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driven home

I never enjoyed dating.
I've always committed early.



In the quest for lifelong love, which I began way too early in life, this tendency was a downfall that often led to rushed and foolish decisions with harmful and sometimes ludicrous outcomes.

But as a grownup – and as one who seeks to constantly grow closer to God – that same tendency has served me well. And in this latest, perhaps craziest chapter of my life, it has been a source of important comfort.

In May, my family moved about 1000 miles southeast...from Chicago, where I'd lived my entire 30-something years of life, where my children were born, where I couldn't go to the grocery store, doctor's office, or even the Cubs game without running into someone I knew, to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, where outside of my family, I know approximately four people.

It has been, as my three-year-old would say, a "teeny-tiny-little" bit daunting.

The thing is though, that I have known since the beginning that our move was a *God thing*. To make a long story short, we'd had our house on the market for nearly a year with no offers. We thought we were headed for Nashville... a place we love, a place connected to our ministry and business interests, a place where we have good friends, a place only a seven hour drive from northern Illinois. However, in late December, someone came back into our lives after many years away and saw his vision more clearly with us in it. Hence, my husband and I are now residents of the Grand Strand and managers of a new theater.

I am excited about the new challenge and all the things it means. But as a woman and a mama, I have three key boxes I need(ed) to check off as soon as possible.

- Where will we live?**
- What will we do about child care/school?**
- Where will we got to church?**

The answers have come more easily than I expected, which is a wonderful surprise, because the packing and stress and sad goodbyes leading up to the move kind of did me in as far as emotional challenges go.

We loved the first house we saw and are renting it

for a year.

I enrolled our daughters in the second Christian pre-school I found, confident that while it isn't homeschool, it is a place where their faith, growth, and education will thrive.

And just today, at the second church we visited, I felt so at ease...not at home, because my home church has been Calvary Assembly in Flossmoor, Illinois since I was seven years old (give or take a few years), but a place that *could be home*.

Sometimes, can't you just see God smiling down on you in the *little things*?

I know we could have kept searching real estate listings and perhaps found something closer to work (and the beach!). And likely there are a few other schools just as nice, just as affordable, just as convenient. And of the many, many, many churches we have driven past in the last two weeks, chances are there are a handful I would enjoy as much or even more as the one we attended today.

But this search is over.

I don't need long courtships. I need hard facts and a sensory confirmation. With matters of the heart, if something brings a smile to my face and tears down my cheeks, it's likely the fit I am looking for. There are no guidelines that cover being able to picture family dinners cooked in a certain kitchen, or how excited your kids will be for a movie-and-popcorn day in a particular school multi-purpose room...

There is nothing on paper to explain why a certain worship service left my heart so full I couldn't utter the words out loud.

Sometimes, you just know.

This month, Driven discusses the idea of success after five years together in gospel music. Charlie Waller reflects on decades of success. The Diamond Awards celebrate the success of artists. Success has a lot of looks and feels, and it is different for each of us.

To me, right now, it is those three boxes checked: shelter, security, and spiritual fellowship for my family. Thank You, Lord!

Follow your instincts, Christian brothers and sisters...because if you're following the Shepherd, they often speak His words! 



KELLY CAPRIOTTI BURTON,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Gospel Music Family

Love, Life, & Legends with Ms. Lou:



Rob Patz, Kelly and Rod Burton, the artists, industry personnel, and fans who gather at the Branson Gospel Music Revival, are an important part of our gospel music family. God has greatly blessed Howard and me with this wonderful group of friends. The gospel music family is worldwide, and I was reminded of the amazing influence of this anointed music recently when the Gaither Homecoming Friends were in concert in Houston. The Homecoming artists have been part of my life for years.

In 1997, I met a young tenor singer from Tomball, Texas, as we both were getting off the plane when it arrived at the Nashville airport. He knew my name and introduced himself as DAVID PHELPS, newly hired by the GAITHER VOCAL BAND. He and his wife, Lori, had moved to Nashville earlier to establish a career in Christian music. It was not easy, but David's big break came when Mark Lowry recommended him to Bill Gaither. The next eight years with the Gaither Vocal Band established David Phelps as one of the greatest tenors of all time. In 2005, he left the Vocal Band to pursue a solo and songwriting ministry. In 2009, he reunited with Bill Gaither, Michael English, Mark Lowry, and Wes Hampton, and the level of performance by this vocal combination is absolutely incomparable.

When the Gaither Vocal Band and the Homecoming Friends were in Houston, Howard and I enjoyed hanging out backstage with the Isaacs, the Martins, Charlotte Ritchie, Gene McDonald, Gor-

don Mote, Kevin Williams, Bill Gaither and members of the Gaither Vocal Band. We loved seeing a very special friend, Deana Warren Surles who works with the Gaithers. At the concert, Mark Lowry received a warm "hometown" welcome and had the audience laughing and cheering. I am honored to be mentioned as Mark's first booking agent, but could not have predicted the pure genius and

depth of this man's artistry. It is pure joy to see and hear him.

A very special couple, Gene and Mary Ella Phelps, parents of David Phelps, were on the front row enjoying the huge audience response every time he was featured. David is a devoted husband and father, and the recent Gaither video "The Best Of David Phelps" has fabulous footage of David, Lori, and their four children



From top: Gaither Vocal Band—Michael English, Mark Lowry, David Phelps, Bill Gaither, Wes Hampton; Martins—Judy, Joyce, Jonathan with Bill Gaither

Callie, Maggie, Grant, and Coby.

May God bless all efforts of the gospel music family as they spread His Word. I thank Him for my thirty years as a member of the Singing Wills Family in Fort Worth, twenty years of artist management and television in Nashville, and these precious years in Houston with Howard, our children, and grandchildren. God keeps His promises, and all the glory belongs to Him! 🇺🇸

Contact: P. O. Box 271106 Houston, TX, 77277
 gospplvideo@aol.com www.louhildreth.com



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.

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

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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.

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. Then, 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 sgn-scoops@gmail.com. We'd love to rejoice with you! God bless you!

It's (NOT) a Pirate's Life for me?

Part II

Last month, I looked at how the entertainment industry has made life frustrating for those who wish to be honest about digital media, and inadvertently rewarded the criminals. I specifically focused last month on the recording industry. Now let's look at TV and film.

YouTube was founded in 2005 and quickly became the go-to place for all videos – not just home movies of giggling babies and funny kittens, but of copyrighted content from TV and film, all advertising-free. Studios have really been cracking down on YouTube lately, forcing the removal of some of the content but, oddly, allowing others to stay, with no real consistency. Meanwhile, YouTube is putting advertisements at the start of many of their videos, even the ones with copyrighted content. The people who posted the clips get no money from it (naturally); the studios get no money from it; but somehow, YouTube is legally allowed to profit from others posting illegal clips. Who designed this system? Lewis Carroll?

Also, the same problem that happened with Napster is starting to happen again on YouTube. Rare and out-of-print film and TV footage is being shut down by the copyright holders, even though those same copyright holders have offered no legal

outlet for the footage to be purchased. YouTube can be a great encyclopedic resource for rare footage, and it could serve as great advertising for product that is available for purchase from the same content creators. Instead, the studios are again shooting themselves in the foot.

Additionally, it doesn't help knowing that the people at the bottom end of the food chain don't benefit regardless. One of the issues that caused the 2007-08 writers' strike in Hollywood is that the writers—the people who create the story without which the rest of the production is impossible—got only 0.3% of the profits from video sales, or roughly 4 cents out of a 20-dollar DVD. Writers asked for an increase of an additional 0.3%, or roughly 8 cents out of every DVD. The Alliance of Motion

Picture and Television Producers insisted that the writers' request was exorbitant. By the end of the strike, the writers failed to get their extra 4 cents.

I care about supporting the work of the creative entities behind the

productions I like, but can anyone really be expected to care about financially supporting the insatiable, unconscionable greed of the corporations?

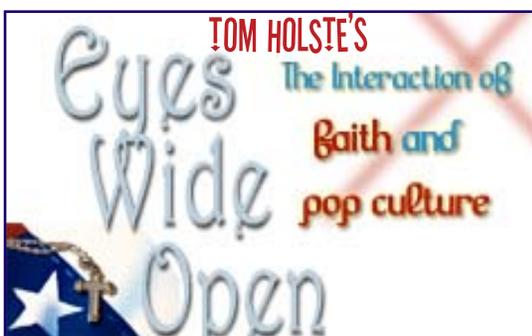
So this is my current stance on downloading content from non-commercial sites on the Internet. (Your own stance may be different.) If I want anything that's legally available, I buy it or rent it. If I want a movie or TV show that isn't currently available, I have no problem with downloading it and keeping it until it becomes

legally available, if that day ever comes. (For instance, I own a copy of the hilariously awful *Star Wars Holiday Special* from 1978, since George Lucas abhors the project and promises that it will never

be legitimately released.) If I'm replacing a lost or missing CD, I don't have a problem with replacing my copy with a copy I find online. If I want a copy of an album I previously bought in another format, I often replace it with an online digital copy. I already completed the transaction of buying the album; I don't feel the need to keep buying it over and over again in every new format that becomes available.

Those are the conclusions that I've come to after repeatedly hitting my head against the wall while trying to do it the corporations' way. I want to do it the

You Lose



most clear-cut, honest, legal way, but the studios need to start working with the consumers rather than chasing them away.

Despite what the industry may think, it will survive

the latest format change, just like it has survived previous format changes.

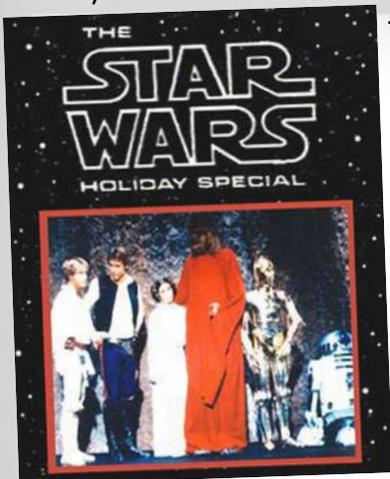
Right now, it's as if the entertainment industry is scoffing, "Radio with pictures? I don't want anything like that to

become popular!"

Maybe I'm wrong on some of these points, and if I am, then please pray for me. When Paul was uncertain of his advice in 1 Corinthians 7, he said, "I and not the Lord say this." In the same way, this is just my opinion. These decisions are the best conclusions I can come to, since the church doesn't seem to want to address the issue very much.

I did, however, see a fantastic example of a godly response when a husband-and-wife Christian illusionist team came to my church once. They sold videos of their ministry at the end, but told us, "If you think that copying our work and giving it to a friend will help them to find Jesus – by all means, do it!" I couldn't agree more. 🇲🇻

Surely, God was not taken by surprise by the advent of digital media, and the answers for even this modern problem can be found in the Bible? *from part 1*



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stuck in the Sunset

When I was 16 years old, I wrote a song titled, "There's Sunshine Awaiting You." The moment I finished writing the song, I knew that God himself had given me the lyrics.

Why? Because the song had a message that transcended the limits of my understanding at this period of my life. You see, the first verse talks about a mother who has lost her child. While I have known people who have gone through this same trial, I have not personally experienced this sort of tragic loss firsthand. Still, God knew that my Mom was the one who needed to hear the lyrics to this song at this exact moment in her life. She was the first one who heard the song, and the first one who cried as she listened. I immediately knew that God had a hand in this one. Little did I know then that this song would one day hold a more significant meaning to me personally. More than a decade later, I would find myself stuck in the sunset.

When I was a little girl, my two little brothers were born prematurely and passed away as infants. I am almost certain that this is why the first verse of my song touched my Mom's heart in such a special way. As I sang the song repeatedly over the years, and even recorded it on my very first cassette, I was so humbled to see that it was ministering to people on so many levels. I enjoyed singing it, I thought the soundtrack was beautiful, and I knew the lyrics were anointed. Still, I could not personally identify with the lyrics of the song, having never been through such a dark time in my life. I had always been the one to smile, no matter what. I could always see a glimpse

of sunshine, even behind the darkest storm cloud. Truth be told, I had not yet seen the darkest storm cloud at this time in my life.

I had witnessed the death of more close friends and loved ones than most people I knew had even been to funerals. Brothers, grandfathers, a grandmother, aunts, uncles, and other friends and relatives...so many loved ones going on to be with the Lord. But, even in the midst of the loss we experienced, my Mom, Dad, and I remained a close-knit Christian family. No matter what happened around us, we knew that the three of us would love and support each other through sunshine and rain. We were like the Three Musketeers. And I had faith that God would always keep us together, no matter what storms brewed overhead. On August 2, 2008, the darkest storm of my life came upon me as suddenly as a tornado can flatten an entire town. There was no warning, there were no goodbyes, and there was nothing my Dad or I could do to silence the violent storm.

Since that tragic night, God has spoken to my heart on several occasions. I still don't have all of the answers. I don't understand why my Mom is not nearby, waiting to read the next entry of my blog, a blog she never had the opportunity to read. And cannot tell you why my Dad and I are not living in this house as a family of five, my Mom and younger brothers still with us. What I do know is that God has a perfect plan for our lives. He walks with me in the sunshine and in the sunset. He holds my hand, whether I am climbing mountains, traversing a rocky terrain, or wading through a raging river. Psalm 23:4 (NIV) says, "Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." I will not be afraid of what tomorrow may bring because I know that God will comfort me in all of my tomorrows. He gives me His perfect peace and He shines forth His light, even though the sun has set. And I know He will continue to bring forth the vibrant sunshine in my life once again, in His timing.

A couple of weeks ago, I was asked to sing at my home church on Mother's Day. For many singers, I am sure this would not be a problem. For me, it is another story. The moment I was asked, a red flag shot up. I thought, no...no, I can't do that. I

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can happily sing any other Sunday, but not that one. I think the pastor must have seen the look in my eyes similar to a deer caught in the headlights, and he quickly asked if it would be too difficult for me. I'll be honest with you. My first response would have been, yes, it would be virtually impossible for me to sing on Mother's Day. And I am sure the pastor would have accepted this, and asked me to sing at another time. Yet, something tugged at my heart and immediately, I knew that this was something I must do.

As I told the pastor that I would sing, I pondered the song that I would share on this day on which we honor our mothers. So, I thought about what I would sing if my Mom could be in the congregation on this special occasion. And of course, the answer was simple. I would sing, "There's Sunshine Awaiting You." Now, I had not sung this song since my Mom's funeral. So, I quickly began seeking God for a different answer other than the one I knew He had given. I mean, I couldn't sing on Mother's Day, much less sing this song. Have you ever had one of those moments when you thought, what is God thinking? Well, this was one of those moments for me. Since I was asked to sing, I have run through the song twice. The first time I ran through the song, I heard the lyrics in a new light. My song was ministering to me. I realized that I had been stuck in the sunset. And that is why I need to sing this song. Sure, when I stand up on the platform on that particular Sunday, I will likely blubber as I introduce the song and I am sure pitch will have a new meaning when I reach the song's end. But, sometimes serving the Lord isn't about eloquent speech or perfect pitch. Sometimes it's simply about answer His call, no matter how difficult it seems.

Even when we're stuck in the sunset, we have the assurance that there is sunshine awaiting us. Although it may seem unbearable at times, we need to be



faithful to the One who created us. He will bring us to a place of rest, away from the storms of life that overwhelm us. The lyrics of my song speak about seeing a sunset that seems forever, and how difficult it is to face grief and pain. This sunset that you find yourself in may seem long-lasting, but it is not forever. When you reach the lowest, darkest valley, God will bring you to your knees. When you cannot go on one more mile, God will carry you through each and every storm. If you find yourself stuck in the sunset, rest assured that there's sunshine awaiting you. 🇺🇸

- Jennifer Campbell



Driven to Succeed

By Lorraine Walker

What is success? For a group of gentlemen inspired to sing, compelled to minister and motivated to worship, success is found in knowing you are fulfilling the Lord's call. The men of Driven Quartet are experiencing this success as they journey into their fifth year of making music. Beginning the summer concert season with a charting song, "The Story of My Life", a newly released album, "He Will Provide" and several nominations for the celebrated Diamond Awards, Driven is succeeding in taking their music across the country. Driven Quartet sings Southern Gospel for every age with a message for every heart. The group is seeing souls come to know Jesus and that's what keeps them going. In February 2012 they will celebrate five years of making music. Jason Funderburk, the driving force behind the Quartet, says his highlight of the past five years has been the ability to meet and greet so many Driven fans.

"My influences are the people in the audience," said Funderburk in a recent interview. "They influence me to live my life in the best of ways. We are blessed to have a wide range of fans." It is the people they sing to that keeps Driven getting back on the bus time after time and singing the songs of faith that they have recorded. No matter how many times he steps up to the microphone to sing, one song Funderburk will not tire of performing is the tune that is currently charting in various southern gospel publications across the country.

"'The Story of My Life', [is my favorite] because the message is simple yet profound," said Jason. "It reminds me every day to live my life for Christ, so others will know that God is the story of my life."

Driven fans will be happy to know that there is new music on the way from the group. "We actually just released one CD," Funderburk said, referring to 'He Will Provide'. "We currently are going through the process of choosing songs for our next project. We have a studio in Nashville we are aligning dates with. Our process is simple for choosing

certain songs: if we connect with the song and enjoy it, then that song goes on our record."

Driven Quartet's fans appreciate the songs the group records and are extremely loyal to them. This is proven by Driven's recent nominations for the Diamond Awards, held in Branson, Missouri on June 30, 2011 at the Branson Gospel Music Revival. The group was picked for the top five choices in five different categories, including Favorite Song, for "Mercy Saw Me" and Favorite Album (Driven Quartet). They also received nods in the areas of Favorite Christian Country Group, Favorite Male Quartet, and Favorite Artist Website. Jason commented, "We are delighted that our fans would think enough of us to nominate us for such prestigious awards."

The faithful fan base of the Quar-

tet is growing and creating some very special friendships for group members. Funderburk shared this story of one very special Driven friend.

"It was a hot summer day last year and we were on our way to Georgia. Around Spartanburg, South Carolina our bus had a blow out. So there we were looking for a bus tire and I was stressing about making it to the date. I called around to several tire shops and everyone I talked to knew I was in a pinch so their pricing reflected that."

"One last call to a preacher in the area I knew lead me to a gentleman that came out, put on a new tire and got me back on the road in time, all staying within a gospel singer's budget," Funderburk continued. "We talked while he worked and then I invited him to

come see us Sunday morning, as we were scheduled back in the Greenville, S. C. area. Sunday morning rolled around, and low and behold, Wayne, also known as 'The Tire Man', showed up at our service!"

"We had an awesome spirited service and the altar had a few people getting things

Making God centered decisions is the foundation to a successful gospel group...and finding the proper balance of being the leader in the group and also just one of the guys. - Jason Funderburk



right. Before I knew it Wayne came down and gave his life to Christ,” said Funderburk. “He told me that all weekend he had been thinking about our conversation and knew something was different with me. He tells me that often people that have known him for a long time have seen that same difference in him and that is his way of reaching folks that I never could. We now see Wayne and his wife Kay whenever we are close, and they even surprised us down in Florida one weekend!”

Jason Funderburk tries to live every day the love he shares on stage. As the leader of Driven, he has found that being in charge of a ministry and a business has its special challenges. “Making God centered decisions is the foundation to a successful gospel group,” Funderburk said. “[Its] finding the proper balance of being the leader in the group and also just one of the guys. Leading the group is very time consuming and there are really no set scheduled hours.” He wants to see the group continue to do the Lord’s will and stay in tune with His leading. To do this, he says that the group must keep their focus on God.

“Individual devotions and devotions that we do as a group keeps us focused. In doing that, it helps us hold one another accountable.”

It was difficult to be away from my dad because he always was traveling...Now I realize [it was] the calling on his life that took him away from his family. - Jason on Danny

Driven’s leader is determined to keep the group’s eyes on the Lord. “Good moral values are the ingredients to great integrity,” he stated. “If you stay focused on God, your integrity will remain strong.”

The members of Driven all have a commitment to good values and a calling to ministry. Tenor Scott Penuel was a Youth Pastor before joining the group. Chad Smith, Baritone singer, is the son of a preacher. Bass singer Will Lane came to the group without a direct connection to a pulpit, but with a heart to minister just like the other members. Each member has a family and resides in North Carolina.

Family is also very important to Jason, who came into Southern Gospel music at an early age, following in the footsteps of his father Danny. Danny Funderburk sang for the Cathedral Quartet, Perfect Heart, The Singing Americans and Mercy’s Way. His son, Jason, learned that the life of a Southern Gospel artist was often one of sacrifice. “It was difficult to be away from my dad because he always was traveling,” said Funderburk. “Now I realize [it was] the calling on his life that took him away from his family. I gained the wisdom of following your heart.”

During this month of June where Fathers are recognized with their own special day, Jason shared this message with *Scoops*, especially for his Dad, Danny:

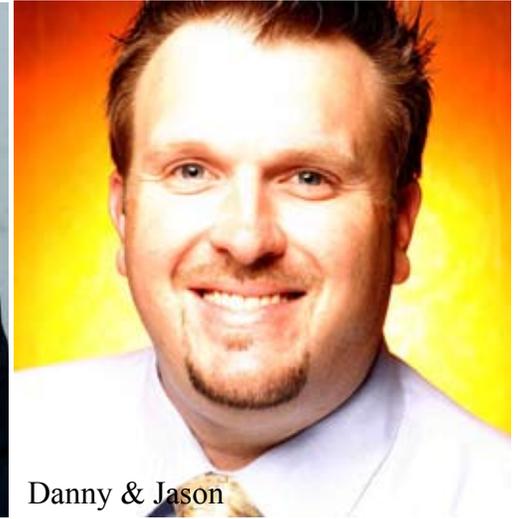
“On this Fathers Day I want to thank my Dad for all the lives he touched through his years of



singing Gospel Music. There is not one place that I go that someone does not share how he has been a blessing to them. But most of all I want him to know how proud I am to call him my Father, and am very glad that he instilled in me the will to follow my heart and always keep God first. Love ya Pop!”

Keeping God first is what Driven is all about. After four years of riding in a bus together, these four gentlemen with the same focus have developed a bond and a sound that is strong and unique. They have also traveled many miles, but Funderburk admits he'd like to go a little further afield. “I would love to go to Australia, so if any mates are reading this, keep Driven in mind!”

Whether they travel at home or abroad, Driven is looking forward to the next five years of successful ministry. They have determined to run a good race and reach for the prize of the higher calling, which is



Danny & Jason

success for any Christian. With Jason Funderburk at the helm, the group will endeavor to keep the Lord as their driving force, whatever they face. Funderburk commented, “No matter what ...God is still in control. The deeper the valleys, the higher the mountain tops are!”

For more information on Driven Quartet, log on to www.drivenqt.com.

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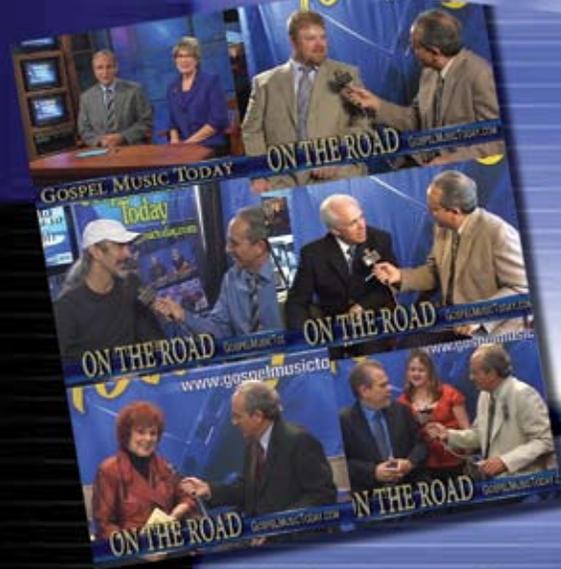
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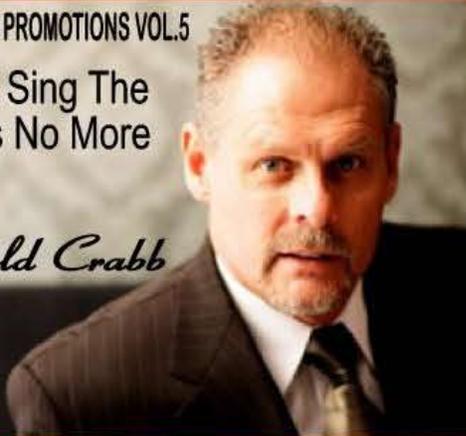
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The Hectic Life of *Charlie Waller*

By Sandi Duncan Clark

If you've been a fan of Southern Gospel music for any length of time, you probably have met Charlie Waller. He would be the colorful Southern gentleman, dressed to the nines, probably wearing a white cowboy hat, and rushing to put the finishing touches to whatever event he's pursuing at the time.

Charles Waller, affectionately known as Charlie, is one of the busiest men in Southern Gospel music. In 1988, Charlie began an event that has proven to be one of the industry's best loved concert series, the Grand Ole Gospel Reunion. That first year was a Saturday night concert and the production has grown to a three day event held in Greenville, South Carolina, August 11-13 this year.

As a member of several Southern Gospel committees, guilds and associations, Charlie is always attending meetings. Having been an active member of the Southern Gospel Music Association since its inception, Charlie was appointed the Executive Director in 2005, and continues to serve in that position. He was

deservingly inducted into the SGMA Hall of Fame in 2009.

Charlie was eager to share his excitement for the Southern Gospel Music Museum and Hall of Fame which are a major operation of the Southern Gospel Music Association.

"We're getting ready for the September 28th, 2011 induction ceremony! Once again

this year we will have the *Singing News* Fan Awards that same day," he said. "The tickets are \$75 and are going fast. They include parking and admission to Dollywood with access to all events for the day. We literally roll out a red carpet for all the Gospel artists, allowing the fans to greet them. We finish the day with the classy induction ceremony and the prestigious awards."

In 2007, Les Beasley, Glen Allred and Derrell Stewart retired and passed the legendary Florida Boys Quartet name on to Charlie. Charlie sings lead and manages the quartet, and even with his busy schedule, still manages to work an average of six concerts each month. "This past year has been a great one for The Florida Boys," Charlie said. "We've stayed busy, and met a lot of new fans. It's always fun to see the audience reaction when we come on stage with our

colorful suits and shirts, and use just the two RCA microphones."

"We are putting the finishing touches on a new

CD, and we're excited about it. We did some old songs with new arrangements; 'One of These Mornings,' 'Just a Little While,' and a song fans might not remember, 'The Brave Apostles Twelve,'" he said. "The album title will be *Discriminately Different* which we are, and we plan to have the new project at the Grand Ole Gospel Reunion."

He con-

**The [Florida Boys' new] album title will be
Discriminately Different which we are...**



Charlie and Eva Mae LeFevre

Eva Mae presented this portrait of herself to me. She had it framed and wanted me to have it. This was the last time I saw her and was also the last trip to the museum and Hall of Fame.

She was a true performer. We were talking about her funeral would come one day,,,I asked if she wanted me to say anything at her funeral. She said "Charles, you have the Florida Boys now and you have dates and commitments. As a performer you must keep those appointments. I would like for you to say something if you are not working though. Honey, you have done for Eva Mae while she was living. There's nothing you can do for her after she's gone." I hugged her and walked away, I never look at that picture, that I don't hear those words of appreciation.



tinued, "The 2011 Grand Ole Gospel Reunion is coming up on August 11-13 and it's one of my favorite annual Southern Gospel events. I started this to pay tribute to some of my heroes in the business... the ones who weathered the storms and made Southern Gospel music what it is today. With the help of Jack Pittman (The Palmetto State Quartet,) we tracked down a number of the original members of groups like The Statesmen, The Blackwood Brothers, The Cathedrals, The Chuck Wagon Gang, The Palmetto State Quartet, The Blue Ridge Quartet, The Segos, The Stamps, The Prophets, The Weatherfords, The Sunshine Boys, The Melody Boys, The Dixie Melody Boys and others."

Charlie continued, "Through the years I've developed some things that really excite the fans. Everyone enjoys 'Let's Make A Deal,' 'Piano Roll of Honor,' 'The Living Legend Awards,' 'Breakfast With The Stars,' and this year we're doing 'This Is Your Life'. He finished by saying, "There are concerts all three nights, Jam Sessions, movies, videos and lots of music."

When asked who would be featured on "This Is Your Life," Charlie replied, "That's part of the excitement. No one knows until the event."

In 1991, the Grand Ole Gospel Reunion was the site of the first Gaither Homecoming presentation. Gaither's concept video, "Where Could I Go But To The Lord" was debuted and performed live for the

audience.

"The Booth Brothers made one of their first concert appearances at GOCR and The original

Dove Brothers made their first appearance on stage singing their phenomenal hit, 'Get Away Jordan,'" Charlie told us. "Hovie Lister joined them on stage for this song, which was a big hit for Hovie and the Statesmen Quartet and revived by McCray Dove and the Dove Brothers."

The Hyatt Hotel in the heart of downtown Greenville, S.C., is once again the site of the GOCR. "It's all under one roof," Charlie shared. "Fans can come in, park their car and never have to leave. There are several restaurants in the Hyatt, or within easy walking distance and shopping is easily available."

Charlie concluded with "There's plenty of room





Florida Boy Mantel to Charlie Waller; Charlie is known as "Tha Man" by fans who attend the Grand Ole Gospel Reunion. This is one of the best photos of Charlie in "Tha Man Hat." This page: Charlie presenting Les Beasley with "Tha Man Hat" of his own.

for the concerts in the hotel ballroom. One of the best things about being at the Hyatt is that you are there with all the performers and you'll always run into someone to have a cup of coffee with or just to chat. I have a great package deal with the hotel at a great price for double occupancy per room."

As you can tell, Charlie literally wears many hats, all of which contribute greatly to the future... and the history of Southern Gospel Music. 🇺🇸

Photos: The Florida Boys are colorful and exciting and the fans expect to have a happy time at their concerts; previous page from top: In 2007, on stage at the NQC Les Beasley, Glenn Allred and Derrell Stewart pass the

All photos courtesy of Charlie Waller.

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KELLY CAPRIOTTI BURTON is a recent transplant from Chicagoland to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, where she works with her gospel-singing husband Rod at the new Pat Boone Family Theater. Together the couple also produces Branson Gospel Music Revival and has four amazing kids. Kelly is a 'still' a writer and believes, "If you want to hear God laugh, tell Him your plans!"
mylifeastheglue.com



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.



SANDI DUNCAN-CLARK! grew up in Greenville, South Carolina as the daughter of a Baptist minister. For more than 30 years, it has been her joy to contribute to the ministry of those who serve the Lord singing Southern Gospel. With her husband, Cliff, Sandi makes her home in Easley, S. C., where she attends Westwood Church, does volunteer work, and spendatime with her son and new daughter-in-law.
Sandi's Facebook



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



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JENNIFER CAMPBELL has returned to Scoops and we're happy to have her. She resides in Florida where she is a master English teacher and enjoys singing and writing gospel music. We invite you to read her rich testimony at her website.
jennifercampbell.net

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Our hearts & prayers are with our contributor D. Ann Bailey in the recent loss of her dear mother, Peggy C. Bailey... who said "Hello in Heaven" on June 5, 2010.



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The Prestigious Diamond Awards: Celebrating 20 Years

By Lorraine Walker



A diamond represents quality, prestige, value and even eternity. Southern Gospel Music's Diamond Awards encompass all these things and on this, the 20th year of the Diamond Awards, the best in Southern Gospel will be honored for their quality. The Branson Gospel Music Revival will host

"I'm excited about the line up for the 2011 diamond awards. It is going to be a year remember!" Rob Patz of Coastal Media.

High Road, a female southern gospel trio, is thrilled to be among the performers during the evening presentations. "As a group, we are thrilled to be a part of the Diamond Awards this year," says Sarah Davison of High Road. "Joining such a talented group of artists for a night of great gospel music is definitely going to be one of our biggest highlights this year. The Diamond Awards are truly inspirational for anyone who loves gospel music, whether you're 9 years old or 90 years old. For us, taking part in making music that is glorifying to the Savior is what it is all about, and we are so blessed to have this opportunity."

Southern gospel favorites, 2nd Generation, are also scheduled to perform during the evening presentation. "The Diamond Awards ceremony is so professional,"



the awards program on June 30, 2011 at the Tri-Lakes Centre, Branson, during an unforgettable celebration of music and worship.

The Diamond Awards were originally presented by the *Gospel Voice Magazine* and were transferred to *SGN Scoops Digital* for the inaugural Branson Music Convention in 2009. The presentation gala has always been a time of praise and worship, and this has been accentuated during the Branson ceremonies. In 2010, the awards evening was filled with outstanding performances by unique

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From top: 2010 hosts Christy Sutherland and Johnathan Bond; 2010 Talent Search winner Tammy Smith is interviewed by GMT's Ken Grady
Photos By Julie Groves

'super-groups', such as the combining of Jericho and Praise Inc. for the singing of "First Day in Heaven". This year the artist roster for the evening is just as varied and fans will be treated to more surprises.

says Brenda Denney. "The only thing missing is the Red Carpet! You feel so honored, blessed, and appreciated."

"2nd Generation is looking forward to the Awards ceremony on June 30th at Branson," continues Denney. "We have been nominated for Trio of the Year along-side of other amazing artists and we know that the fans have already cast their votes. We are so thankful for each of them."

The Diamond Awards are fan-based prizes, with voting completed through both print and on-line ballots. This has been the case since Allen Smith acquired the Awards several years ago. Smith was the owner of SGN Scoops Magazine at the time. In an earlier interview, Allen Smith explained the Awards history to this writer for an article published by SGM Radio in March 2007. "They were started [in 1991] by the Gospel Voice Magazine. They went out of business a few years later and the Diamond Awards lay dormant for about two years. I had been praying for some time about the possibility of our magazine having an awards program. Feeling the direction of the Lord in the matter, [in 2003] I spoke with the owner of Voice Magazine and

asked if it would be possible for us to take over the Diamond Awards. He told me he would have to talk it over with his partner, and get back to me. He did Dale & Cheryl Golden get back to me, and the rest is history. They just handed the Diamond Awards over to us."

In the same interview, Smith said, "There are many more fans that vote, than those in the industry. However, you would probably be surprised by the industry names that appear on our ballot registrations. There are a lot of industry people who do vote. The Diamond Awards have become very prestigious, and almost everyone wants to be involved in some way or another." This same scenario holds true today and the Diamond Awards have retained the prestigious reputation they earned under the management of Allen Smith.

Fans and industry insiders are still given the opportunity to nominate and vote for their favorites. The website at <http://www.sgnscoops.com/> sees a flurry of activity when the nominations begin. At a time when more Gospel awards programs are springing up across the country, the Diamond Awards have retained their reputation for the excellence of their recipients and for reflecting the authentic viewpoint of the real southern gospel fan. It is because of this reputation for quality that the awards are so popular with fans and artists alike.

"The thing that makes the Awards special is the fans get the vote from beginning to end and I love that process of voting," says Jonathan Edwards. "I love being a part of the awards show because you never know what's going to happen! Last year we saw combinations of singers we may never see again singing together, and this year is going to be even better, with the focus being on the Cross of Calvary." Edwards is a DJ out of KWFC, Springfield Missouri and is involved in the production of the Diamond Awards.

As a recipient of a Diamond Award, Brenda Denney of 2nd Generation concurs. "2nd Generation is so honored to be winners and nominees of a Diamond Award. We won our first Diamond Award in 2010 for

In the music industry we seem to see the same groups winning the same awards over and over every year because most nominees and winners are chosen by people in the industry and not the fans. The fans get to speak their voice for the Diamond Awards and people listen."

- Brenda Denney, 2nd Generation

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the Sunrise Artist. It meant so much to us. It might as well been a Grammy!"

"To think that the fans nominate and vote for the winner is what means the most to us," continues Denny. "In the music industry we seem to see the same groups winning the same awards over and over every year because most nominees and winners are chosen by people in the industry and not the fans. The fans get to speak their voice for the Diamond Awards and people listen."

One of the hosts for the evening will be Christy Sutherland, gospel soloist and past Diamond Award recipient, who remarks, "I am also humbled and thrilled to be the most nominated artist for the second year in a row. I look forward to celebrating the Diamonds with many of my friends and co-workers in spreading the Gospel. It's going to be a great time in Branson, Missouri!"

Another major event on June 30th will be the Mansion Entertainment/Pathway Records' Talent Search. Featuring new talent from across the country, the first place entrant will be announced during the Awards ceremony that evening. Bill Dykes of Mansion Entertainment says, "We are looking forward to being apart of the Diamond Awards this year. In my 45-year career singing Gospel Music I have seen, been a part of, and observed, many types of Award Shows. There is something special about the Diamond Awards!"

SGN Scoops Digital is owned by Costal Media Group whose CEO, Rob Patz, also takes part in the presentations. Patz himself received a Diamond Award in 2005 and has determined to carry on the tradition of the esteemed awards. Dykes says, "Rob Patz is a true lover of Gospel Music, its fans, the artists, and the business, but I believe what does set him apart is that it's not all about him or the business! It's about sharing the Good News, about people coming to know the Lord, and taking time to honor the people that spend their lives traveling the world doing the same. I like the fact that the fans can vote on who they love, not just who the industry loves!"

The evening of the ceremony is a busy rush of preparations and last-minute details for all involved. While presenters, performers and award nominees mingle and prepare backstage, another gospel music personality, Ken Grady, can be found in the midst of the organized chaos. Ken and his wife Jean are part of the driving force behind Gospel Music Today, and in 2010, the couple talked with many of the artists who gathered for the presentation.

"Jean and I did backstage interviews with the win-

ners, presenters, and performers," says Grady. "One of the memories that has stayed with me was that, while the winners were, of course, delighted, the people who did not win seemed as happy for the winners as if they had won themselves."

"We also enjoyed the all-star quartets that were formed for the program that night. It was obvious that the singers really enjoyed singing with each other, in many cases for the first time," says Grady. "An awards program implies competition, but we did not get a sense of that at all. The atmosphere was more like a family reunion."

The sense of family and collective worship draws fans and artists back to Branson each year. The excitement and anticipation of the Diamond Awards adds a touch of ceremony to the Thursday night concert that is a highlight of the four-day event. Southern gospel fans who have not made the June trip to Branson should make this event a vacation destination for the family.

Quality and eternity are valid descriptors for a diamond, and those involved with the Diamond Awards aim not only for quality but also for the eternal value of their work. As the Word of God goes forth in song, the lasting effect that it may have on those present may only be discovered in eternity. As for the nominees and winners, they are honored for their value as servants of God, in a way that can only be found at the unique and prestigious Diamond Awards.

For a full list of nominees, please visit www.sgn-scoops.com 



Top: 2nd Generation is nominated for this year's Trio of the Year after winning (bottom) Sunrise Award in 2010.

Lynda Lynn Songs, Award Winning Songwriter

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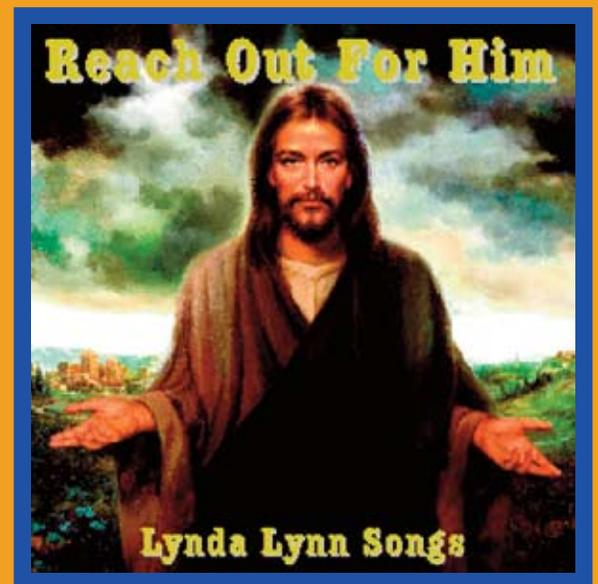
Frequent television guests, **Lynda & Bud Lynn**, are Country Gospel Music Association's International Media Personalities of the Year for 3 consecutive years. They also received a Publisher's Award from SGN Scoops Magazine.

Lynda & Bud with Gregg Busch honor the Purple Heart Recipients at Branson's Chateau on the Lake. Branson cares for our Veterans. Lynda & Bud performed Lynda's song *One Voice* at the Missouri state capital in Jefferson City, Missouri.

Photo George Kurlin

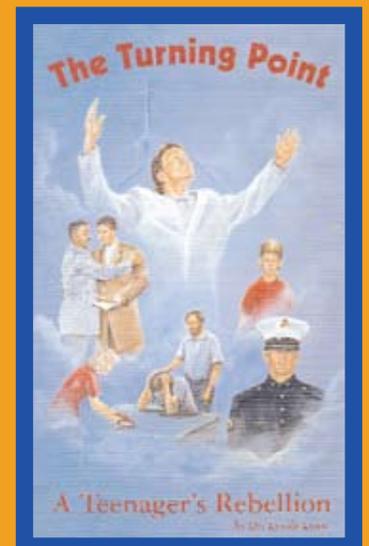


Dr. Lynda Lynn is a 14 time ASCAP award winning songwriter. Her latest CD, *Reach Out For Him*, features 16 Branson artists and 19 songs. Barbara Fairchild, Randy Brooks, Andrea Blackwood Carter, Glory-Anne Prophet and more. Gene Higgins' Powersource Magazine, Nashville, listed *Little Boys & Little Toys* by Barbara Fairchild at #7.



An Ozark winter wonderland at **Chapelwoods**, this was built to make a difference as Rod Burton stated. Rod chose this as an image for the front cover of his new CD titled *The Difference*. Come see and pray. God will "God Zap" you as you enter through the door of this quaint little chapel.

Lynda has co-authored a book with her son Rory titled, *The Turning Point, A Teenager's Rebellion*. The book focuses on trusting God to bring families with troubled teens through rebellious times allowing family restoration.



Behind THE Music

If you're a fan of traditional Southern Gospel music, you must add Georgia's new recording to your collection. Eleven well-known Gospel favorites receive a royal treatment from this male trio; Don Elrod singing lead, Reggie Smallwood singing baritone and Terry Dale singing tenor.

They sing a number of songs that made the Southern Gospel music charts throughout the group's thirty six year history and the most enjoyable for me was their resurrection of several Heaven Bound hits, written by Jeff Gibson. A couple of these were top charting songs for Heaven Bound, and these gentlemen do a wonderful job on each one!

"I Know My God Can Do It," "Canaan Land Is Just In Sight" and "Wonderful Savior" took me back a few years, and I certainly sang along! You'll also hear great versions of "I'd Rather Have Jesus," "I Never Shall Forget The Day" and "Jesus Is Precious To Me," all done with the finesse.

"I'm Going There," "I Know What He Did For Me" along with the grand old church invitational hymn "Just As I Am" are all very well done. You can hear the trio's joy in their music when they sing, and their harmony and blend make their songs most enjoyable.

Georgia selected Colbert Croft's "When I See Jesus Coming After Me" as the song to send to Gospel



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"OUR 36TH ANNIVERSARY" was released in March of this year, and has been an exciting addition to Georgia's ministry. Having a legacy of thirty six years singing Gospel music speaks volumes of the group's tenacity and joy in serving the Lord. Georgia is a "weekend warrior" trio and enjoys sharing their love for the Lord and Gospel music with fans wherever they travel.

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Behind THE Music cont'd

NEW DAY
THE MARTINS
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Producer: Jay DeMarcus

This is the first studio recording we've had from the Martins' since 2005, and it has been highly anticipated. In mid-April we were privileged to hear some of the songs in person, when we attended the Gaither Homecoming in our home town, and what dynamic music we experienced!

Produced by Jay DeMarcus, (member of the band, Rascal Flatts,) Martins' fans will enjoy the same quality music we've grown to expect from this family trio.



The recording has a country flavor, with a more traditional sound on some songs, and a little progressive sound on others. Ten songs, written by a number the music industry's best writers, provide a new repertoire for

Judy, Jonathan and

Joyce.

Their hit release, "Somebody Like Me" and their current radio single, "Unredeemed" are two of the powerful songs on NEW DAY. The theme of this recording seems to be God's great mercy and forgiveness through all our humanity and life trials.

Martins' fans will not be disappointed with NEW DAY and the ten songs offer something for every Gospel music lover. One of my favorite songs is "Tell Them That I Love Them," co-written by Carl Cartee, Gina Boe and Kenna West. This is a ballad with good music tracks, featuring Jonathan. It has a simplest message; just "tell them that I love them, that I died to set them free..."

The music tracks on "Unredeemed" begin with a simple piano, then crescendos into a great orchestrated production, grabbing ones' attention. It has the poignant message of a life of disappointment that can be filled with the redemption of God when we give our all to Him! What an awesome blessing and Judy does a wonderful job on this song.

"Love's Gonna Drive This Train," written by Dwight Liles and Michael Puryear has a driving country intro, and picks up the pace to bring the recording down to the final song. "I Surrender" was co-written by Chris Eaton and Joyce Martin Sanders and speaks of our humility before the Lord, in seeking His love and forgiveness.

"I Surrender" is a wonderful way to close out a recording of love, grace and new beginnings. NEW DAY will be available at your local Christian book store on June 21st.

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