

HisSong

October 2009 - NQC Highlights!

THE ALL NEW

sgn Scoops

Southern Gospel's First All Digital Magazine digital

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Annes

Dottie Rambo
SHELTERED

The Rambo Legacy lives on:
Dottie's family & fans celebrate new CD

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about Dan Brown's
Angels & Demons?

Pastor Appreciation
Month

We Salute
SOUTHERN GOSPEL'S
PASTORS

HIS SONG

takes center stage



NQC CHATS:
We caught up with
Jason Crabb,
The Roarks,
The Quicks,
Beyond the Ashes,
& more!

We had a blast bringing & making the news with you at NQC 2009!

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Publisher Rob Patz enjoys a moment with Ms. Naomi Segó



Editor Kelly Capriotti Burton & husband Rod talk about the new SC00PS with KY's 770AM personality Bruce Edwards



Rob hangs out with The Original Couriers.



Production Assistant Tawyna Harris takes a breather. We work hard around here!

Hundreds of fans & friends stopped by to scope the new Scoops



SGM radio

Southern Gospel

24x7



Writer Evie Hawkins chats with Chris Hester.. Our cartoonist captures the moment forever!



Happy Birthday Boss.. an NQC tradition slightly younger than 52 years!

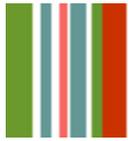


Ms. Lulu Roman.. do you hear what I hear?

We appreciate seeing & serving you year after year & we're already looking forward to 2010!



2nd Generation brings color, class, & a little crazy to the interviews!



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For advertising, inquiries, or comments:
SGNScoops@gmail.com

Send news items to:
news@sgnscoops.com



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Publisher:
ROB PATZ

Editor-in-Chief:
KELLY CAPRIOTTI BURTON

Contributing Writers
EVIE HAWKINS
CHAD HAYES
LOU WILLS HILDRETH
TOM HOLSTE
RHONDA FRYE
JIMMY MCMILLAN
JERRY TINKLE
LORRAINE WALKER

Graphic Design:
STEPHANIE KELLEY

Founder:
ALLEN SMITH

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shoutlife.com/sgnscoops

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.

"Greenish Me" was the intended title for an article I started writing almost two years ago, when I decided our kids needed to drink organic milk and that we as a family should use organic products whenever possible. The cost difference not only caused my husband, my mom, and my BFF to challenge my decision, but also to make fun of me at every turn. If I purchased, say, a bag of Doritos, they'd automatically ask, "Are those organic?" You get the point..

Being Green used to be about a lovable talking frog, and now it is about being environmentally responsible. A traditional meaning, though, means that something is new.. like spring.

Greenish, therefore, is a great word for most things going on for me lately. I still feel pretty new at the mommy thing, and though my experiences are racking up after almost seven years of being a wife and

a stepmom, and more years than I care to think about being a "grown-up," it all feels new a lot of the time. That said, newness is a theme I enjoy personally. Anyone who knows me knows I am always looking for the next thing to discover or learn about or do.

WHAT I HAVE DISCOVERED ABOUT SOUTHERN GOSPEL PEOPLE SINCE I WAS THROWN HEAD-FIRST INTO THEIR WORLD.. IS THAT THEY ARE A FAMILY.

For the last 12 years, even my 'life verse' has been about newness - Isaiah 43:19, 'Behold I will do a new thing..shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.' (NKJV).

Newness can also be exhausting. I witnessed this as I milled around National Quartet Convention for just the third time in my life. It's been a full two years since my first exposure to this pretty much indescribable event (I know. Try describing it to my Chicago suburbanite friends. It can't be done!). This year, I felt like I could find my way around with my eyes closed. It had somehow become comfortable. Familiar. Not new.

And I was glad! See, what I have discovered about Southern Gospel people since I was thrown head-first into their world (Thank you, Husband), is that they are a family. A lot of music genres and sub-genres

and scenes have a lot of cool things going for them, but you don't typically see people praying together at their events. I am willing to bet their interviews don't often end with the shutting off of a recorder so reporter and reportee can have a cry after sharing testimonies. I am doubtful that many if *any* of their pre-parties or after-galas occur in the food court and involve a whole lot of people holding each other's kids and feeding them ginourmous ice cream cones.

Of course, Southern Gospel is also an in-

dustry, and every industry has its problems, its controversies, its conflicts, and its haters. But it is also a family (you know, most families contain those things as well). And families have some qualities that were very evident as



I traipsed from booth to showcase to meet and greet to concert hall to Denny's and back again.

Families celebrate each other's successes. And wow dd we celebrate when we saw friends taking the main stage for the first time or bringing people to their feet during a song! If people tell you that there is nothing but competition in SG music, they aren't talking to everyone involved. I saw friends in so-called competitive categories genuinely rejoicing in the victories of others, even if that success surpassed their own. (Don't get me started on the competition thing anyway. SG is at its core ministry, and the only competition in that is for souls – and by the way, there are only two possible winners there!)

Families encourage one another through trials and disappointments. There weren't an abundance of these during the convention, but we've heard about more than a few since we've been back. Once again, I will call out the power of interactive internet. Because of it, we know when artists are stranded with bus trouble or sick or looking for a date to fill a last minute cancel or grieved in some way, and we can pray immediately. We can offer words of encouragement immediately. Even today, I see SG brothers and sisters pouring out love and blessings and exhortation where it is needed. I am so proud to know that circle and to be a part of it.

I am also proud to bring it to you with *Scoops*. We're working to bring you more than just glimpses of the people serving the Lord with their music. We want you to know their hearts. Meanwhile, as you will see this month, we are branching out to delve into topics that our relevant to our world and just as important, our Christian worldview. It's another new thing we're trying.

Being Green.. it's about being something fresh, but more importantly, being alive.

Evie Hawkins
THE MUSIC NQC MIX

Catching up with artists during NQC week was a treat. Brief interviews during the Daywind Showcase, the set of the Rob Patz SGM Radio booth, the SogospelNews Meet and Greet, and Shane Roarks Showcases, were just a few outlets for a reporter to get the scoop!

Amazingly, the roving reporter actually had some scheduled appointments for interviews. Catching up with Jason Crabb would definitely need to be an appointment, as a television crew was filming him on his very own quest to interview fans himself. Fun to watch! The interview at his product table was amusing, to say the least, because Jason doesn't meet a stranger, ever! The blessing of getting to see him interact with his fans and be his scattered and genuine self was a treat.

People ask the question of scattered people: "Why don't you get organized?" First of all, an artist that wants to connect with every fan may never get there! Jason is a true example of a man that does not want any fan to leave without a hug, a smile, and a big "I Love you." This makes Jason Crabb a kindred spirit to masses of people. He's real, he's genuine, he's scattered!

Now what about that quote that was being given and didn't quite get finished because a fan needed a hug? Well, it never got answered, but one just as good did. Just as the answer was about to come from his mouth, another group of fans came to his record table. He jumped for a hug and this motherly reporter said, "Yes, and be sure to buy Jason's new CD." He stopped and gave hugs to everyone there, asking how they were, obviously remembering his fans, and completely forgetting the record table. No quote needed! Thank God for his wife, Shellye, who kept the appointment book! Jason's "Walk on Water," Spring Hill release, hit the *Singing News Chart* at #40 in September.

Johnathan Bond, with Young Harmony, is a man about his business. Johnathan and Ginger have a compassion that reaches far and wide, and they have a reputation for reaching out to those that



Our roving reporter Evie with Jason and Shellye Crabb.

Photo by Melissa Patrick

so many have given up on. Many success stories, and yes, humorous stories, have been told by Johnathan as they travel thousands of miles to spread their message of hope through testimony and song. The His Choice booth was like a neighborhood picnic and fitting for Young Harmony, as friends and fans felt comfortable enough to crash on a couch or sit at a table with their snacks. Johnathan is somewhat of a pied-piper and really doesn't seem to realize that people just want to be close by to hear what he will say next! Fans and artists alike filled up his booth as though they were squatters.

The His Choice booth had water bottles, hand-lotion, finger-nail polish, reporters' notebooks, and extra luggage, an obvious indication that people were just not going to be "movin' on!"

Many good interviews took place right inside Johnathan's booth, as he made all friends and fans welcome. Chris Hester, Rob Helton, Josh Akers, Rod Burton, and Anthony Facello were easy prey to interview in this gathering of food and fun.

Rod Burton is not only rapidly becoming a popular name for establishing himself as a promoter with the Branson Gospel Music Convention, but is rapidly climbing charts with "Take a Stand."

Faces that are not so new but who have taken a break to only come back

PEOPLE ASK THE QUESTION OF SCATTERED PEOPLE: "WHY DON'T YOU GET ORGANIZED?" AN ARTIST THAT WANTS TO CONNECT WITH EVERY FAN MAY NEVER GET THERE!



A lively trio on an early morning at the Daywind Meet and Greet - Dustin Sweatman, Eric Phillips, and Mark Trammel.

Photos on this page by Evie Hawkins

stronger than ever, include Josh Aker's, Atoned, who has proven to have amazing harmonies and business savvy that is apt to propel this Kentucky based group to new heights.

Chris Hester holds the # 26 spot on New Day's Southern Gospel Retail Sales Chart with crossover, "Steps I've Taken." Strong, powerful, moving vocals are taking this song and voice into new horizons. Chris is definitely an artist one should watch and give a close listen!

Beyond the Ashes holds its own with "He Still Does" at #67 on the *Singing News* charts. Anthony Facello's testimony will not be given away here. One needs to sit with the humble Facello, and hear the story first hand. This is a blessing worth a trip to Louisville.

Rob Helton charted with his debut single, "I've Been to the Well" and continues his success story with :A Little Further down the Road." First impression: Rob is a warrior, here for the battle and not going away...and no one wants him to! Watch his songs!

So, back to Johnathan... Maybe he should practice being distant. It's hopeless; he'll always draw a crowd! Johnathan and Ginger Bond hold the #48 chart position for "Movin' On" while continuing to help other artists reach their goals through their Chattanooga based, His Choice Music.

The Southern Spin Entertainment Meet and Greet was well received by media and artists. Eighth Day was present and delightful, grounded, and enthusiastic. The group comes in on the *Singing News* charts at the #32 slot with the moving, "The Veil Was Torn." Also present were members from Vertical Praise, The



A trio of another kind! - Michael Douchette, Chris Hester, and Johnathan Bond at the HisChoice Music exhibit area.

Gardners, The Glovers, The Quicks, and many other SEE-family favorites.

The Daywind Showcase not surprisingly featured tremendous talent, and yes, coffee! Triumphant Quartet ...all talkers, all extroverts...How many quartets does one meet that hosts an entire group of out-going energized men? A lot probably, but all the guys were happy as punch to be interviewed. Did they suspect they were about to be named, Male Quartet of the Year in Saturday night's Singing News Fan Awards? Probably not. Humility and compassion is at the heart of this group. Humor, pranks, fun, and camaraderie appear to be a second past-time for a group that takes its mission very seriously, but never forgets to laugh.

Proof of their success was validated on the Freedom Hall stage as Jeff Stice took home the Favorite Musician award and Eric Bennett won the Favorite Bass award. David Sutton has been a favorite among fans for many years and the Inman father/son team is something worth bragging about. Scott Inman is first in line to vouch for his superman dad. The energy and spirit of Triumphant on the finale stage, not surprisingly, brought the house down as they teamed up with Brian Free and Assurance on "Long as I Got King Jesus." Should there be an etiquette book for ladies at future NQC's? Maybe so, but that would certainly be no fun. Foot-stomping, hand-clapping, and praising were tak-

NQC Mix - continued

ing place on the last minutes of that final song. Two Alabama girls were running, literally, probably with pork chop sandwiches in tow, to get to the VIP section, right below the stage, to be in the middle of that final blessing with this amazing group. Triumphant holds the #4 Singing News Chart slot with "Everyday" on the Daywind label.

The Mark Trammell Trio was a Daywind Showcase treat, as the guys not only commanded the stage but media personnel had a few belly laughs when Mark and his finely tuned trio pulled a few pranks as they took the stage. Too much coffee? This group needs no jump-start of caffeine to get their show on the road. What more could one say about Mark Trammell that hasn't been said? Everyone knows the respect and success associated with the Trammell name. Mark not only is an expert in leading one of America's most beloved trios, but says he enjoys golfing when he can. "Safe on the Glory Side" moved up to the #30 position on the *Singing News* charts in September. Written by Dianne Wilkinson and recorded on the Daywind label, it is a fitting song for such an established mainstay.

The Roarks are always a breath of fresh air. Shane Roarks showcases hosted some exciting new talent and plenty of established standards. The Roark family has been on the innovating end of the industry for many years and established themselves as not only beloved artists, but visionaries who have helped develop and produce up- and- coming artists.

"Number One Fan," on Shane's Sanctuary label, hit #1 on the charts in September. Also with Sanctuary, Paul's Journey held the #46 slot for "Grace is Never Far," while Hyssongs held the #56 spot with "Just Stand" on the same label, and Chapel Valley's Emmaus Road checked in at #73 with "When He Calls My Name."

A chat in a meet-and-greet with Paul's Journey proved to be



Soloist and jokester Ron Brewer (R) with his wife Trish.

a blessing and privilege as did another with Paul Brasfield during the day's events. Paul's work in the mission field is simply

a blessing to hear. Rick Alan King, Chapel Valley recording artist, was also a delight to get to know and has such a versatile program in his ministry. There is something for everyone who attends one of his concerts, as he includes humor and several styles to engage a crowd of diverse interests.



Brian Worley of The Stamps with his wife Aimee.

Photos on these pages by Evie Hawkins

Ron Brewer also performed on the same showcase, and he and wife, Trish, are certainly people to know if being energized and motivated is on the agenda. The energy and enthusiasm of this couple is contagious! Ron is a live wire and it shows in his performances and music. He has received numerous awards as a soloist and is a favorite among fans and performers alike.

Meeting up with Brian Worley and his lovely wife, Aimee, in the food court, was truly a blessing. As September's edition of *SGN Scoops* was edited for space, the Stamps story by this writer was erroneously cut. To the horror of the writer, (Editor's note: and the fault of the editor - sorry Brian!), Brian Worley's bio had been accidentally deleted in the process. Of all people, this amazing and compassionate tenor should always be included in the Stamps' story! Brian grew up in a home full of Gospel music. His family, The Worleys, has traveled and blessed his region of Kentucky for many years. Brian's powerful tenor voice is being enjoyed all over the country as The Stamps travel far and wide during this 85th anniversary year for the legendary group.

New Ground is yet another delightful group and makes their home-base in Scottsboro, Alabama. Catching up with Robbie Maxwell is not so easy. This sweet lady looks as though she never slows down, and another gal that never meets a stranger. Dale and Robbie are teamed up with David Owens, who was only penned



down for questioning at the hotel breakfast bar! This group will not only knock your socks off with their powerful harmonizing, but delight you with their sweet testimonies of faith and soothing sense of humor. New Ground's "Thank God I'm Saved" clocks into the charts at #36. Finally, one of the sweetest blessings to be showered was running into Kenneth Payne, brother of

Shane Roark performs at a showcase. The Roarks were also a main stage group for the first time.

Glen. Kenneth is still an avid supporter of Legacy Five and can usually be found in their booth and on the road lending a hand of support. He told of his recent Alaskan Cruise with the gang and then began to tell how Glen remained positive, with a song literally on his lips up until his last breath.

This was a moment of overwhelming emotion for a happy, but exhausted writer. As the tears began to flow from the impact of Kenneth's story, it was evident that the spirit of the NQC held the spirit of Glen Payne and all those precious artists that have gone on before. A Cathedral memory of the men coming through the back door and signing autographs before they could reach their booth flashed before this writer's eyes. Those men and women gone before were right in that exhibit hall, right on that stage, and just at that moment in time right in that Legacy Five booth. That is the spirit of the NQC. Since the days of its origination by J.D. Sumner and the Blackwood Brothers in Memphis, TN, this writer has been blessed to be a part of this special Southern Gospel tradition, and plans to always be a part of ones to come! More updates on NQC artists will be available to read on the next SGN Scoops edition.



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 whome she loves very much.

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Family, industry continue to remember & celebrate Dottie Rambo at NQC

By Evie Hawkins



With all the busy buzz and fever-pitched pace of the NQC, it appeared that time momentarily stood still as Reba Rambo entered the SGM Radio set with husband,

Dony McGuire. The scene was reminiscent of a few years back, when fans and friends of the beloved Dottie Rambo were able to speak with her in the NQC exhibit hall.



A story such as the Rambo's is truly difficult to document, as their amazing musical journey began to unfold well over 40 years ago. Dottie and Buck Rambo formed a trio with daughter, Reba, and the many renowned songs of Dottie are still being sung, recorded, and performed today by multitudes of fans and artists across the world.

A brief list of some of Dottie's most notable songs include 'Build My Mansion Next Door to Jesus,' 'We Shall Behold Him,' 'Tears Will Never Stain the Streets of that City,' 'If That Isn't Love,' 'Sheltered in the Arms of God,' 'Remind Me Dear Lord,' 'Mama's Teaching Angels How to Sing,' and 'Holy Hills of Heaven.' Dottie's songwriting skills portrayed the heart of a woman that accomplished a feat very few writers and performers can achieve: reaching a massive audience with varying tastes by appealing not only to Southern Gospel listeners, but Contemporary, Bluegrass, Christian Country and others. Timeless lyrics and sweet family harmony has always been the Rambo trademark, and while fans have never forgotten Dottie, they continue to embrace her gifted and compassionate daughter, Reba.

Reba Rambo McGuire is married to the renowned Dony McGuire, and although their singing career together has been tremendously successful - together they won a 1981 Grammy for "Best Contemporary Gospel Album" - they felt a call into the ministry in 1985. The McGuire's and their two children, Destiny and Israel, launched their church, The River at Mu-

sic City, in Nashville, that not only reaches out to the congregation, but the needs of neighbors and causes within the surrounding community.

It is no surprise that the Rambo name is still thriving, and Reba calls the latest task of releasing Dottie's songs "a labor of love." The Daywind *Sheltered* project features many of Dottie's standards with vocal contributions from hand-picked artists including The Whites, Porter Wagoner, LuLu Roman, and Mel Tillis.

As Reba continues the Rambo journey, spreading the Gospel in song and encouragement, she never misses the opportunity to pay tribute to her mother. In discussing *Sheltered*, which Dottie co-produced, Reba notes, "I think it is authentically her true essence coming through. Mom felt the pain and suffering of others, and she felt the pulse of listeners on the long roads she traveled."

This was made evident at the very time Reba was gracing the NQC exhibit hall, as her mother's songs were being performed on the Freedom Hall stage. The Rambo legacy will always live on, not only through Reba, Dony, Destiny, and Israel, but within the very hearts of all of her fortunate fans.



Contact
Dony &
Reba
McGuire:

mail@
TheRiver-
AtMusic-
City.com

www.
theriverat
musiccity
.com

Pictured top: Evie enjoys a time of reminiscing with Reba Rambo McGuire
Courtesy of Evie Hawkins

Pictured top: The Rambo-McGuire family, Reba, Dony, & Destiny, continues to minister.

Pictured bottom: The newly released Dottie Rambo CD.
Photos courtesy of Aaron Crisler, The Judy Nelson Group

The first thing I ask Tim and Sally Quick is how often during the course of a day their name gets punned, knowing that I will shamelessly do it again when writing this story.

"I do it a lot," Tim says earnestly.

And so begins a zany conversation with a family known for its stylistic ability and its sincerity on and off the platform. In the first few minutes of our chat, we cover Chicago style pizza, family rituals, and.. TV trays. It would be hard not to feel at home in the warmth of this fun couple

and their daughter Rebecca, who true to her love for music, was inside Freedom Hall catching some of the NQC concerts.

The family is celebrating 10 years in southern gospel music with a "newish" CD - *The Quicks Remix - A 10 Year Reflection*. This latest project features 10 favorites from the group's previous releases, some of which have been updated.

"Rebecca was 13 when we recorded our first CD," Sally explains, "So we let her re-record her parts."

Additionally, Sally plays the guitar on this CD, something she does in the group's concerts. It's obvious this is a love for her and she was excited to play on the recording. This is just one talent she adds to the family; more than half of the songs on this recording were written by Sally.

One that has become a staple for The Quicks is "The Uniform." Tim is retired from the United States Air Force – the family formed its group while living at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida – and this song is one that pays tribute to those who serve in the military as well as those who serve Christ "with all [their] might." During the artist spotlight showcase at NQC, The Quicks performed this song with a special something extra – the color guard from a local high school.

It is this creativity and enthusiasm for what they sing that makes the Quicks so appealing to listeners, and so fans will not be disappointed when they hear what is next for the trio:

"Our hymns project is coming together," Sally says. "We have the tracks completed and for the first time, we are doing all the arrangements ourselves. We

wanted to get back to the guts on gospel music."

Tim adds that the preparation for this CD has been different than for all their others. "There is no anxiety or pressure," he says. "These songs are The Word."

In true Quick style, a unique flair will be brought to the overall project and to each individual song. Back in January, Sally began utilizing the groups e-newsletter and their Facebook group, "Quick Fix," to ask fans to contribute song suggestions for the CD.

"We literally needed someone to give us ideas," she explains. "We wanted to know what people wanted to hear." As it turns out, nine of the 10 songs were chosen by Quick fans.

A tenth was sought out by Sally and Rebecca, who listens to and studies many genres of music and wanted to add a traditional Black gospel song to the project. They looked until they found just the right one, "I'm Not Tired Yet." The plan was for Tim to sing lead on the song, but when Rebecca sang the demo for it, the group decided it was hers.

The remaining choices, including "It is Well With My Soul" and "At Calvary" will include a rich variety of styles, including jazz, big band, and traditional sing-along. Sally explains that in the planning, they chose styles they personally enjoy as well as songs

they loved growing up on.

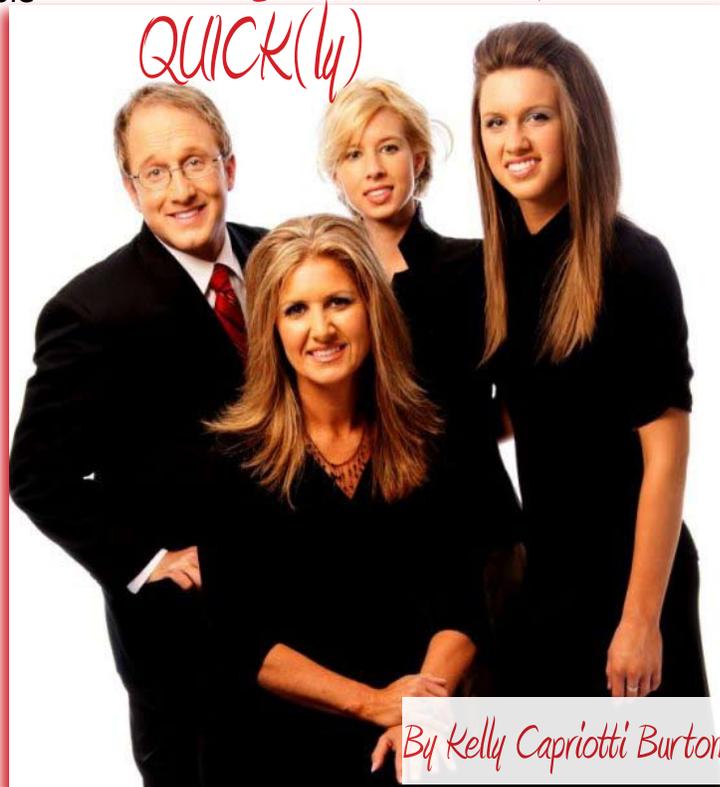
They also found – via Sally's Facebook search – a "phenomenal guitarist" who is helping them accomplish the styles they desire. Sally's excitement about this particular aspect of the CD makes it all the more intriguing. Release of the project is expected at the end of 2009 or the start of 2010.

In the mean time, Sally will focus on songwriting and Rebecca on college at Middle Tennessee State University.

Affection amongst the family is as obvious when talking to them as it is when reading their Facebook comments to each other. Family harmony is a prevalent theme in southern gospel, and witnessing it Quick-style – in song, spirit, and playful chiding – is a refreshing fix indeed.

Special note: Shortly before press time, the Quick family suffered the heartbreaking loss of their newborn grandson. We respectfully ask that you keep them all, including daughter Rachel Rich and her husband Aaron, in your hearts and prayers.

Ten years goes by (wait for it)...





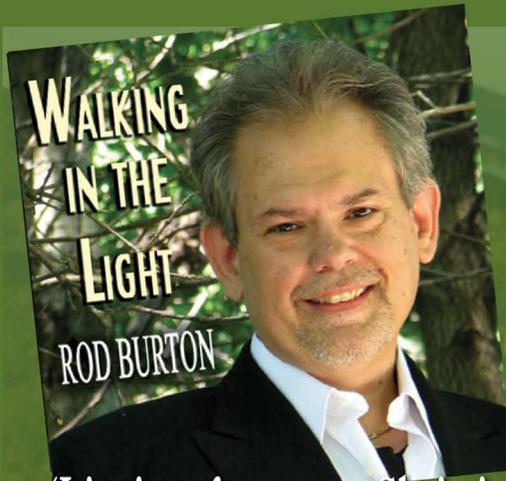
COMING HOME to

Harlan



Rod Burton

Special Guests The Roarks
& featuring Out of Ashes



'It's time for every Christian to rise and take a stand, proclaim the blood of Jesus all throughout the land.'

- from Take a Stand, written by Bobby Carter

Hear it on Rod's latest CD WALKING IN THE LIGHT or Rick Hendricks Company Volume 64, cut 5

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Money saving tips from
 Stephanie Kelley

receipt that shows a savings of 90%! I was always amazed, a wee bit jealous and totally in awe of how these people could pull off this kind of feat, when

I all I could ever do was save a lousy quarter on the coffee I was buying.

It wasn't until I really started learning about how the "coupon world" works that I realized that ANYONE could pull off those kinds of savings. Buy the Sunday paper, learn a few techniques and you too could be buying your groceries for only 10% of their retail value.

So what are those few techniques? They are quite simple, really.

1) Match what is on sale with coupons to maximize your savings. Many of us just clip coupons and use them on our next shopping trip. I used to do that (when I used coupons at all). I would look through my grocery list and pull the appropriate coupons out of the disorganized pile and off I'd go... to save my seventy-five cents. This is not the best use of your coupons. In fact, this technique is really not worth the price you paid for the paper to get the coupons or the wear and tear on your scissors to cut them. After you clip your coupons and get them organized into categories in your coupon binder (my favorite coupon organization method), resist the temptation to use them right away. It's best (unless they are about to expire) to wait until you find a sale that matches your coupons. For instance, saving a dollar on laundry detergent is great, but what if that detergent was on sale for \$2 off and then you used your coupon to buy it? Suddenly, you've saved \$3 on the item! And if you have multiple coupons, you can do that sale again and again and stock-up.

Buy the Sunday paper, learn a few techniques and you too could be buying your groceries for only 10% of their retail value.

2) Most coupons specify what size must be purchased in order to receive the discount, but there are some coupons that do NOT specify a size. These coupons will read something like this: "Save \$1.00 on ANY [name of product]." These coupons, though not as prevalent as other coupons, are available and are as good as gold. Make special note of these coupons and then check out the travel section of your local stores. Most grocery store and department stores offer small, trial size, versions of products in their travel section. Here you can find health and beauty items, laundry detergent and other goodies. Use your "ANY" coupons on these travel or trial sized products to get the best bang for your buck. If the product is not available in a travel or trial size, look for the smallest size product available. Although some products are less expensive when purchased in larger quantities, generally buying the smallest size product coupled with a coupon will bring the per ounce price down considerably! Many times this technique will equal free products for you.

3) A lot of stores, particularly grocery and drug stores, offer store coupons. In most cases, store coupons can

[continued on page](#)



Eyes
Wide
Open

The Interaction of
Faith and
pop culture



Screwtape Weighs In On *Angels and Demons*, (with apologies to C.S. Lewis)

Editor's note: This month, Angels and Demons will be released on DVD. This 2009 movie, based on the best-selling book by Dan Brown, is, as is its companion novel The Da Vinci Code,

is a source of much scrutiny and controversy amongst Christians. While SGN Scoops does not recommend nor recuse the novel or the film, we do want to educate our readers on the scope of the story. Our columnist has chosen this month to analyze the film as a springboard for doctrinal and theological discussion, using the style of classic author C.S. Lewis.

For a Christian perspective review of Angels and Demons, visit PluggedInOnline here:

For a description of C.S. Lewis' The Screwtape Letters, visit this spiritual classics site. Especially important to note: Screwtape is another name for Satan.

My dear Wormwood,
Really, your excitement over this whole affair is quite juvenile. Of course, there are many things about the current situation which can be used to our favour, but there is truly no point in singing the praises of one of these bipedal creatures—what did you say this one was named? “Brown”?—as though his tireless work for Our Father Below puts him in some kind of special standing with us. Make no mistake, Wormwood. This creature is just as disgusting as any of those in the Enemy’s camp, and one day he will be food for us like so many others, if we play our cards right.

‘At any rate, as you noted, this is an excellent time to stir up dissension as much as possible.’

At least this Brown fellow’s guardian devil has got it into Brown’s head to excuse everything he does by calling himself a “Christian.” And when real Christians protest his use of this label, we have our other patients refer to the believers as “narrow-minded,” as if somehow it could be narrow-minded to observe that an animal that walks on all fours and barks is not a duck.

At any rate, as you noted, this is an excellent time to stir up dissension as much as possible. Treemold will be working on your patient’s

closest non-Christian friend, getting him to see the movie and walk away as though everything he have seen and heard is fact. Of course he will make the little worm feel too busy to ac-

tually bother to look anything up and verify its truth or falsehood, but he will feel that he has learned something valuable through the way the actors speak with such conviction about these “facts.”

Note, too, the game we can play with them: since your patient is a believer, when he objects to any of the content of the movie in front of the non-Christian friend, the friend will repeat the mantra that we have drilled into his head: “But it’s just a movie.” Yes, these creatures will on one hand gladly accept indoctrination from their entertainment, and then dismiss anyone else who takes it seriously in the very next breath. Our use of jargon for propaganda has been one of our greatest triumphs of the last century.

And, naturally, Treemold and his fellow tempters will make sure to point out anything that their patients happen to come across that seems to reinforce what the movie told them. Sometimes no actual

facts are needed; simply repeating the same lie over and over will give the lie credibility in the creatures’ minds. But if there happens to be some fact in the film that is actually verified to the bipeds, that fact will have the effect of making everything else in the story seem all the truer. Mixing a small amount of truth within the lie has been one of Our Father Below’s best tactics: remember, the creatures in Eden did become more like God after they ate the fruit—in a manner of speaking.

We have discussed external attacks that will come upon your patient. Now let us discuss the internal. Is your patient more likely to read too much into what he sees, or too little? If the former, make him not only abstain from seeing the film, but also harshly judge anyone within the Enemy’s camp who doesn’t do likewise. You see, some within that camp may see the movie in an attempt to be more informed about the film and to be able to answer their critics better. If they abstain or

if they watch with discernment, this is good for the Enemy and dreadful for us, provided it is done with the intention of giving Him glory. But as much as possible, provoke your patient into doing something that is strictly forbidden to him, that is, judging another man's servants.

As I say, making him an Abstainer will have several good effects, but even better for our cause is if you make him a Glutton. An Abstainer is at least attempting to use reason and so might eventually see the other person's point of view. But the Glutton rejects reason altogether. Here you can use a bit of Scripture to achieve our ends (as Our Father Below did so brilliantly during the Enemy's forty days in the wilderness, though sadly without the intended results).

During his reading time, point his attention to all the scriptures that point to his freedom as one of the Enemy's creatures and away from any scriptures that extol the virtues of self-control and cautiousness. Soon he will be watching many movies that are not healthy for him and accepting them as truth, and engaging in other dangerous behavior in the name of "enjoying his freedom."

Of course, the Spirit will be prompting his conscience to turn back, and his Christian friends will likely try to talk to him about his lifestyle. You need not do anything



at this time; his own guilt will make him greatly defensive against any arguments, and he will likely throw himself into his activities with even greater abandon in order to quiet the nagging voices in his head. How many in the Enemy's camp have we prevented from being great warriors for His name by binding them to alcohol and various lusts! Their whole lives are wasted chasing after that which chains them, all in the name of greater "freedom."

One final note. Never let it occur to your patient to pray for this Brown fellow or any of the others associated with this piece of cinema. Awakened charity and compassion can be disastrous for our cause; teach him to maintain an "us

vs. them" attitude, as he does with sports and at his place of employment. Let him think of his ideological opponents as his "enemies" that he must defeat with his intellect (by which he will really mean his nasty, sarcastic streak) rather than seeing them for what they really are: drowning people, just as he once was, in desperate need of a hand reaching out from the lifeboat.

Another reason that prayer for Brown and the other bipedal bugs is bad for us is that these prayers can in fact be quite effective in turning around a human soul. Remember, the best way of tempting any soul to hell is the quiet and subtle route, without signposts. Sometimes the loudest and most passionate fighters for our side turn out to be equally passionate when turned to the Enemy's side. Remember the Damascus incident?

Your affectionate uncle,
 Screwtape



Tom Holste studied communications at Trinity Christian College and film at Act One, a screenwriting program specifically geared towards Christians. He performs in local plays and leads a puppetry group at his church. He lives in the south suburbs of Chicago, and is the proud uncle of his sister's three fantastic kids.

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HisSong's journey takes to the sky

The trio takes their sound & their heart for people across the ocean.. then across the NQC stage.

By Kelly Capriotti Burton

HisSong has a group name that shows their hearts in just one word. Though they have had what owner and lead singer Dennis Humphries calls "their best year," they are still, simply put, singing for Jesus. The blessings that have come to this 8-year-old male trio, based in Smyrna, Tennessee, have been abundant not only in the last year but in the last month.

Along with tenor Adam Elrod and baritone Adam Cannon, Humphries recently celebrated three major milestones for the group: a concert tour in Norway, a new CD release, and the group's main stage debut at the National Quartet Convention.

Fans of the group were able to follow HisSong on Twitter, the social networking website that boasts hundreds of gospel singers as users, as well as on their Facebook page, where fans could follow the group's itinerary and see almost instant pictures from the concerts.

For HisSong, it was the second trip overseas for ministry. In 2008, they partnered with Compassion International for a tour in Peru, where they were able to reach out to diseased and in some cases dying children.

The trip to Norway and Sweden was differently comprised; it took the group to concert halls at the largest fair in Norway, the country's largest Assembly of God church, and its oldest AoG church, amongst several other venues.

"People sang and worshipped with us," Cannon recalls.

"The concerts opened with Norwegian groups who sang American praise songs. The language barrier we expected just wasn't there."

Cannon, married to Samantha and new dad to son Noah, 5 months, rocks back and forth and uses his hands while describing the experience. Clearly enthusiastic about the most recent experiences for the group, he adds, "It's not difficult to get excited about God!... He has been gracious to us in giving us amazing opportunities, amazing music, and most importantly, and amazing message worth telling."

The tour included a seven hour time change, to which Cannon says he personally never got adjusted, as well as what he calls "the most beautiful scenery I've ever seen in my life."

For Humphries, culture shock was kept to a minimum. He notes that people in Norway dress much the same as Americans, express themselves similarly, and certainly worship in the same way. One area of challenge for him, however, was culinary.

"I'm not a big McDonald's fan in the States, but I thank God for McDonald's in Norway," Humphries says with good-natured conviction. Raw fish was a treat brought to the group after concerts; one he tried to avoid.

'God has been gracious to us in giving us amazing opportunities.'

Adam Cannon

HisSong took their ministry to Norway the first week of September.

Elrod readily agrees. "There is no Southern food!" he notes. "...like fried chicken, corn bread, pinto beans, peas, or green beans. A boy like me would starve to death!"

Elrod adds that any cultural adjustments were smoothed by the people of Norway, whom he describes as "sweet and kind, something that's sometimes hard to find these days."

The group members also note the steadfast economy of Norway, which, according to its official national website, is ranked first in the world in living conditions, boasts a nearly 100 percent literacy rate, and is absent of extreme poverty.

Norway is also comprised of a population of which 90 percent speaks English. Humphries says that their party could turn on the radio there and hear HisSong music playing, which he describes as "amazing." In fact, he continues, the time spent there was "the most amazing experience I've had in ministering to people."

That is saying a lot considering where the trio has been in the last eight years, a relatively short tenure in a genre boasting groups who have been together for more than eight decades, so long they have the word "legendary" tagged onto the beginning of their names. In that time, however, this HisSong has cemented itself in the mainstream of southern gospel and is now enjoying a rise in ranks, evidenced by a number of singles in the Singing News Top 10, a 2009 GMA Dove Award Nomination for Southern Gospel Album of the Year for their project On The Way Up (its producer, Wayne Haun, was also nominated for his work on the album), and an invitation to sing on the main stage at the recently held 2009 National Quartet Convention.

Main stage as a concept is so grandiose in its Southern Gospel and NQC mythology that it conjures images of an Oscar nomination. Humphries remembers with modest excitement when he got the call:

"In October of 2008, I received an email from Dominion [Agency], who handles our booking. It said the [National Quartet Convention] board had met and wanted us to appear on the main stage for 2009. We didn't have any details at the time, but it was such an exciting moment."

Humphries had appeared previously during an NQC night time event with Big Mo and Chosen, and Cannon had performed on it as part of a talent show when he was a teenager. Taking part as a group – their group – was obviously exciting, not just for the group and its fans, but for fellow artists as well, several who "tweeted" their reactions during HisSong's performance of their #2 song from 2008, "I Still Have It All."

"It was great to see friends, people so sincere in their ministry and excellent in their music, be out there!" said Liz McMillan of McMillan and Life.

Even as they navigated the fast paced times in the recent month, HisSong also released a brand new CD entitled Journey Through the Sky.

Elrod notes, "I honestly love this CD - it's very different than anything we have ever done." He goes on to elaborate, "We took a few risks and they have honestly paid off; we have songs that are soulful, Black Gospel, Country, and pure Southern Gospel. I think it's the best we have ever done."

Judging from the line around their product table at NQC, fans are just as excited about the new music. One of them, Pat Sewell, says, "I am so proud of these guys.. all of their hard work, and the trials they have been through, are finally paying off!"

Radio is pleased as well; information provided by Southern Spin Entertainment shows the strong impact the album is already making at radio. The album has already had a strong impact at Southern Gospel radio. The debut single, "I Believe In Prayer," released last month through Crossroads Music Group and Spin-N-Mo-



This scenic photo was taken at Aurlands Fjord on 9-1-09. Left to right are: Per Nielsen, Adam Elrod, Marvin Humphries (Dennis's Dad), Christian Davis, Patrick Cochran, Dennis Humphries & Adam Cannon.



tion Promotions, debuted at number 29 on the Singing News chart. After only a few weeks at radio, the song was also named the most added song at Southern Gospel radio – ranking #1 on the Singing News Top 10 New Releases (October 2009 issue) and will be the highest debut for the upcoming November 2009 report.

So what is next for this group who is at the end of one whirlwind year and at the start of another which seems to hold even more excitement? At press time, they were just returning from concerts in Colorado, another previously unexplored region for them, albeit one with more familiar food.

Humphries also describes a frontier that seems to be a nice for the group. They have been noticing larger crowds of young people at their concerts and have

even been asked to sing at several youth conventions.

“I love singing to all different folks – but there are so many more options for young people, it’s great to see them coming and filling the first 3 or 4 rows,” he explains.

Wrapping up the interview in order to greet a few more people and head to his next one, Humphries says simply, “I believe we are to reach out to everybody – that’s what this is all about.”



Clockwise from top left: HisSong’s new CD cover photo; Humphries at NQC with comedy legend and gospel singer Carol Channing; HisSong performs at Norway’s biggest fair with Christian Davis, who toured with the group singing bass; the audience worships at a church concert in Norway; HisSong brings “I Still Have It All” to the NQC main stage
 All photos for this article used with permission from HisSong



Are you a Dr. Scott?

I would like to introduce an imaginary character; his name is "Dr. Scott." Dr. Scott is a cancer research physician. Ironically, his body is ravaged by the dreadful disease. Well, that is until that eventful, life changing day - twenty years ago. On that ordinary yet fateful afternoon, much to his surprise, he discovered the long awaited cure for cancer. In desperation, he consumed the miracle drug and was immediately cured. Other cancer patients were curious when they noticed his sudden restoration to health, but for many "so called" reasons, he withheld the good news. Of course, there were many times he came close to sharing, but over time he grew desensitized to their condition and continued to withhold the news. Unfortunately, the diseased population continued to needlessly suffer and die.

Obviously, Dr Scott is hoggish and thank goodness he's imaginary! Surely a Doctor would not encounter the cure for cancer, benefit from it and keep it veiled. Ok, so my imagination may be loose, but I am going somewhere with this illustration. The scenario is absurd, but in reality the "average" Christian imitates the actions of Dr. Scott. We have discovered the cure for the disease that infected the earth and its inhabitants in the Garden of Eden. The disease of sin has been wreaking havoc, separating people from a loving God and causing eternal death since the fall of man. However, research indicates we're behaving like Dr. Scott

95% of all Christians have never won a soul to Christ.

Monthly encouragement from one called to teach & share Good News

By Rhonda Frye

by keeping the cure secluded.

I'm assuming most of us have been around the church long enough to understand Jesus' ministry began with evangelism and His last words on earth were a command to evangelize (Matt 28:19,20). I'm also assuming we understand this command is not directed and limited to "trained clergy", but it is EVERYONE'S responsibility to share their faith. We are commanded to be a witness for Christ in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth (Acts1:8). In the spiritual sense, this means we are to share our faith with our immediate circle of influence, those in whom we are in close contact, our enemies or "outcast" and to the world. Even though most of us are conscious of the great commission, we should acknowledge the fact that we seem to be struggling in our efforts of its implementation. Consider the following statistics from NET BIBLE website:

- Ninety-five percent of all Christians have never won a soul to Christ.
- Eighty percent of all Christians do not consistently witness for Christ.
- Less than two percent are involved in the ministry of evangelism.
- Seventy-one percent do not give toward the financing of the great Commission.

Other research indicates as few as two percent of Christians share their faith. Although we can never be sure of the exact percentage, it is obvious we are lacking and the reasons are too many to name. The most common reason is fear of saying the "wrong thing." DL Moody once said, "The only wrong way to evangelize is to not evangelize at all." Evangelism isn't about seeing how many people we can win, but simply sharing the good news of Jesus and trusting God for the results.

With God's help, motivated and determined, I refuse to watch people suffer from the ill effects of sin without sharing the cure. I'm sure I'm not alone in my ambition to see people healed of this "sin disease." Because of this, I'm delighted to have the opportunity to write for *Scoops Magazine*! My purpose in writing is to stimulate an enthusiasm within believers prompting a confidence to share their faith in a

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variety of ways. The goal is to make these articles as interactive as possible. Everyone can participate by emailing ideas, suggestions and tips about how you and your church are reaching out to our world. I realize a good portion of the reading audience will be devoted artist that have committed their lives to spreading the gospel. Music ministers and evangelists sacrifice tremendously in order to spread the word. Please know your efforts are appreciated and applauded. It's my longing to encourage every Christian everywhere to do their part by taking advantage of life's ordinary opportunities that are often missed.

This month's challenge is to encourage everyone to seriously reflect on the Great Commission. In doing so, I'm asking for a response in the following three ways:

1. Be Thankful! Author Mary Marr made this statement in her book "Lighting the Way." "How thankful you are for your own salvation will largely determine your passion in sharing it with others."

2. Evaluate. In the same book referenced above, Mary Marr made this thought provoking, nearly chilling statement. "No matter how you ask an unsaved person 'Do you want to be a Christian?' What they hear is,

'Do you want to be like me?' Evaluate your relationship with Christ and determine the brightness of the light burning within.

3. Pray. Ask God to burden your heart for the lost, to illuminate your life with His grace and to open doors of opportunity to share His love.

During the holidays, most of us encounter unsaved family members. November's focus will be on sharing the good news with immediate and extended family members. Please email me your creative tips and suggestions as to how you share your faith with family. I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

EMAIL RHONDA: rsfrye0330@yahoo.com

Rhonda Frye is a full time minister of music serving the Lord in at least three different ways. She teaches a preschool music program, she serves her local congregation as the worship leader and associate pastor and she is a singer/songwriter/recording artist as well. Rhonda lives in Ringgold, Georgia and is supported by her husband, Eric and their three children.



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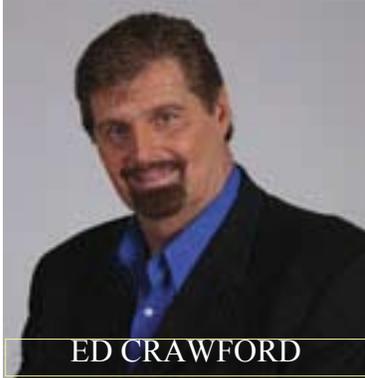
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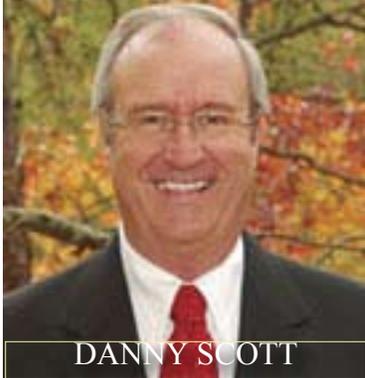
Serving Twice.

Saluting Southern Gospel Pastors,
who share in word and song

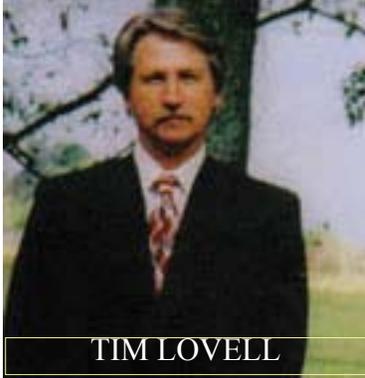
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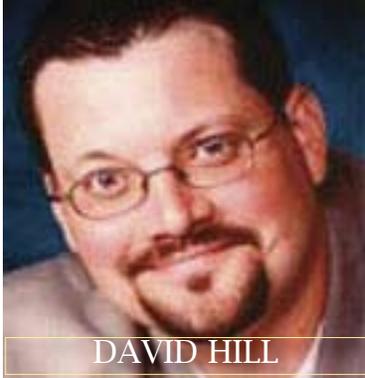
ED CRAWFORD



DANNY SCOTT



TIM LOVELL



DAVID HILL

October is Pastor Appreciation Month and SGN Scoops would like to salute all the Pastors who are called to sing and preach the Word. There are many who are licensed with their denominations and who are gifted in teaching, exhortation or evangelism. Most fans are aware of ministers such as Brian Free, Mark Trammell and Squire Parsons. But there are many more and this month we salute artists like Ed Crawford, Rhonda Frye, Danny Scott and David Kelly among others who have spent hours of study to develop the gifts within them.

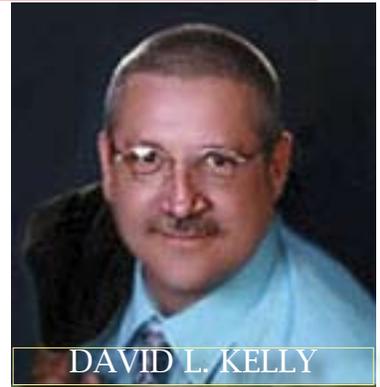
Rev. Ed Crawford was a member of the mighty Kingsmen Quartet in the 1980's when the group's sound was big and loud, earmarked by fast tunes, showmanship and talented musicians. Audiences had a good time as master MC Jim Hamill had them laughing, crying and clapping at the drop of a hat. But Crawford wanted more.

"After having spent 10 years with the Kingsmen Quartet and leaving to pursue my own endeavors, I prayed and felt impressed that this whole singing thing be more than just a song," says Crawford. "I wanted it to be more than just going to entertain, going for more than just an offering or a payday. For me, becoming ordained was to be able to get to the heart of an individual with the Word of God."

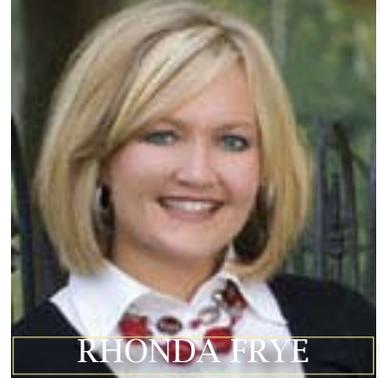
"The music will bring them in but the word will make a difference. Even today in The Mystery Men, our goal is to create an atmosphere of reference, fun, excitement, and most of all an altar situation for lives. The second reason I became ordained was that I had some friends who wanted me to marry them. Though I was honored that they asked, I could not deliver their nuptials unless I was ordained. I followed the process and am now an ordained minister."

David Hill was also a member of a popular quartet before he got the call to go into ministry. "I was sitting in a Sunday morning service at a church in my hometown about 6 months after I had left Gold City," says Hill. "Out of the blue at the end of the service the pastor read his resignation letter to the congregation. At that very moment, I just knew that I was supposed to be the pastor of that church. Two months later I was ordained and licensed and then called to be the pastor. I'm now the pastor of a new church plant close to where we live."

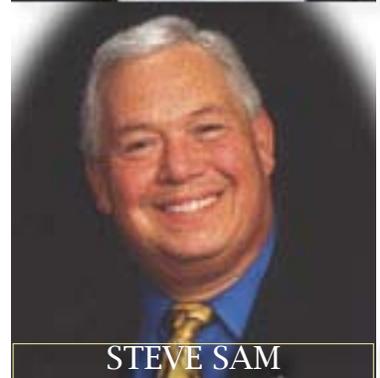
After traveling with groups such as the Nelons and the Perrys, Hill now sings with his wife and family friend in The David Hill Trio. "I believe that being a pastor



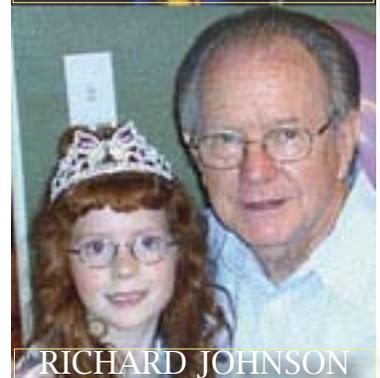
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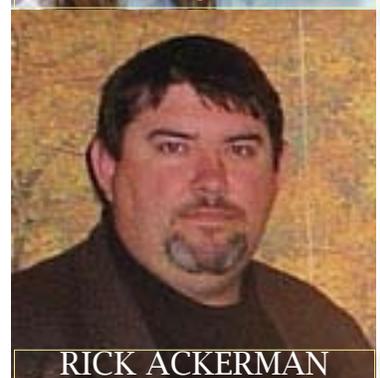
RHONDA FRYE



STEVE SAM



RICHARD JOHNSON



RICK ACKERMAN

Photos provided by pastors.

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For me, becoming ordained was to be able to get to the heart of an individual with the Word of God.

- Ed Crawford



continued

14th, 2004 God miraculously healed my body completely of this stroke. God replaced all of my excuses with His power and might. So I just threw in the white flag of surrender and gave in to His calling to preach His Gospel."

"Both singing and preaching to me are a calling on my life," says Scott. "I've sung Southern

Gospel Music for over 40 years but have only been preaching for the past three years. I fell in love with Southern Gospel many years ago and it has become my first love, if you will. I take God's calling of carrying His Word very seriously, in both preaching and in song. So I guess you could say I have the best of both worlds. I am blessed beyond measure when I think that I can travel with three other people in The Capstone Quartet, up and down this great nation of ours singing and preaching the Word of God."

Another artist who has the best of both worlds is Rhonda Frye. She is the Associate Pastor, Minister of Music in Rock Pointe Worship Center, of Rossville Georgia. Frye is also a singer/songwriter who just released her solo album entitled, "Second Chances". Frye shares, "I don't really remember having a specific desire to become a pastor. I grew up in Christian environment but didn't invite Jesus to be my Lord and Savior until about 10 years ago. I knew in January of 2006 that He had spoken to my heart, calling me into ministry, but I had no idea the assignment. I began to cooperate with Him and began to prepare."

Frye continues, "As I progressed, He slowly opened doors of leadership opportunities within the my local church slowly increasing responsibility. At the same time, He was giving me songs to write and experience with singing. For a while, I thought it was crazy to have a foot in each world of church ministry and music ministry and that He would eventually make clear to me by picking one He had in mind. As I've sought His will, He has led me through one open door through another, up through the door of ordination. At the same time, He has continued to open doors in music ministry as well. As I have surrendered, I have found my fulfillment in serving in both roles."

"As a songwriter, I've noticed the biblical training had helped when writing lyrics," says Frye. "I'm very careful and strive to make sure the songs I sing and write are indeed theologically correct to the best of my understanding. Sometimes the perfect lyrical or rhyming word can throw the message off balance completely. Also, due to ministerial training, I feel more confident to minister to the people who always approach the table following a concert."

positively effects our music ministry in that I have a good basic understanding of what the pastor and his people are going through". Hill continues, "This makes me more sensitive to the needs that are represented on any particular evening. Therefore I have a good understanding of what our job is when we go out to minister. Our job is simply to point the people to Jesus Christ. Whatever their need, He is the answer."

Pointing people to Jesus is also what The Ackerman Family are called to do. This gospel group, consisting of Rev. Rick Ackerman, wife Rosie, daughter Sarah and Rick's parents Otto and Shirley Ackerman, minister out of Stout, Ohio. Rick Ackerman says, "My ministry began in 1976, when my family turned from a life of sin and started serving God. When I saw the change that came through Jesus in our family I knew that He was real. It was then at the age of seven that I started preaching."

"I wanted everyone to know this Jesus who was able to take a family such as ours and save us and set us free from that life. I received my first ministerial license when I was sixteen and my ordination when I was twenty-one. The Bible says in II Tim. 2:15, 'Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.' This was my reason for seeking ordination, so that I was sure that I was preaching correctly."

Ackerman continues, "Being a preacher along with is being a Gospel singer is very helpful because I feel that God gives you more insight into what is going on with the people you are ministering to. I have found that the two ministries go hand in hand."

Rev. Danny Scott of the Capstone Quartet is a licensed Southern Baptist minister and a Deacon in the Taylorville Baptist Church in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Unlike Rick Ackerman, Danny decided to become a minister at a later stage in life. "I received my call into the ministry in 2006 at the tender age of 53," says Rev. Scott. "First and foremost, I put up excuses to the Lord that I was too old to accept the call to preach and also had health problems. But God showed me that age was and is not relevant to the call into His ministry and that He could heal my health problems, which He did. I suffered a stroke on April 7th, 2002, which paralyzed my left side for 22 months, but on November

"Since music ministry isn't my only source of income, I don't seem to get caught up into the payment of performances," continues Frye. "I am truly honored to sing to a handful of people at a nursing home as well as a packed church or coliseum. I'm also thankful for pastoral training I've had with leading people to Christ. Understanding theologically how people become saved helps me not become discouraged if I don't see immediate results at the altar and helps me stay away from ever manipulating people to respond. I'm thrilled if God uses me to plant a seed, water it or harvest it."

Rhonda Frye is finding that her place in church leadership as well as in Southern Gospel sometimes can be difficult. "Being a woman in ordained ministry presents its obstacles for obvious reasons, therefore it can be a challenge in getting opportunities to sing in some churches. Some churches have concerns that women may detour from singing and spin off into a preaching frenzy. I certainly respect denominations that do not endorse women in ordained ministry and would never overstep boundaries making anyone feel uncomfortable."

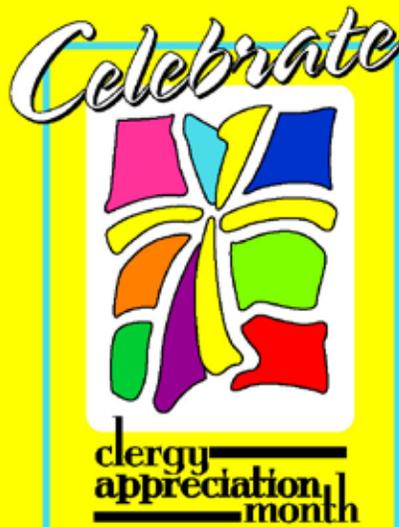
"As an ordained minister, I have a huge respect for the sacred platform and seek only to please my Father. My Father is not the author of confusion and I fully understand the accountability to come when my days are through. It's my intention to use His platform with integrity and for His glory." Frye continues, "Even though I wasn't crazy about God's idea of not picking one ministry, I see now how it all works together!"

Another Southern Gospel singer/songwriter is Tim Lovell from Kingsport, Tennessee. Lovell began preaching in 1987 and has served as an assistant and interim pastor, as well as traveling as an evangelist. Lovell says, "The Lord started giving me songs to write in 1989. I had never written a song or poem before and was not seeking to. I kept these songs for several years and a few friends kept encouraging me to do something with them. I began recording them and that's how I became involved with Gospel Music and a singing ministry."

Lovell continues, "I've been involved with pastoring enough to know that it is a very demanding job. In fact I believe it's one of the hardest. I have the greatest respect for the office of pastors because I've filled in for them. I believe having a singing ministry can take away from your calling as a preacher in some ways. It's hard to do all you need to do



Both singing & preaching, to me, are a calling on my life.
 Danny Scott



A Resource of Focus on the Family

We believe that the concept of clergy appreciation started with the Apostle Paul as he was establishing the first Christian churches. In 1 Timothy, he wrote, "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and

teaching" (1 Tim. 5:17). And, in 1 Thessalonians, he said, "Respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work" (1 Thess. 5:12-13).

Focus on the Family named and began emphasizing Clergy Appreciation Month in 1994, reminding congregations that it was biblical and proper to honor their pastoral staffs and pastoral families throughout the year, but suggesting that they set aside the month of October for a special tangible tribute. For those churches that preferred a single weekend, we recommended the second weekend of the month. However, honoring a church's entire pastoral staff and their families can be done at any time — and, in fact, should become a normal part of a church's ongoing care of these special families throughout the entire year.

Our goal is that every pastor (including staff ministers) and his or her family would feel appreciated by those they serve. To assist congregations in this process, we have developed a planning guide (in both English and Spanish) intended to facilitate and publicize a CAM celebration. We also attempt to promote the concept ourselves each year through radio, newspapers, magazines and any other means at our disposal.

Over the years, we have been privileged to work in partnership with many publishers, bookstore chains, radio networks, news syndicates, musicians, denominations and other church groups, and have made many friends. Many of these fine organizations promote some form of clergy appreciation on their own. We think this is great! We feel that the fact that no one "owns" the idea of honoring pastors gives the campaign special inertia of its own — or from God.

>continues

continued

when pastoring a church, much less trying to write, record, travel, etc."

"I truly believe the preaching of the word of God is the most important thing in the church," says Lovell. "The Word is what feeds us. On the other hand, I think having a singing ministry can be very powerful as well. Sometimes the Lord may use a three-minute song to reach someone's heart when an hour sermon would roll off their back."

Richard Johnson from Tulsa, Oklahoma, is a senior saint who continues to sing and preach at 71 years of age. "I was saved at age five, and at seventeen, I was filled with the Holy Ghost. That is when I became a worshiper and began to sing with my mother. I began to play guitar at age 23. I graduated from Oral Roberts University, and at age 53, I began to be a preacher and pastored in Jackson, Mississippi for 12 years."

Johnson continues, "When my late wife passed away in 2000, I moved back to Tulsa, Oklahoma. As of now I am singing and leading worship. I am 71 years young, and I am strong and in good health. And I'm ready to go and serve my King Jesus Christ. My main ministry now is in jails and prisons, and leading worship in various places."

David Kelly of King's Highway is a licensed minister with the Full Gospel Restoration Church and is based out of Texarkana, Texas. "I was saved in October 2005 and immediately I felt the call into a music ministry. In January 2006, I began to pray that God would open more doors and give me more to do for him. My Pastor at the time walked up to me the Sunday after I had prayed that prayer and told me that God had directed him to ask me to preach the next Wednesday night. I began my studies soon afterwards and worked to get my license. I really did not look at my calling as something that I had any control over; I just felt it was what I had to do for the Lord. I received my license to preach as an evangelist in February 2007.

Rev. Kelly comments, "I am sure that being a licensed minister has opened some doors that I might not have had otherwise. I think that if we follow the will of the Lord and know that without a shadow of a doubt that God is in control, His will will be done in our lives."

Another artist following the Lord through open doors is Praise, Incorporated. An up-and-coming Southern Gospel group out of Texas, this group recently signed a recording agreement with Mansion Records and released their latest album, *It's All About Him*, with the company at the National Quartet Convention. Lead singer, Steve Sam is the founder of Praise, Incorporated and an ordained minister.

"I have had a calling on my life to serve and sing since childhood," says Sam. "God has always been faithful to allow me to bring the word and give me messages for the different places we travel. I was raised and ordained in a bible believing Church. We have seen more than 400 walk the isles. The knowledge of God's word has helped me to stay grounded and to revive those

that have been sitting on the church pew so long they forgot what it was like to see God move in their life."

Sam continues, "I think being an ordained minister has added to the group what it should be all about: Jesus. We will continue to proclaim Jesus wherever we go, without any reserve. If you just let the Holy Spirit do the work it's always a success."

Ed Crawford agrees that it's all about the Lord. "There is little concern about The Mystery Men Quartet coming in to do anything other than minister. I tell all the pastors we are here for whatever they want us to do. We can do all any or part of the service, but we are there to be a servant of the Lord and a servant for the shepherd of the flock. The difference is because of my training, and the people that I mentored to, I know the difference."

These ministers, pastors, reverends and bible teachers are giving their lives to bring the Word of God to audiences and congregations across the country and around the world. We salute all those who have given of their time and talents to be their best for the Lord.



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



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Top: Students break to pray for another. Photo by Wess Adams
 Right: Tara Jackson learns from Allison Speer. Photo by Heather Rice

ELIJAH CONFERENCE '09

A personal account of this event
 soul-changing, mind-growing event

BY RHONDA FRYE



The fall 2009 Elijah Conference is over, but it will never be forgotten! God was there in a mighty way changing lives, warming hearts, awakening dreams, refreshing spirits, reaffirming callings and renewing minds. The Kingdom of God has been impacted! Pastor Ken Dove and Grace Church of the Nazarene graciously hosted the conference extending a warm welcome to their beautiful facilities in Nashville, TN.

According to the official Elijah Conference website, the goal of the conference is to make music ministers and musicians effective ambassadors for Christ. Founder Allison Speer explains it like this: "Ministry is like a Rubik's Cube. One square is communication, but other squares consist of performance, entertainment, humor, compassion, musical excellence, love for the audience, servant hood, etc. Teaching young ministers and musicians to hone their skills in each of these categories in order to make the puzzle pieces mesh will make for a more effective Gospel presentation."

As a participant of this year's event, I can personally testify that Brian and Allison Speer labored tremen-

dously to implement the purpose of the conference.

The training schedule was packed from 9:00 am until 9:00 pm. Experienced guest speakers were brought in during the week to discuss the areas of marketing, booking, radio airplay, audio technologies, artist development, and establishing and operating a Non-Profit Ministry. The presentation speakers included Steve Allen, Kimberly Allen, Johnny Minick, Bill Traylor, Rebecca Irwin, Brian Speer, Nancy Morgan, Mike Allen, Les Butler and Pastor Ken Dove. Students were blessed to gain valuable knowledge from Ben Speer as well. Each one covered their topics with precision, and each presentation was relevant. Every speaker had a warm servant's heart, welcomed questions, and made themselves available beyond the conference.

The content of each presentation was valuable; however the performance training with Allison was the emphasis of the training. Being filled with God's wisdom, discernment, and exhortation, Allison will do anything, everything, and whatever it takes to make each artist a better

singer, performer, and communicator. It was amazing to witness the transformations taking place on the stage. There is no doubt; each artist was lifted to a higher level. Allison had a special way of helping each artist release their identity and encouraged everyone equally to be authentic and true to their individual calling.

An unforgettable statement by Allison: "Be who God called you to be, let everyone else catch up with you later." Allison poured out her heart as she inspired artists to reach excellence in communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It seemed like everything had been thought of and planned well in advance for a smooth week. The curriculum was outstanding, but every other detail had been planned perfectly as well – including the registration, check in, snacks, lunches, give-a-ways, and curriculum from Wednesday until Saturday; it was all absolutely first class.

Even though the content of the conference was beyond excellent, the best part of the week is that God was there! His presence was

ELIJAH CONFERENCE - CONT'D

invited, honored, respected, and welcomed. Allison had no issues whatsoever with setting aside her well planned agenda to allow the Holy Spirit to work through her and minister to the artists there. Several times the schedule was interrupted and at one point came to a screeching halt in order to allow God to move among those He has called to minister.

Experiencing the presence of God is a wonderful thing, but there is also purpose with divine visitation. He fills us with His Spirit to empower us to accomplish His will and His purposes. God showed up and showed off at the Elijah Conference and He is receiving all of the glory. The Holy Spirit is fire and there is no doubt that He set hearts on fire, rekindled flames and now the world will have to take notice because God will perfect the work He started. The Holy Spirit also brings love and unity. It was refreshing to see no spirit of competition among the artists, but genuine sincerity and encouragement for one another. The spirit of love and fellowship among everyone there has extended beyond the conference as well. The old Michael W. Smith song is true. "Friends are friends forever if the Lord is the Lord of them."

On behalf of the students of Elijah Conference, I would like to publicly express thankfulness to everyone on the Elijah team. The team extended true servants' hearts towards the students and we are grateful. We fell in love with Allison and appreciate the time, energy and enthusiasm she poured into our lives, her transparency, and the lessons she instilled, especially the valuable "More of Him, Less of Me!"

Elijah Conference 2009 is being remembered as friendships blooming, memories made, wisdom imparted, knowledge gained, spirits renewed, hearts inspired, truth spoken and empowerment from God!

After a brief resting period, planning for next year's conference will begin. Visit [Allison Durham Speer's website](#) or the [Elijah Conference website](#) for details to come soon. If anyone desires to build an honest, God-honoring ministry, this opportunity must not be missed! Praise God for Elijah Conference 2009- a defining moment in time when God's Kingdom forcefully advanced and continues to do so.

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 A group photograph of four men in dark suits and ties, standing in two rows. The background features large, faint letters spelling "PRO".

www.patriotquartet.com

Singers promoting singers, foster family feel

Regional gospel conventions share common threads of equality, fellowship, and tradition

By Jerry 'J.T.' Tinkle

Last month the annual National Quartet Convention was held in Louisville, Kentucky. Southern Gospel fans from all across the country and beyond filled the Kentucky Fair and Expo Center for the annual week-long celebration of the presentation of the Gospel in song. It truly is the mecca of Southern Gospel.

Southern Gospel, however, offers enough music in enough regions to warrant other conventions at other places during the course of a year. These conventions are sometimes just a few days long, while others are week-long events like NQC.

While all but one of these conventions have already taken place for 2009, fans can make their plans now to attend the 2010 versions of these regional conventions. And who knows, Southern Gospel fans just might make these conventions part of their annual plans.

NORTHERN GOSPEL SINGING CONVENTION

Alan Godsey, owner/manager of The Northmen, a trio based out of Fort Wayne, Indiana hosts the Northern Gospel Singing Convention in Marion, Indiana, that is held at the Sunnycrest Baptist Church's Family Life Center. This convention celebrated its 10th anniversary this past year, and plans are already underway for next year's version, to be held August 5, 6, and 7, 2010.

Alan recalls: "The Northern Gospel Singing convention started in 2000, and was held that first

year in the coliseum in downtown, Marion, Indiana. The building was old, not air-conditioned and HOT!

"The past nine years, it has been at the Sunnycrest Baptist Family Life Center, Marion, Indiana, a comfortable facility, and will again be there 2010. From the beginning, it has been promoted as a national event; artists and fans came from as far as Alabama and Texas. We have had people from Canada, Pennsylvania, New York, and this year, as far as Washington state. We have had approximately 40 artists each year; some come every year, and every year always brings new talent as well."

According to Godsey, at The Northern Gospel Singing Convention, every artist sings the same amount of time and is treated the same. Each artist is as important as the other. The fans have commented that this is what they like to hear, and this fosters a warm family feeling for artists and fans alike. Many artists have launched their careers at the Northern Gospel Singing Convention; artists have made new long term friends at the convention and come back each year to renew these acquaintances.

Everything happens in the same room: the artists booths are around the edge of the center and the concessions are in the same room. Fans enjoy visiting and eating without missing out on the music. The tickets are reasonably priced to accommodate as many fans as possible.

Godsey states, "Many people think of these events as a time to renew friendships, make new friends, listen to good ole Southern Gospel music, and a time to get to know some of the lesser-known artists that sing the music they love."

GREAT LAKES GOSPEL SING

Lynn Bromley, of the group Northern Edge, based out of Walkerville, Michigan, shared about the Great Lakes Gospel Sing held in western Michigan each year:

"The history of the Great Lakes Gospel Sing is fairly short. It began in 2006. We (Northern Edge) were looking for a way to bring Southern Gospel music to West Michigan. There's quite a bit of this music on the East side of the state, but very little here in the rural farm areas. We promote concerts here (we're having the Talley Trio in November) and we do a weekly radio program, but thought, with the encouragement of Eddie Crook, that a gospel sing would be a good thing for West Michigan. Our goal is always to present an event to which the local believers can bring their un-churched friends for an evening

>continued



The Northmen, including NGSC owner Alan Godsey (front) and his wife Kathy, are annual favorites at the event.

Regional Conventions, continued

Lynn Bromley, pictured with Northern Edge, considers fan favorites when planning their yearly Michigan event.



of good music, entertainment, food and friendship.” Bromley points out some highlights of the Great Lakes Gospel Sing: each artist is treated equally. There are no table/booth fees, and table space is on a first-come first-served basis.

Also, she adds, “Any Sing must have a good sound person; the words “your disc won’t play” isn’t heard at the Great Lakes Gospel Sing.”

She continues, “We invite regional groups from states which border the Great Lakes to participate and God has blessed us with return visits from some of the best artists in the region who attend each year. This has created sort of a ‘family feeling’ among the artists which, with a little encouragement, extends to those who attend.

“From a fan’s point of view this feeling of belonging to the ‘family’ brings them back each year. They begin to recognize each other, and talk of what has happened, good and bad, throughout the year. Our emcee, who is an excellent communicator, encourages this ‘family’ feeling between the fans and the artists and, indeed, the local people feel that these artists are their friends. They know who has new CD projects out, and follow what is happening within each group. If a singer leaves a group we all feel the loss. It is up to Northern Edge to communicate with our local attendees about the various artist groups throughout the year and let them know what is happening. We do that through newsletters and with our weekly radio program.”

Bromley believes what is different about the Great Lakes Gospel Sing is the personal touch; the fans feel it, and they return.

“I believe the artists would say this event is well run and fair,” she says. “We watch the interaction of each group with our local residents, and return invitations are based on who the people want back.”

KENTUCKY STATE GOSPEL SINGING CONVENTION

Caleb Cowan represents the Kentucky State Gospel Singing Convention and accounts for the history of the event:

“The Kentucky State Gospel Singing Convention is one of the nation’s oldest Southern Gospel conventions. The State Singing Convention was organized on April 20, 1946 at a meeting in the armory in Glasgow,

Kentucky, with the late Rev. John Salmon elected as its first president. It was held September 28-29 on the campus of Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Ky.

The “Big State Sing” has been throughout the entire state down through the years. During its grand history, many of Southern Gospel music’s legends have graced the stage of the event, including the late Dottie Rambo. The long running history of the Kentucky State Sing prides itself this year in celebrating 64 years. Many of the nation’s singing conventions promote large choirs singing shape note music. However, the Kentucky Convention has always promoted mixed groups, quartets, and trios primarily of the Southern Gospel genre.”

According to Cowan, several artists from throughout Kentucky and surrounding states are on the performance schedule each year. There is no admission charge to attend the concert.

The convention has seen an increase in attendance over the years due to the effort of the board to improve the quality of the groups that participate. Reaching out further across the state and surrounding states has aided in this effort, and it allows the people in the area to become familiar with those who are currently singing.



Caleb Cowan sings with The Sneed Family and pours Kentucky’s heritage into the annual Cave City sing.

This year’s Kentucky State Gospel Singing Convention is being held in Cave City, Kentucky at the Cave City Convention Center. The dates will be October 17th and 18th, with singing beginning at 6pm (cst) on Friday night, and 7pm (cst) Saturday night.

If you are looking for a friendly family atmosphere, with quality Southern Gospel music at the forefront, you can’t go wrong with any of these special events. Click below to reach their websites:

- [Northmen/Northern GSC in Indiana](#)
- [Northern Edge/Great Lakes Gospel Sing in Michigan](#)
- [Caleb Cowan/KY St GSC in Kentucky](#)



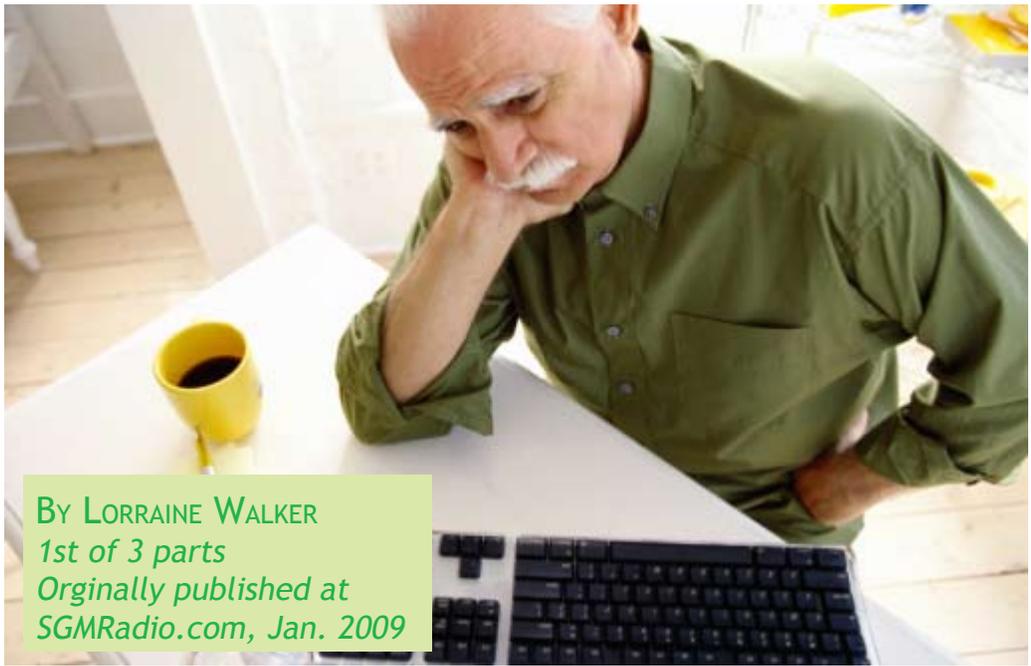
Jerry ‘JT’ Tinkle is the baritone for the Ministers Quartet from Muncie, IN. He hones his writing with their weekly newsletter, which he fills with inspirational stories from the road and from life. His mantra stands, “Just one more soul, Lord Jesus, just one more soul.” Learn more at ministersquartet.com

Mental health has long been the elephant in the room of the local church. People who suffer from depression, schizophrenia, personality disorders or any other illness that affects the mind have been avoided and left to sit alone in the pew for too long. Whether this is from fear of the unknown, ignorance or wrongful teaching from the pulpit, the result has been the same. If a mental illness makes someone noticeably different from fellow churchgoers, they are often ostracized or a subject of gossip.

The truth is that Mental Illness is a disease that needs to be seen in the same light as any other disease such as cancer. It is not contagious or proof of a spiritual wrongdoing. It is not demon oppression or possession. It is however a very serious and disabling condition that requires professional help and open discussion.

The National Institute of Mental Health, part of the National Institutes of Health which is a component of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services offers several sobering statistics on their website. The site reports that one in four Americans, or 26% of the population, suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in any given year. Mental illness is one of the major factors in suicide, which was the eleventh leading cause of death in the U.S. in 2004. Suicide was the eighth leading cause of death for men in 2004, the sixteenth leading cause of death for females, and the third leading cause of death in young people ages 10 to 24. [Statistics quoted are from the NIMH National Institute of Mental Health website at www.nimh.nih.gov .]

BY LORRAINE WALKER
 1st of 3 parts
 Originally published at
 SGMRadio.com, Jan. 2009



in any given year. However, only about one-third of those who suffer from depression actually seek help. The rest suffer in silence. Many fill our churches and our workplaces, living their lives in the shadows. The Church can and should be a part of the healing process for those who suffer from depression and all types of Mental Illness.

A friend of mine, who suffers from bi-polar disorder, or 'manic-depressive' as it has also been called, once described mental health as a continuum. At one end is a state of complete Mental Health and at the other, Mental Illness. All of us are somewhere on that continuum and our position may shift depending on the day or year. No one is immune and good mental health needs to be a goal that we work toward daily, similar to good physical health.

Dr. Bob Nichols is an expert on mental illness and works with pastors to assist them back to a state of mental health. He has a doctorate in theology and psychology and over thirty years in ministry. A speaker and counselor who travels the world, Dr. Nichols recently took time while in Portugal to answer our questions about depression and the Church.

Dr. Nichols feels that prevalence of mental illness in the church is typical of the general demographics. "Though probably a bit higher in the pulpit, as is typical with a high-stress job," says Nichols. "Some church members may go to their pastors for counseling if the pastor is effective in this area. Larger churches have full-time pastoral counselors and other churches have lay-led counseling teams. The later is the present trend according to Barna Research Group. Due to the fall of many public church

Everybody Hurts.

Getting Past the Christian Stigma of Depression

Many websites on depression cite the prevalence of the diagnosis of this type of Mental Illness at 9.5% of the American population

For a Christian with depression, reaching out for help is often very difficult.



recently shared his views on mental health with us. "I would argue that the church Mental Illness statistics are quite similar [as the quoted demographics], if not higher. My logic is that the spiritual opposition has found, or always known, that the true battle for humanity is within the mind. If one can capture the mind, the rest is merely consequential. I believe that all church and religious leaders, including

leaders, the parishioners are no longer trusting the professionals and are trusting their friends, especially if the friend has some form of training."

For a Christian with depression, reaching out for help is often very difficult. They may feel that it reflects on a lack of spiritual maturity, or that others may see them as inadequate in some way. Jimmy McMillan, a southern gospel artist with McMillan And Life, is a Christian who suffers from clinical depression and who recently shared his battle in an interview with SGM Radio. Jimmy has talked with many people who also fight this battle and shared what he has heard regarding where they go for help.

"The answer varies greatly depending on the spiritual atmosphere of the church they attend," says Jimmy. "Is the church a body that understands and cares for it's own with open hearts and minds or simply an organization of members? It is not hard to tell the difference and the heart of a church determines whether someone feels safe to share their need for help, especially when it comes to this illness that has long been regarded as shameful. The same applies to the pastor and perhaps even more so as they often set the spiritual tone for their church."

Dr. Nichols agrees regarding the pastors' search for assistance. "Where do pastors go for help? This is a huge problem. Many denominations are developing vehicles for this but most do not have a vehicle. I presently work with different denominations providing that service. The problem is that men of the cloth are viewed by most as those with all the answers and no problems. When they do share a problem, most denominations terminate their services. Therefore the pastor is induced to hide his issues."

Timothy Mills, southern gospel artist with The Southern Brothers, is pursuing his degree in Psychology and

pastors, deacons, teachers and singers, have a huge target put upon them for the simple fact that they are leaders. As cliché as it may sound, the church will rise and fall with its leadership and the enemy knows this."

Timothy sees a change in Christians seeking help with Mental Illness. "I believe that the tide is turning somewhat on the stigma of Mental Health counseling. Attitudes have changed in the past ten years and dramatically in the last twenty. Most counseling, I believe is still done through local pastors, and for pastors, through a loose network of friends within the pastoral circle. It is sort of a good-ole-boys network to this day. I think the tide is turning in the positive direction for the pastor's flock, but I think the leadership has some way to go before Mental Illness is addressed in a positive manner within the ranks of pastors. I liken this problem as John 3:16 syndrome. All in Christianity can visualize God saving the world in spite of their faults and sins, but balk on the thought of themselves. "Whosoever is much easier to mentally and spiritually process than me."

One hindrance to finding help for Mental Health issues, is the inability of the Church leadership to understand the symptoms they are seeing in their parishioners. A recent article on www.reasons.org/blogs/average_joe stated, "Here's the first paragraph of a recent report titled, "Church Pastors Dismiss Mental Illness." : In a study of Christian church members who approached their church for help with a personal or family member's diagnosed mental illness, researchers found that more than 32 percent were told by their pastor that they or their loved one did not really have a mental illness. The problem was solely spiritual in nature, they were told."

A quick search revealed that the quoted report is no

longer accessible on the internet, however this appears to be the unfortunate reality for many. Dr. Nichols listed the following as symptoms of depression, one of the most common mental illnesses:

"There are many types of depression. Some of the better known are: Agitated depression, Dysthymia, Clinical depression, Bipolar depression (also called manic-depressive disease), Winter depression (lack of sunshine, Vitamin D), Postpartum depression.

Depression is an illness that involves the body, mood, and thoughts; that affects the way a person eats and sleeps, the way one feels about oneself, and the way one thinks about things. A depressive disorder is not the same as a passing blue mood. It is not a sign of personal weakness or a condition that can be wished away. People with a depression cannot merely "pull themselves together" and get better. Without recognition and help, symptoms can last for weeks, months, or years.

Depression symptoms include:

- * Persistent sad, anxious, or "empty" mood
- * Feelings of hopelessness, pessimism
- * Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- * Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities that were once enjoyed, including sex

- * Decreased energy, fatigue, being "slowed down"
- * Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- * Insomnia, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- * Appetite and/or weight loss or overeating and weight gain
- * Thoughts of death or suicide; suicide attempts
- * Restlessness, irritability
- * Persistent physical symptoms that do not respond to treatment, such as headaches, digestive disorders, and chronic pain

If you or anyone you love fits this description, please seek help from your family physician. Untreated depression can lead to many things, even suicide as was discussed earlier.

In future parts of this series, we will talk about the diagnosis of mental illness, the Christian's positive response and the connection between the spiritual, emotional and physical aspects of Mental Health.

For more information:

Dr. Bob Nichols: <http://www.drbobnichols.com>

Jimmy McMillan: <http://www.mcmillanandlife.com>

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Glimpses of Gospel's Future:

Meet Devin Brumfield – Stepping into a brand new Life

By Kelly Capriotti Burton



would give it a try. It's not something I ever thought I would be doing."

That "they" was the trio McMillan and Life, based in Smyrna, Tennessee and owned by Jimmy McMillan and his wife Liz. Finding themselves without the last third of their trio over this past summer, they auditioned a handful of young singers and found their match in Brumfield.

After a Wednesday audition in Nashville, and a Friday call telling him the job was his, Brumfield has a week to learn 26

music, but also the ins and outs of road life, living with virtual strangers, and an industry rich in history.

To hear and see Brumfield on the platform, just six weeks in, it's hard to imagine his being so new to his role. Partnered with the McMillans, who have sung with separately with groups such as The Wilburns, The Toney Brothers, and The Lesters, he holds his own in power and stage presence and is ready to continually grown in those areas.

Brumfield definitely shows proficiency for music. He began playing the piano for his church at the age of 12. By 18, during his senior year of high school, he was hired by another church to direct their choir and lead their worship services. That church was Kelly Baptist, where he

Author's note: It's not often in Southern Gospel I find someone in the middle of it who is even 'greener' than me. (Yes. It's a theme!) But recently I met a young singer whose new tenure with an established group came about in a quick, intense, and adventurous fashion. Get to know him at his beginning. I bet you'll want to find out what happens next.

Devin Brumfield considered himself a fan of Southern Gospel music. He was familiar with the sound and knew of a lot of the popular names of today. But busy working as a very young music director and song leader at Kelly Baptist Church in Hopkinsville, Kentucky (a town famous for a supposed alien invasion, he informed me), he was intrigued one day by an ad in the *Singing News*.

"They were looking for a singer," he recalls. "And I just thought I

songs, and then he was picked up in a mo-

torhome by two people whom he'd only spent an hour with, on his way to Pennsylvania for his first concert as a Southern Gospel singer.

For many young people, this would have been the next expected step in a Southern Gospel career that had begun early, or at least had been planned or talked about from a young age. But this was not the case for Brumfield, and so he not only had a short time to learn the



Photos: Top by Paul Wharton
Middle by K. Burton

worked for the next five years until that one ad caught his eye. Certainly, his experiences there teaching and sharing music helped prepare him for what was next.

"The first time I sang any of the songs with Jimmy and Liz was on

the way to our first concert together," he says, still a little bewildered. "But it worked out fine!"

In fact, he recalls, one of his favorite concert experiences so far was on that first trip. "We were at a non-denominational church in Pennsylvania called The Church. [The congregation members] were on their

> continues

Brumfield - continued

feet for every single song, singing, clapping, and shouting 'Amen.' I've never seen anything like it."

McMillan and Life concerts are full of energy and emotion, and though this was an adjustment for Brumfield at first, his role in the group seems to be cemented. At the group's Homecoming concert this past weekend, Jimmy McMillan told the audience of Brumfield, "He has such a sweet spirit. We truly see Jesus in Him."

McMillan also told the audience that Brumfield's first weeks with the group have been chaotic – they included several 10 day trips and some trials for the McMillans' family. But Brumfield says his new singing partners put him at ease, "The biggest adjustment so far is the travel, but it's a lot less awkward than I thought it would be. Jimmy and Liz make the trips as fun and enjoyable as they possibly can."

The adjustment is also one for Brumfield's family. His father, Shelby, who is also a church song leader, and mom Diane await him at home. At 23, this is the most he has been gone. He also has a sister Kayce, who has three children and four step-children, ("God bless her," he says with a smile) and a home church who, though reluctant to let him go, has been very supportive of his new journey.

He also looks forward to what is ahead. Having experienced National Quartet Convention, the Homecoming concert, trips to Chicago and New York, and learning not to try to help fix the motor home, Brumfield is certain he is right where he is supposed to be.

"This is a dream come true. This doesn't feel like a job," he says. "It's so cool to share the gospel in a way that I love."

Coupon Lady continued from page 13

can be stacked WITH manufacturer coupons. If a drug store offers a coupon for dollar off of a specific brand of toothpaste and you know (because your binder is so organized) that you also have a manufacturer's coupon for that same brand of toothpaste, you can really maximize your savings by using both coupons. Be sure to ask a manager to verify the use of both coupons on one product. A lot of cashiers have not seen this technique and although it is allowed by most store policies, they will question you or try to convince you that this is not allowed.

4) Stock-up on a product while it is on sale. If a particular grocery store has canned tomatoes on sale this week, but it is not on your menu, buy anyway! Why pay full price next week (or next month) for something you can get for free now? Every week you will see one or two products that really stand out. As long as you have multiple coupons, which you have because you've listened to me and purchased multiple copies of your Sunday paper, you can stock-up! There is no harm in having a shelf of canned tomatoes in your pantry! Next week, you'll add the pasta that will be on sale and by the following week, cheese will be on sale and you now have a spaghetti feast any time you want. That doesn't mean that you will be eating spaghetti every night for six months, but it does mean that the further along this coupon path you go, the bigger your stock-pile, the more variety you have in your pantry and the more generous you can be with your family, friends and those in need of a little help.

5) If you are able to learn to plan your menu around what is on sale and what is in that stock pile of foods that we have just talked about, you will save hundreds, even thousands of dollars per year. Sure, tacos sound good right now, but if you don't have the ingredients to make them, you will be forced to buy all these products that are most likely not on sale. Why not have lasagna tonight and start building your stock pile of foods so that the next time the taco craving hits, you will have a shelf full of beans, spices and all the other goodies that go into making a mean taco?

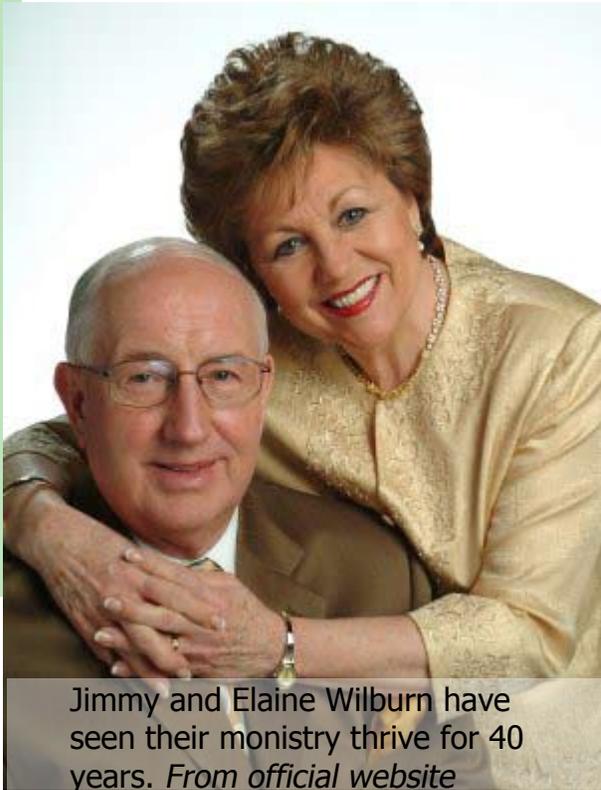
Follow these techniques and you will soon see a drastic change in your budget. In a good way.



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. Follow her at www.queenoq.blogspot.com / Contact: queenoq@gmail.com

The Wilburns: Then & Now

Members of a true SG 'farm team' recall road life with an ever-changing - yet ever steady - group By Jimmy McMillan



Jimmy and Elaine Wilburn have seen their ministry thrive for 40 years. *From official website*

They've been called a farm team, a school for the future of Southern Gospel and once or twice the singer's boot camp. Whatever name one may want to use, it all comes down to this: They are The Wilburns.

The Wilburns are one of the real stories of God promoting those who serve Him. It all started forty years ago in a little church in Carthage, TN. Though Elaine had sung all through her youth, on that day during a revival they asked Jackie and Elaine to come up and sing a song together. That first song was "Hand in Hand with Jesus." No one there that day could have imagined that this would be the beginning of an era, a ministry and a legacy.

Singing locally eventually expanded into a wider range of travel and took them all over the United States and Canada. With their songs consistently in the top 10 of the *Singing News* charts, The Wilburns' ministry has spanned over three decades of Southern Gospel music. They have been credited with giving many full time gospel performers that are still on the road a platform where God could use them.

The idea for this article came from a conversation when I was once again being asked about the status and whereabouts of several past Wilburns members. I didn't really have the best of answers, so I thought I would make a few calls and do a little research to come up with some.

The face of the Wilburns changed many times over the years even after they rose to the status of a na-

tional group. There is not enough space in this article to cover everyone who has passed through the group, so I chose to follow up on members who were with the group in their heyday. I also thought I would let them each tell things their own way, and here's what I found.

ELAINE WILBURN

One of my most memorable moments was when the song "God's Promised Land" was nominated in the *Singing News* top 10 songs of the year. As was the custom, those songs were performed at the NQC in Nashville. The year was 1990 and The Wilburns had never performed on the stage of the convention before. We also had never performed with tracks. It was a stipulation of being on the program that no live music was used. So, rather than the usual with Tony Gore playing the piano and Jonathan Wilburn on bass, the Eddie Crook Company came up with the track.

There we were singing in front of that huge audience. I asked Tony if he was nervous and he said, "My knees are shaking so bad that I feel like you can hear them clicking together." I said, "Just look at it this way, these are the same people we've been singing to all year – tonight they are just clumped together. He said, "It's these right down here looking up our noses that I'm worried about." He was talking about our peers seated in what is now called the artists circle, many of whom we had only heard on the radio. That song and that album, *Alabama Lightning*, launched us into a direction of full-time singing that has been our life for almost 40 years.

Funniest memory: I recall being on the bus on our way south, down through Georgia. We made a fuel and bathroom stop at a truck stop and everyone went in a different direction. Jackie was driving that day and was the last to get back on board after fueling. The

The Wilburns are one of the real stories of God promoting those who serve Him.

usual "Is everyone on" was called out with no negative response.

So, the bus headed on down the interstate at the usual rate of about 70 miles an hour. We had been back on the road for 30 to 40 minutes when Jackie heard a familiar voice saying "Daddy" – "Daddy." At first he thought Jonathan was calling from the bunk area but when he looked in his driver's mirror he saw no one

in the aisle. Then he suspected a prank, perhaps a walkie talkie planted so that it sounded loud in the drivers seat. But NO, it wasn't a prank. IT WAS JONATHAN'S VOICE COMING THROUGH THE CB RADIO! Jackie asked himself, "How could this be?" While his mind was turning he reluctantly cued the mike on his radio and



Alum Ricky Atkinson now leads compassion, also featuring alum Loren Harris . *From official website*

said, "Jonathan where are you?" The nervous reply came back, "I'm in a semi truck about five minutes behind you. Pull over and wait for me." Still puzzled, Jackie pulled the bus over to the side of the interstate and anxiously waited to find out WHAT HAPPENED.

Whenever the bus stopped unexpectedly, I would always come running up front to find out where we were. This time I was surprised to see Jonathan coming up the steps of the bus. "You left me at the truck stop, Dad, and I was just lucky enough to catch a truck driver who would trust me to ride with him while he tried to catch up with you. I don't know how fast you were going, but that truck driver was puttin' the pedal to the metal and it has taken us 30 minutes to catch you." Jonathon said that he had told someone from the group that he was going to the restroom, but evidently that person forgot to mention it to the driver.

This instance reminded me about a time when Jackie and I first started singing. Jonathan was about 2 1/2 years old and we left him at a church. Everyone in the van

thought he was asleep on the back seat. I had a feeling he wasn't there and about five miles away I went back to check and you guessed it, NO JONATHAN . We turned around and drove back to the church, where we found him

in the arms of the pastor with an ice cream cone in his hand. To borrow a line from one of my signature songs, "That's My Boy."

LOREN HARRIS, 1996 - 2000

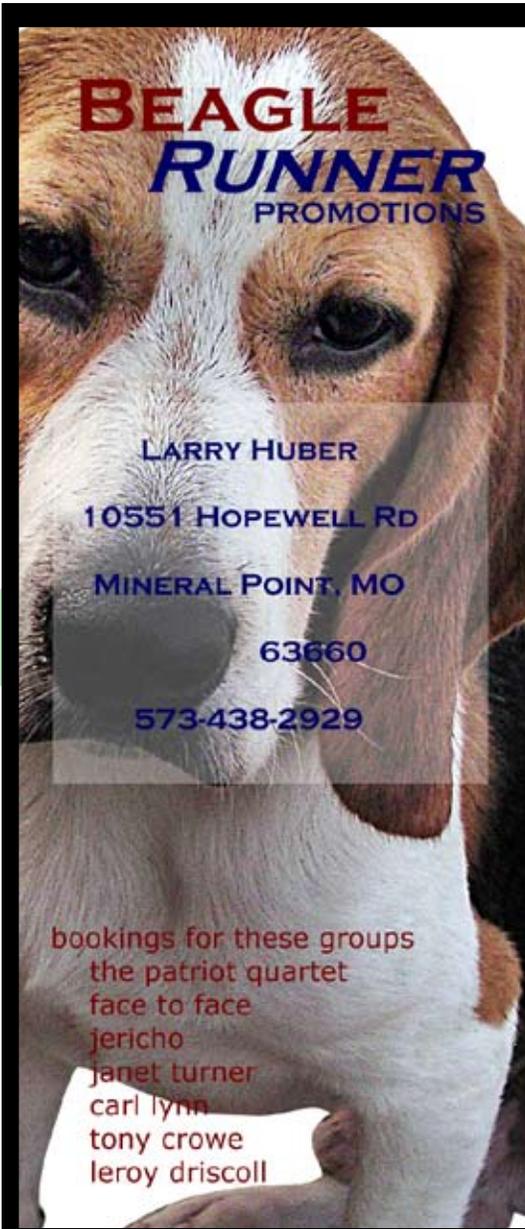
My very first date with The Wilburns was in Waldo FL at the Dixieland Music Park. I auditioned in Carthage TN on Tuesday and then hopped on the bus for Florida the next day. I crammed in learning as much music as possible on the trip down there.

We got to the date and lo and behold we're singing with Tony Gore & Majesty. I'm nervous anyway, so when I get there and Tony is there I'm pretty tore up. I mean here's the guy that helped put The Wilburns on the map and I'm getting ready to go on stage for the very first time and sing all the songs that he made popular. Well, we get on-stage and three songs into the set Jonathan calls "Outside the Gate." Well, I have the lead on the verses and as I step up to start singing I look back and Tony is standing at the soundboard in the back of the building listening to us. That's not the best part.

Halfway through the second verse the power goes out. No tracks, no keyboard, nothing but vocals. Jonathan says keep on singing, so I did. When we get to the chorus, in true Wilburn form, Jackie tells us to lay our mic's down and walk out in the crowd and continue singing a cappella. By this time I'm a deer in the headlights, wandering around behind Jonathan singing a song for the first time, with no music, in front of the guy that made the song a hit! To say the least, Tony "endorsed" me, I got the job, and the rest is history.

I spent the next four years with The Wilburns then six more with

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the Perrys. I came off the road three years ago last month to work in my church, Valley Forge FWB Church, here in my hometown, Elizabethton TN. As my church schedule allows I am currently doing about one date a month with another Wilburn alum Ricky Atkinson and his group Compassion. I can be at home with my family (wife of 14 years Cindy, 9-year-old son Cameron, 4-year-old daughter Kenidy) every night, still work here at my church, which I love, and still get to scratch that singing itch every once in a while.

RICKY ATKINSON, 1996 – 1999

For me, the best thing about traveling with The Wilburns was the family atmosphere. Traveling full time with a group can be hectic and can often cause short tenures for singers. Being with people who ARE family, and TREAT you like family makes life on the road much easier!

While traveling with Jackie and Elaine, I learned so much about what to do and what not to do, from a personal, professional, spiritual, and business standpoint. Mentors is the word I would use to describe them, as well as a second mom and dad. When I told my family that I was going on the road full time, everyone was excited about this group because of the reputation and strong family ties of The Wilburns.

Fun Times: I always loved it when Jackie would break out his "Brover" character! He would slide his glasses down to the edge of his nose, and use a tiny squeaky voice and terrorize us all with this character, telling us all about his "brother who also has a gospel group" and how they carried their equipment in a horse trailer! And how they record all their CDs in their basement, so as to get the echo sound! Funny!

Funniest memory: Singing in Tyler TX with Dale and Cheryl Golden in a school gym when right in the middle of our set someone burst thru the side door (the side that our bus was parked on) and yelled, "...smoke is everywhere and there's a fire somewhere...." Needless to say, if anyone knows how D-Jack was about that old bus – he dropped his mike on the stage and ran out the door leaving Elaine, Loren, and me to finish the song, and the set! Thankfully it wasn't The Wilburns' bus!

Ricky Atkinson & Compassion: I attribute most of the success of RAC to radio. We don't travel as much as a lot of the full time groups do these days. However through gospel music radio we are able to reach so many people and touch thousands of lives through our songs. Again, this goes back to Elaine putting me to

work in more ways than just singing.

When we released "Resting Place" to national radio in 1998, Elaine told me that since I was the writer and the lead singer on the song, I should be on the phone talking to those disc jockeys and program directors, sharing how the song was written and the inspiration for it, so I did. The result was the very first #1 song for the Wilburns in over 30 years of ministry, and that job she gave me, along with singing, playing keys, writing, running sound, helping with the bus driving, along with other chores, was not always easy but it would prove to be key to the future of my own group. I never would have chosen that, but if I hadn't accepted that role



Gary Castro, front left, now leads the popular Tribute Quartet.
From official website

I wouldn't have a strong ministry with my group, my record labels and publishing companies today.

Thanks again to hard working people, teaching hard working people!!



GARY CASTO, 1999 - 2005

September 11, 2001 was a bittersweet memory for me traveling with The Wilburns. I woke up early to the tragic news that terrorists had targeted our country. That day will forever stay in the memories of the American people. That day also happened to be the second day into the largest event of our genre, the National Quartet Convention.

Later that evening The Wilburns took their place on main stage at Freedom Hall in Louisville KY to debut our brand new release "We Will Stand," in their first appearance of the week of NQC. Prior to this event we had arranged to have a choir to back us up on this great song, with a retired military man to present the American flag and a local pastor friend to present the Christian flag.

During our performance I looked out at 20,000 Americans who were saddened by the devastation that had taken place earlier that day and thought to myself that this would be one of the hardest performances I would



Jimmy McMillan and wife Liz lead their own group, McMillan and Life. *Courtesy of Liz McMillan*

ever have to make.

As we began to sing "We Will Stand" along with the choir, with the military man and the pastor marching into the auditorium and presenting their flags, I saw the countenances of 20,000 Americans begin to change.

When we finished, there was complete silence in the auditorium. We saw hands raised to the sky and eyes being wiped, and heard sniffles in the air. That was one of my most memorable moments with my friends, The Wilburns.

Today Gary is the owner and manager of Tribute Quartet. They have made great strides and had many achievements in the short three years of their existence, including *Singing News Horizon Artist 2008*.

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JIMMY McMILLAN, 2000 - 2003

Since I am writing this article I thought I should wait and be last for this months portion. My time with the Wilburns included many of the funny memories shared already, but I have several of my own.

Road Life: One of my favorite memories is morning coffee with Elaine. She and I were the two early risers in the group and that gave us lots of time in the mornings to sit, sip and chat. Elaine had to grow accustomed to diluting the coffee I made, since at full strength it required a knife and fork for consumption. Our topics were as varied as the towns we woke up in, and between the two of us we could almost always come up with the solution to any problem. Only trouble was, no one else seemed to realize the extent of our combined wisdom so the world continues to revolve without its benefit. J

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Funniest Memory: One of my funniest memories was singing on Bill Bailey's program in Bonifay FL. Gary Casto informed me that we WOULD jump off the stage as usual during the song "Moved Up, Moved Out, Moved On." This notice came with the threat that he would push me if I didn't jump. Normally this was not a big deal but this night the stage was five feet high and at the time I was over 300 pounds. Not a good combination.

When the time came to jump, I stiffened and hit the ground like a vertical stove pipe. That was bad enough, but the funniest part was the lady in the front row who was sure I was gonna land on her. Her eyes got wide as saucers while she jumped and scrambled to get out of the way. Between recovering from the landing and trying to stop laughing at the poor woman's response, it was all I could do to finish the song let alone the concert.

And then there was the time I got the sweetest of revenge on Gary Casto. Little Gary is perhaps the most jumpy and nervous person I know. He also has a habit of trying to scare people. He got me once or twice when I first started with the group, but then I came to expect it. However with his "condition" he was always

an easy target.

One Sunday evening I hurried to get my teardown work done and had Josh close me in Gary's product bay under the bus. I waited till he opened the door and then growled as I reached toward him.

I'm not sure just how high in the air he actually was before he started back own, but I do know that all I could see was his feet in the air and CD's scattering everywhere. For a moment I was afraid we might need to call the paramedics, but he survived and from that day on retained a healthy respect for my scare tactics.

Like several other Wilburn graduates, today I have a group of my own. Starting in March of 2007 my wife Liz and I began traveling as McMillan & Life. We are so fortunate to get to do what we love the most, with the one we love, for the One we love the most. God is blessing us with an ever-expanding ministry focusing on the God of the second chance and depression recovery. We are also experiencing strong radio success, which is a big boost to our ministry.

Like many other alumni I often look back with fondness on my time with "MommaLaine" and "D-Jack." Their influence resonates today as I often see their ministry reflecting in my own.

These days Jackie and Elaine are enjoying life at a slower pace. They still sing occasionally, but once more it's just the two of them. No more buses, crazy all-night drives or "boys" to deal with. They are enjoying things the way they are.

There are lots of groups in Southern Gospel today that offer real hope for the future. Many people are working hard to preserve the tradition and heritage of SG. At the forefront I see the Wilburns and how God took a couple from the country and used them to impact so many lives. Not just the people they sang to, but perhaps most importantly, the "boys" they trained. The ministries they spawned and the impact they made for Christ will last far beyond anything they could have imagined when they sang that first song together in a little church in Carthage TN so many years ago.

Be watching next month for updates on Tony Gore, Jonathon Wilburn, Tony Peace, Troy Peach, Josh Singletary and Michael Helwig

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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. He can be contacted at jimmy@mcmillanandlife.com

Who's making new music...

CD Reviews by Chad Hayes



THE AKINS *The Akins*

www.theakinsonline.com

The Akins are an up-and-coming family group based out of the state of Georgia. Since last year's release of their debut album, *Good Tired*, the group has been nominated for several awards: Horizon

Group of the Year, ICM Entertainer of the Year, ICM Vocal Group of the Year, New Artist of the Year, and Christian Country Song of the Year ("Good To Know It's Not The End" from the *Good Tired* CD). The group consists of David Akin (piano, acoustic guitar, keyboards, vocals) and his three sons: Dave (bass guitar), Nick (drums, acoustic guitar, vocals), and Eli (electric guitar, acoustic guitar, mandolin, piano, vocals).

This self-titled album is their sophomore release. It features 12 songs done in the country style that the Akins have become known for. Also, 10 of the 12 songs were written or co-written by the Akins themselves. As with the last album, the CD jacket is in booklet form with all of the song lyrics included inside.

Starting things off is an up-tempo number called "Faith Thing". Written by Nick, this song is one that I think would go over really well at radio. Next up is my favorite song from this album, the up-tempo "I'll Be Happy When..." Nick and Eli co-wrote this song, and the lyrical hook is very catchy and well-thought-out. Nick and David co-wrote Song #3, a very poignant and powerful slower ballad called "What If God Says No". The message of this song is one to really hit the listener like a ton of bricks and make them think. Next up is a medium-tempo song written by Nick called "Any Day Now". This song has some really nice blending vocals to convey an encouraging message.

Song #5 is simply called "Comfortable". Written by Nick and Eli, this is a medium-tempo offering with a nice arrangement. The message is also a very "in-your-face" challenge to us as believers. The tempo then speeds up for the old standard "I'll Fly Away"-done Akins-style, of course! This has long been one of my favorite songs, and it's such a classic that you really have to be careful about how you arrange it. However, the Akins don't harm the song in any way, giving it a progressive feel that listeners should really like. The seventh song is the only instrumental on the

album. I don't normally like straight instrumentals on vocal albums unless the group is especially known for their instrumental prowess, and the Akins certainly fit that category. Not only that, I like the fact that they keep their instrumentals to a shorter length than their vocal songs, and "Nothin' But The Blood" clocks in at 1 minute, 26 seconds. It comes in right at the end of the previous song, and it fits quite well. Nick wrote Song #8, a slow-to-medium-tempo ballad called "I Want My Stage To Be An Altar". The message of this song, I think, encapsulates the Akins' vision of their ministry.

The ninth song, "Love at First Sight", was co-written by Nick, Eli, and Eli's wife Whitney. Being a relatively new father, I immediately identified with the words of the first verse. I will never forget the "love at first sight" I felt when I saw my baby daughter for the first time, and it gave me a clear picture of how much our God truly loves us. Song #10, also co-written by Nick, Eli, and Whitney, is an up-tempo number called "God's Company". This is a toe-tapping, fun song that many listeners will like. Nick co-wrote the next song, "When You Get Home", with Josh Kirk. This is a slower ballad that uses different imagery to illustrate the depth of God's love for His children. The vocal blend here is very tight and pleasant to listen to. The album concludes with a simple tune written by David called "The Moment".

The vocals, instrument work, and arrangements on this album are very well-done. However, what sets this album apart from their previous one is the song selection. Lyrically, each of these songs has a crystal clear message presented in a straightforward way. There are some powerful messages and themes that run throughout this album, and listening through it felt like a true worship experience. Even though I think they could have maybe kept the album to 11 songs, and even though a couple of their songs are still a bit lengthy, on the basis of its strengths I have to give this album an overall rating of 9.5 out of 10 microphones!

Favorites: "I'll Be Happy When...", "Any Day Now", "I Want My Stage To Be An Altar", and "When You Get Home"

Chad Hayes is also the resident CD reviewer for SGMRadio.com More reviews of your favorite artists can be read there.



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