this was a very good album, for me it was bit of a letdown after *Journey Of Joy* and *Ephesians One*. While the song selection was good, I think that there could have been a little more variety in the area of song tempos. Most of the songs were either slow or mid-tempo, and the album really could have used at least one more up-tempo song. Still, this is a quality album that listeners will enjoy overall. I am looking forward to hearing what the group sounds like with the new male vocalist on their next album. Overall, I give this album a rating of 9 out of 10 microphones!

Favorites: "Bend In The River Of Life", "While I Still Can", and "Ready For The Ride"

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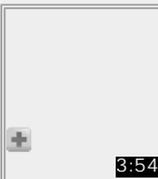
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