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The Diamond Awards

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The Stutzmans ♦ Sunday Edition ♦ The Glovers

IN THIS ISSUE: Light Recipes - Christian Fitness - Ideas for Dreary January
How families cope with cancer & drug abuse

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



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2010 SGN SCOOPS DIGITAL DIAMOND AWARDS



The SGN Scoops Diamond Awards are returning for an 11th year! This fan-voted awards ceremony will take place THURSDAY, JULY 1 at the Branson Gospel Music Convention (www.bran-songmc.com). This year, we've changed & added a few categories based on fan feedback. The categories are listed here & for the first round of voting, you may choose UP TO 10 of your picks in each one. First round voting begins Monday, January 11 and will continue until February 28. TO VOTE:

Go to SGNSCOOPS.COM and click on the DIAMOND AWARDS LOGO (pictured here)

J.D. SUMNER LIVING LEGEND AWARD - to recognize the living performer for whom the fans feel has made the greatest contribution to Southern Gospel music over a career spanning 25 years or more. This award is a once-in-a-lifetime honor. PREVIOUS WINNERS: (No longer eligible for this award) Bill Gaither, Naomi Sego, Beb Speer, Dottie Rambo, Connie Hopper, and Eva Mae LaFevre.

MIXED GROUP OF THE YEAR - a group of any number with male & female members

QUARTET OF THE YEAR - a traditional group with 4-part harmony

TRIO OF THE YEAR - a traditional group with 3-part harmony

DUET OF THE YEAR - a group consisting of two singers

FEMALE SOLOIST OF THE YEAR - for artist recording as a soloist

MALE SOLOIST OF THE YEAR - for artist recording as a soloist

SUNRISE AWARD - for a new or developing artist who has seen growth in their career this past year. Nominees in this category have not released their debut single two years prior to the eligibility date (January 1, 2010) This award is also a once-in-a-lifetime honor.

SONG OF THE YEAR

ALBUM OF THE YEAR

CHRISTIAN COUNTRY GROUP OF THE YEAR

CHRISTIAN COUNTRY FEMALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR

CHRISTIAN COUNTRY MALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR

CHRISTIAN COUNTRY ALBUM OF THE YEAR

ANTHONY BURGER INSTRUMENTALIST OF THE YEAR

DOTTIE RAMBO SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR

BLUEGRASS GOSPEL ARTIST OF THE YEAR

VIDEO/DVD OF THE YEAR - a short form video or a DVD release

FAVORITE ARTIST WEBSITE - independent, artist-owned website only (no Facebook, MySpace, SoGoCity, ShoutLife or fan sites will be counted)

FAVORITE INDUSTRY WEBSITE - industry news, magazine, supporting business, or event

PAUL HEIL AWARD (Broadcasting) - honors a disc jockey/radio or television host

OFFICIAL RULES: One vote per email address. Email address will be required to place a vote. *SGN Scoops Digital* and Coastal Media Group reserves the right to discard any vote believed to be fraudulent (ie, using a fake email address for mass voting) and reserves the right to determine eligibility in all categories. All fans are eligible to nominate.



JANUARY 2010

COLUMNS

2 Publisher's Point Video Blog... Rob Patz

5 Greenish Me... Kelly Capriotti Burton

7 Ms. Lou's... Lou Wills Hildreth

8 Eyes Wide Open... Tom Holste

10 Monthly Encouragement... Rhonda Frye

12 America: A Great Destination...

Stephanie Kelley

NEWS & FEATURES

~The Family Issue ~

14 COVER STORY:

The Lesters, More Family Than Ever

18 Sunday Edition

20 The Stutzmans

24 The Collingsworth Family

27 Ron Brewer

32 The Glovers, part 2

33 Facing a silent giant:
When a family member uses drugs

34 The 'C' Word

38 Can I Begin Again in 2010?

40 Webcipes

41 The Why Generation

43 New Music: The Kingsmen

PAGE 3:

VOTE FOR THE DIAMOND AWARDS!

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

FIGHTING FOR FAMILIES

2009 was honestly, with no exaggeration, with no haphazard use of a powerful word, the most amazing year of my life.

That statement packs a bunch. So let me break it down to two of the most important things I learned during that incredible 12 month ride:

We are all called by God to be used in ministry.

Family is a ministry.

This issue of SGN Scoops focuses on "family ministry," and we've taken that term and applied it in several ways. For one, we have covered what Southern Gospel Music fans might come to expect: family members who sing together. There truly is no harmony like that of a family whose members know each other's dialect, timing, instincts, and hearts better than anyone.

But we also take a look at ministry within a family. How can we share the gospel with our children? How can we help those close to us who are battling the evils or the yes, apathy of this world?

And finally, we take an unconventional look at family ministry as we follow a solo singer, a full time minister, who travels with his wife and son. As the wife of a gospel singer, one who has for the last several years traveled as a soloist, it's no stretch for me to say that yes, even the ministry of a solo singer is a family ministry and a family calling.

I remember a concert Rod participated in back in December 2007. Our Miranda had just turned one and we were about two months away from the arrival of baby Kaity. As he took the platform to sing his set, I carried Miranda to the front, leaning near the wall, so we could see Daddy and so that he could see us.

A little later, a singer from another group, one with whom Rod had sang several times that year came up to me and said, "I always appreciate how you hold up that baby to see her Daddy singing. It blesses me."

While I do not record that here for my own kudos, I will say that it has never once occurred to me not to follow my husband in his ministry. I am fortunate in my relationship with Rod: we are best friends and our communication and closeness comes easy for us. I am also fortunate in that currently, my full time job is raising our kids and that, along with a fabulous support system at home and our digital world, allows me to follow him

wherever he goes. There is no place I would rather be.

Not everyone has the option I have been afforded. (I often think of the spouses who stay at home every week-end taking care of family,

obligations, and errands alone...) But we do all have a choice to make as spouses, as parents, as friends, and as children of our Father God. Will we be a minister in our own worlds? - encouraging those around us, praying for them, being kind to them. If we cannot

be used in the ministry of love in our own families, how can God possibly use us in our churches, our communities, and in the rest of the world?

The other choice is not to be supportive, to buck against the ministry within and amongst the family. Unfortunately, we have seen that in our lives as well. As hard and heartbreaking as it can be to have a prodigal in the family, we must recognize it for what it is. The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) ran not only from his earthly father, but from his heavenly one. He was uncomfortable amongst the fruits and works of the Holy Spirit.

You know who else is uncomfortable around it: the enemy of our souls. When he cannot derail workers of ministry from the job God has called them to do, he will go after our kids, our parents, our transportation, our bank accounts, our plumbing, and anything else he thinks might stand in our way.

As you read these stories, as you attend gospel concerts, as you listen to your pastor preach this Sunday and place your children with the nursery staff, as someone in your family hears a new call from God, keep those ministers, their families, and their homes in prayer. The front lines of God's work are a heated battleground, and as brothers and sisters in Christ, we need to be armor bearers for each other.



KELLY CAPRIOTTI BURTON,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

IF WE CANNOT BE USED
IN THE MINISTRY OF
LOVE IN OUR OWN FAMILIES,
HOW CAN GOD POSSIBLY
USE US IN THE REST OF THE WORLD?

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

A: Admit that you are a sinner.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Wills Family: 72 years singing the Gospel



The Bob Wills Family are hosts of the Annual Wills Family Thanksgiving Concert in Fort Worth, Texas. Shown: Bob and his children, Angel, Ron, Don, and Bob Wills, Jr.

Photo by Lou Wills Hildreth

Gospel singing roots are planted deep in my soul, and I will forever be thankful to our wonderful Lord for this heritage. Pop Wills established the first WILLS FAMILY QUARTET in 1938. I was a ten-year-old singing alto with an older sister and brother, Rene and Calvin. We already knew shaped note music and traveled the highways of Texas, Oklahoma, and surrounding states. Pop (A. B.) Wills was the President of the Texas & Oklahoma Singers Convention, and we even got paid travel mileage. Other Siblings Bill, twins Betty & Bob, and Norma Jo joined the family troupe as soon as they were old enough to walk on stage. Since 1938 to this day there has been a Singing Wills Family. As we enter 2010, the BOB WILLS FAMILY is carrying on the family tradition. Fort Worth, Texas, is their home and Bob Wills' phone number is 817-535-0136.

After years of singing with the Wills Family in Texas, hosting our nationally syndicated television series, operating a music store, owning a record label and publishing company, Howard and I moved to Nashville. The twenty years there in the center of the gospel industry were fruitful, and we are still enjoying the

blessings from our efforts. Being one of the Gaither Homecoming Friends and having the privilege of being on many of the Gaither videos is one of those blessings! A recent thrill was opening the beautiful Gaither Christmas Homecoming Book and seeing a full color photo of Pop Wills and the Wills Family on the TV set of "Wills Family Inspirational Time" with a story about how Pop Wills and his children were pioneers in gospel music.

After moving back to Texas, one of the special events for Howard and me is the WILLS FAMILY ANNUAL THANKSGIVING REUNION CONCERT at First Baptist Church, Fort Worth, where one of Bob's son is the pastor. When we all get together, I am always reminded of the faithfulness of God and how he keeps on blessing my singing WILLS FAMILY. We pray when Jesus comes back, there will be a WILLS somewhere singing a gospel song.

Lou Wills Hildreth

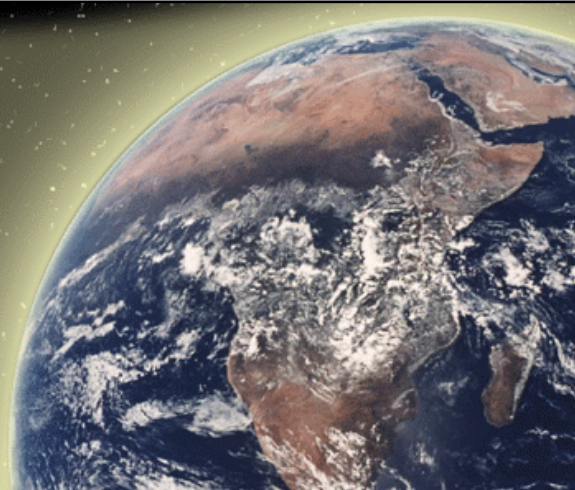
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The Culture War Part 3: What is Christian Art?

By Tom Holste

In my first column, I suggested that Christians need to pull back from boycotts as their primary way of interacting with the world. In Part II of that discussion, I opined that a better strategy would be to send out our artists into Hollywood and the other arts communities (read: the mission field).

But once there, what kind of art should Christians make? Are there certain guidelines that suggest what a Christian artist can and cannot do?

First, let's be clear about terms. In a sense, there's no such thing as "Christian art," since a work of art is an inanimate object, and therefore cannot be saved or unsaved. But one can certainly grasp the concept of art that expresses positive ideas about the Christian faith.

However, that concept means that one need not necessarily be a Christian to create "Christian art." Chariots of Fire, the 1981 Best Picture winner, is a secular film about a runner who is ultimately vindicated for

to accept responsibility.

On the other end of the spectrum are books and films funded and produced by Christians. One can hardly deny the overwhelming success of the Left Behind books by Jerry Jenkins and Tim LaHaye, and the subsequent movies. (And whatever criticisms follow, I certainly do not personally judge Jenkins and LaHaye or doubt their faith.) But, unfortunately, to be quite honest, the prose is simply dreadful in the books. The characterization is very thin and one-dimensional, and the characters' dialogue and their thoughts, along with the scene descriptions, are very "on the nose" – that is, they're all completely

surface level. The films suffer from these same problems (as well as some wooden acting). There's an adage in writing that says, "If your scene is about what it's about, then you're in trouble." These books and films are full of exactly that.

Take this scene from near the beginning of the film Left Behind II: Tribulation Force. An unbeliever comes to a church where a pastor is giving a sermon how all the events of the end times are unfolding according to Biblical prophecy. That's

it. That's the whole scene. A guy is preaching on stage, saying the obvious truth. So the unbeliever finally gets disgusted and leaves, but he's stopped just outside the church by Buck Williams (played by Kirk Cameron), who begins giving the same guy another sermon, until the guy gets disgusted and resumes walking away. (Can't say as I much blame him.)

If all one is going to do is sermonize, then why not just film a sermon? A straightforward sermon would be more honest and probably more appreciated by an unbeliever. What we



Concept art for Left Behind: Tribulation Force
Used with permission / leftbehind.com

In a sense, there's no such thing as "Christian art..."

refusing to compete in the Olympics on the Sabbath. 1997's The Apostle, a film by Robert Duvall (who in interviews has stated that he doesn't believe that Jesus is the Son of God), is about a preacher named Sonny (played by Duvall) who lets his anger run wild until tragedy happens. Sonny spends most of the film evading the consequences of his actions, until finally he is willing to admit to himself that the Lord would want him

have here is a half-hearted attempt to tell a story when all the writers really want to do is hit an unbeliever over the head with their message.

Therein lies one of the deep flaws with the concept behind this franchise (and, yes, it's a franchise worthy of comparing with Star Trek): the makers believe their work to be largely evangelical. They actually think non-Christians would want to read and watch these things for sheer entertainment value alone, and in the process they will be converted to Christ.

continues>

However, the aesthetics are so poor that most people would never watch or read based purely on entertainment value.

In fact, all of the people who I know who have read or watched *Left Behind* and liked it were all Christians already. Of the few non-Christians I know who read it, they all hated it. (Granted, I speak only from personal interactions; these observations could hardly be called "scientific research.") Why is that?

Because what *Left Behind* does best is preach to the choir. At best, for people who are already saved, it's very encouraging to be reminded that there is an ultimate happy ending awaiting us. At worst, this kind of story – with its "good" Christians and "bad" non-Christians – inflates the pride and ego that runs rampant in

the Christian church in America. It allows us to pat ourselves on the back for how righteous we are, while looking down our noses at whoever isn't like us. But we dare not forget that we too are beggars at the feast, with no more hope of salvation than the unbelievers had, until Christ reached out to us with love.

"Good Christian / bad non-Christian" stories ring false to unbelievers (and even believers like myself) because we can all think of times in our lives when we've blown our witness in front of people. Many of us can also probably think of times when the charity and grace demonstrated by an unbeliever put our own feeble efforts to shame.

The Bible itself is filled with flawed believers. Remember David and Bethsheba? Moses striking the rock

twice? Paul declaring himself chief among sinners? I doubt any of them would feel comfortable amongst the "always righteous" characters of *Left Behind*.

To be fair, it's my understanding that the movies are enormously popular overseas, and they have taught people there who otherwise wouldn't know about the end times. If so, praise the Lord! I certainly have no problem with God's work going forward.

In fact, most of my objections would be null and void if LaHaye and Jenkins had simply written a non-fiction book (or books) about the Rapture as opposed to pretending to tell a story. But then, I suppose, a non-fiction book is harder for creating action figures and candy bars to go with it.

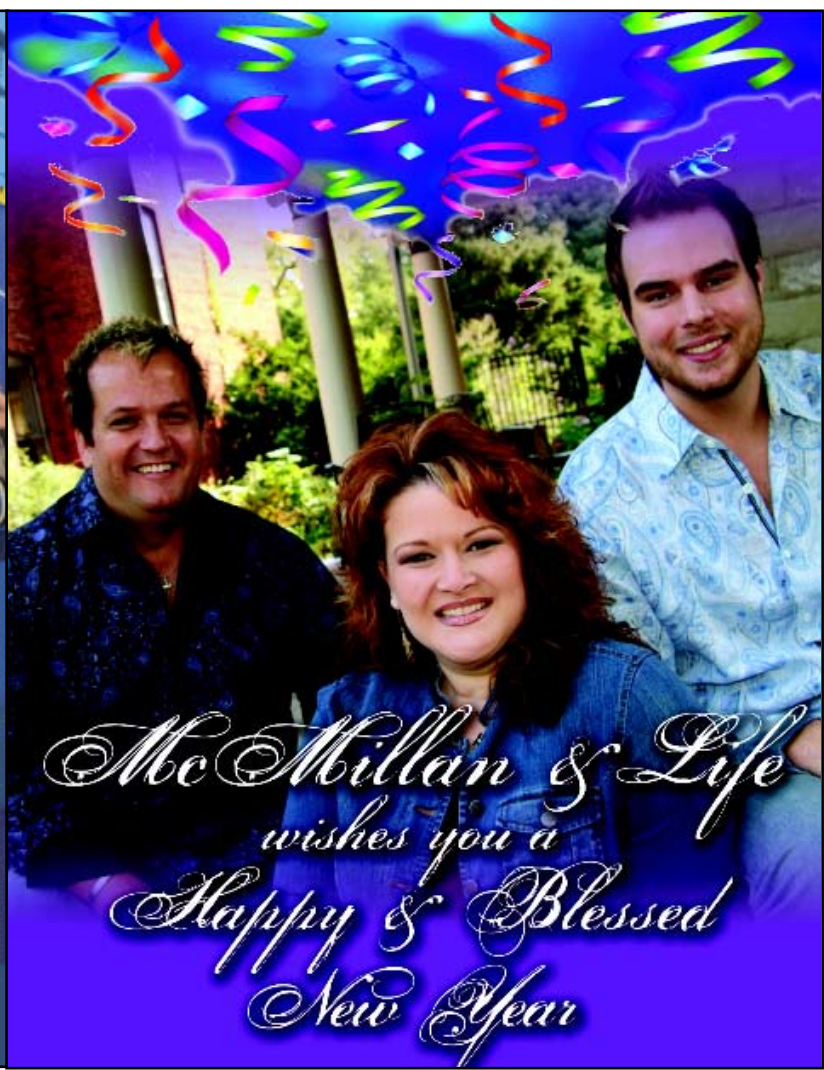


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McMillan & Life
wishes you a
Happy & Blessed
New Year

Giving the gospel to our precious gifts

By Rhonda Mitchell Frye

Children are precious gifts from God, aren't they? Just as children are gifts from God, it's a privilege to be a parent. There are joys to parenthood, but as the



It's simply not enough to take our children to church, read the Bible and pray. We must live the principles of our faith throughout the day.

saying goes, "With privilege comes responsibility." One of the most important duties we have as parents is to teach our children about the Lord.

Many parents wonder how some children can hear the gospel and believe and others hear the exact same message and not believe. In Matthew 13:1-23, Jesus gives us an explanation with His parable of the seed. "Teaching received without understanding kills the yield."- Thom Schultz, Focus on the Family.

Faith with shallow roots withers and dies, but one who hears the word and understands it will bear fruit. It's one thing to transfer Biblical facts to our children, but it's quite another to raise children who love God with all their hearts, souls, strength and might. Imparting knowledge only is like planting seeds that do not take root in the heart. The key to teaching our kids to truly love God and become fruit bearers is "understanding." Thank God, there IS an instruction manual! In scripture, we find much wisdom on the topic, but here are several biblical principles to guide parents as they nurture their children's spiritual development.

1. PRAYER- The importance of prayer can NOT be emphasized too much. Pray specifically for each child individually. Remember God has a plan for each child and each child has different struggles and temptations. Pray that God will bring them to a saving knowledge early in life. James 5:16 b

2. MODEL-When children see parents praying and reading their Bibles, the importance is stressed without a word spoken. On the other hand, children see through hypocrisy. If a parent has a "Sunday" personality much different from what is displayed at home

throughout the week, the child will know.

3. DAILY FEEDING ON GOD'S WORD- Just as food is nourishment for the body; God's word is nourishment for the spirit. Parents can be creative by tucking scripture notes/cards on pillows, mirrors, gym bags, backpacks or lunchboxes. Children can be taught to hide God's word in their hearts by singing and memorizing scripture.

4. INSTRUCTION- The best example of how parents should instruct children in the ways of God is given to Moses more than 3,000 ago.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

Basically, this passage implies parents should integrate their faith throughout the day by taking advantage of teachable moment, which are "like creating an on-the-spot commercial for Biblical principles using simple, everyday language and familiar objects." says Marianne K. Hering of *Focus on the Family*.

It's simply not enough to take our children to church, read the Bible and pray. We must live the principles of our faith throughout the day. In Deuteronomy 6:4-9 there are four distinct times of the day specified to impress the concept of loving God on the hearts of children. The specific times are when we sit, walk, lie down and arise. Great opportunities to connect with children are found when sitting at the dinner table.

Although today's culture "rides" instead of walks, the principle is the same. Riding in the car is a great time to take advantage of teachable moments. Families can listen to Christian music or discuss God's creation while riding in the car. Displays of grace can be discussed as well as meanings to words of the songs being heard. Mornings can be chaotic, but the instruction from this passage teaches us to use morning times as well. Before the chaos begins, take a few minutes to turn the

Monthly encouragement from a teacher of Good News

child's attention to God asking for His help, guidance and protection throughout the day. Bed time is an excellent time to train the hearts of children. Many times children will feel at ease to "open up" in a dimly lit room. It's also a great time to tell Bible stories and to pray. It's important to teach children to move past echo type prayers and begin to talk to God from their hearts. The familiar "Acts" method is one way to teach children the concept of prayer. Always allow children to fill in the blanks.

Adoration: "Wow!" Lord, I think you are _____.

Confession: "Oops!" Lord, I'm sorry for _____.

Thanksgiving: "Thanks!" Lord, I am thankful for ____.

Supplication: "Help!" Lord I need you to help me with _____. Lord, I need you to help _____ with _____.
(Intercession)

5. REMEMBER- Keeping a journal for each child is a

great way to remember answered prayers and spiritual highlights in each child's life. "Remembering and Recording" is mentioned throughout scripture. Keeping a journal for each child will build faith and confidence in God as they visually track the activity of God. Journals also make a wonderful Christian Heritage keepsakes to give children when they are grown.

The responsibility of spiritual development is a tremendous one, but parents are never left alone with the task. God promises to impart wisdom upon asking and is full of mercy when mistakes are made. Remember, only the Holy Spirit can convict a child of his need for a Savior but it's the parents' responsibility to give the tools and guidance when the conviction comes. Also remember the goal is to train the hearts of children to LOVE GOD and the key is understanding! The rewards are amazing- fruit bearing children and the promise of eternal life with God! There are many tools for parents available in Christian book stores, but there are a few helpful websites listed below as well.

•Age of Accountability

•Talking to Your Child About Becoming a Christian

•Heritage Builders

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America: A Great Destination *Cabin Fever Edition*

By Stephanie Kelley

Welcome to Dreary January

I'm sorry, but January is just a dumb month. Aside from the three day weekend for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, there really isn't anything all that exciting about it. No reason to celebrate and nothing to look forward to. The weather is dreary and the world is trying to financially recover from December. You could celebrate some of the lesser known January holidays, such as Step in a Puddle and Splash Your Friend's Day (January 11) or Dress-up Your Pet Day (January 14). But if it's not raining and you don't have any pets, there's very little reason to celebrate. Sure, you could take your kids to Disneyland. That would be sure to take away the winter blahs, but seriously folks, this is the FRUGAL LIFE and expensive vacations just aren't going to be discussed. So, I have a proposal to make to all of you. Create your holiday! Let's create some family fun, the Frugal Life Way.

1) SCRUB-A-DUB DAY: Don't wait for spring to start cleaning! This is the perfect month to organize and clean your home. Gather the family together and make it fun! Turn on your favorite music and work together as a team. Tackle those ominous junk drawers (or junk rooms, depending on your situation). Have a pizza party afterwards and enjoy your new, clean space.

2) GIVE AWAY DAY: Now that you've cleaned, you have undoubtedly created a "give-away" box or two. If you haven't, this would be a great day to start. Traditionally, food banks are teaming with food and donations in November and December, but many forget to donate after the holidays. Go through your surplus (if you are a coupon queen, you should have a surplus) and gather some donations for those who are less fortunate. Gather the book you told your mom about, the bag of used clothes you promised to your friend's daughter and the box of miscellaneous items for the Salvation Army and pack them safely away in your vehicle. Grab the kids and start distributing all those goodies. It will show your kids the power of giving and will help de-clutter your house.

3) BE A BLESSING DAY: If January is dreary for you, imagine how dreary it might be for the widow next door or the less fortunate family in your church. Think of all the people you know who may be having a worse time than you and set a date to be a blessing. Supply the kids with some art items and have them draw pictures for the elderly in your church, create a basket of bath goodies for the young mother

who is stressed with life or simply volunteer at your favorite ministry. It's surprising how blessed you are when you set out to bless others.

4) GAME NIGHT: It's an old and simple plan, but in this technically advanced age, the old-fashioned family game night has been all but forgotten. Dust off the old board games and pop some popcorn to start a fun January tradition. Make sure you choose games that are age appropriate for all members of the family and allow everyone to have their turn "winning" the game.

5) AWARD CEREMONY DAY: Pull out the red carpet (or red table cloth or red construction paper) and get ready for a fun night on the red carpet, Frugal Life style. Have your kids been cleaning their room without being asked? Did you husband fold the laundry for you? Why not reward your family with a great big thank you day! Cut starts out of aluminum foil or cover cardboard with sparkle to hang around the room to give a glamorous look. Ask your guests to dress in their best attire and setup the video camera. A paper towel roll can easily be turned into a microphone and a flashlight makes an excellent spot light. Create some "awards" with your home computer and then present your family members with awards of appreciation for the wonderful things they do and the people they are. Awards could include: The Cleanest Room, The Best Daughter, The Best Son, The Fastest Bad Maker and many other awards.

Although January is traditionally my least favorite month, I plan to find reason to celebrate the blessings of the Lord this year.

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



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



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

'More Family Than Ever'

The Lesters, 85 Years Ago & Today

By Jimmy McMillan

The year is 1925. The city is St. Louis Missouri. The story is that of a family that began carrying the torch of southern gospel music which they are still holding high today. There are many family groups in our genre today but not all can say that they have the history and longevity of The Lesters.

I got the chance to sit down with Brian Lester and his wife Sandra recently and get a better look at the whole story of his family's career in ministry. We had a great visit full of memories, laughs, tears, and thanks to Sandra, some amazing coffee.

The story begins with Brian's grandparents Harvey and Opal (fondly referred to as Bobo). They began singing on a part time basis with no real aspirations of a career in music. Nor did they have any idea that what they began would carry on into a new century.

In the early days another family by the name of Garner sang with the Lesters and they were known as the Lester Garner Band. This went on for several years. When the pairing ended the Lesters continued on.

As time went on, Harvey and Bobo were joined by their son Herschel. When he married Alene in 1947, she knew the job came with the deal and became the newest member of the group. Herschel played the guitar, Alene the stand up bass, and Bobo was best known for her skills on the accordion. They all sang

as well while Harvey was better known for his recitations and being the group's cheerleader.

During these years the

group spent a great deal of time taking part in tent revivals and camp meetings. This kept the whole family very busy in addition to their full time jobs.

Brian goes on to say that it was very common for Harvey to invite all sorts of folks to just "come on with us and we'll have you play one." This often made for crowded traveling conditions and many interesting stories. These times were made even more interesting by Herschel and Alene's children Donna, Brian and Ginger who began traveling as they came along.

Brian began his career, singing "How Far is Heaven" at the age of four. Not to be outdone, Ginger began at age three dressed in a western outfit singing "Christian Cowgirl." This song title came to double as Ginger's nickname. And while others may have let her grow out of it, Big Jim Hammel referred to her as his little "Christian Cowgirl" until the day he passed away.

1959 brought the opening of the Lesters own music store on the corner of 39th and Castleman streets in St Louis, right next door to Herschel and Alene's home. This store would go on to become a landmark in the St Louis area with the signage bearing the name "Lester's Music Store" remaining to this day, some four years after its closing.

The group's career turned in new direction in the late sixties when the new



The site of the music store still stands in St. Louis. *Lester Family Photo*

generation of Lesters decided to make a fulltime commitment to their touring schedule. They also expanded the Lester Family by forming The Gateway Boys with Donna and Ginger as well as a trio called The Rainbow Girls which included Ginger, Donna, and their cousin Beverly. Both of the group names were intended to reference the St. Louis Arch, which had just been completed a few years before and had quickly become the signature landmark of their home city.

FUN FACT: The Lesters' official website features a family tree and a 'Where are they now?' section for all the groups' past members.

In the early seventies, group member Curt Reed left for Viet Nam and they decided to retire the Gateway Boys name. From that time to the present the group has been called The Lesters.

Through the years the artists such as Big Mo, Jeannie Cameron Vargo and Duane Garren have been a part of the group. However with the exception of piano players and sopranos, they have remained mostly family.

More recent years have seen some of the biggest changes ever including the departure and return of Ginger and her husband "smilin Dan," as well as the addition of their daughter Jenny as the soprano.

On having all family in the group for the first time ever, Brian says, "Sandra and I felt a revival in our spirits as the Lord began to reveal just how the last few years had fit perfectly into His master plan, as if we are watching the completion of a perfect circle."

Today there is more family on the bus than ever: Brian and his son Jonathon, Ginger, Jenny, and her two girls Emma and Ava. Ginger's husband "Smilin Dan" is driving and running sound and their son Evan is playing drums.

Sandra has also returned to the road in the role of nanny. She had traveled in years past caring for Jenny, Evan, and Jonathon before they started school. When Jonathon started kindergarten Sandra left the road to care for him as well as help with Jenny and Evan who stayed home and attended Tower Grove Baptist school while their parents traveled.

These days Sandra cares for Emma and Ava while their mom-my ministers. Helping with their home schooling on the road, and of course having



The Lesters today. *Publicity photo.*

them ready and waiting for that special moment in the concert when they get up and sing a song or quote a bible passage. Sandra says she feels "blessed to be able to fill this roll."

In addition to all of these exciting changes, Brian was invited to begin sharing the emcee duties for the National Quartet Convention. Brian says that when Les Beasley approached him in 2004, he gladly accepted. The Lesters have been performing on the main stage consistently since 1963 according to Brian's recollection.

"Being chosen for that honor was truly humbling," he says. "The job is a lot of work but I love every minute of it!"

Fun fact: Ginger was named after Ginger Smith Layton who sang with the Speers. The two groups were singing together the night Ginger was born. Seemingly in return Brian Speer was named after Brian Lester.

As the topic turns to the future, Sandra begins, "Now that is a big subject. Brian and I spend most of our at home mornings sitting at the kitchen table, drinking coffee, discussing the future. Not only the future of the group, but that of the southern gospel 'industry' and ministry in general."

"The future," she says, "is dependent on our efforts to sustain it. We have to look at doing things in a new way, a way that is totally outside of the box we are in now."

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"I have no problem sitting on a stool while the kids and even grandchildren step up and minister in word or song... standing in the background cheering them on...allowing them to become The Lesters." - Brian Lester

Photo: Emma Revelle sings with her grandmother Ginger. *Staff Photo*

Their son Jonathon is a big part of that future. Jonathon was planning on a career in business after graduating from Harris Stowe State

University in St. Louis. However, after graduating he felt called to return to full time ministry with his family. Today he is following in his family's footsteps putting both his business and musical skills to use for the group.

According to Brian, equipping this next generation to continue on is vital. He says "I have no problem sitting on a stool while the kids and even grandchildren step up and minister in word or song, no problem standing in the background cheering them on, no problem allowing them to become The Lesters." With these moments happening more and more, Brian says, "It

encourages me to press forward with a new vision and hope for things to come."

Brian wants people to know that The Lesters stand for, "a commitment to sharing the gospel of Christ and living

what we sing about." He says, "Although the Lesters have a rich legacy, I would really like people to focus on the Lesters ministry today."

This writer can tell you that if you will take the opportunity to attend a Lesters concert today, all of these things will be evident. Not only will you hear what I believe to be the strongest vocal incarnation of the Lesters ever, you will also be a part of an experience and a special time with the spirit of God.

Looking back, it's amazing to see how the Lord has taken an unknown couple from St. Louis and turned their willingness to serve Him into a legacy that has lasted 85 years and four generations. Looking ahead, it seems this family has a strong future filled with hope and promise.

This month marks not just the beginning of a new year, but a new decade as well. As we make this transition, I believe we can all be encouraged to know that with groups like The Lesters, the future of gospel music is in good hands.

Fun fact: For many years beginning in 1963, the Lesters had a television broadcast every Saturday on the local NBC affiliate in St Louis. This program served to expand their horizons and notoriety even further.

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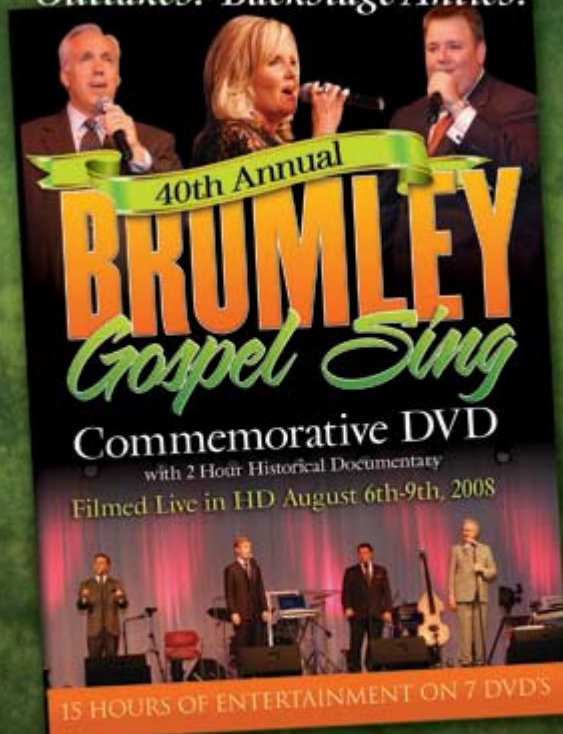
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With "He Bore a Cross" still holding its own on the charts, the beloved trio, Sunday Edition, appears to have another chart-buster on the way. "Mercy Walks a Road," is anticipated to be released before the end of the month, and with writers Glen Bates and Glen Ashworth's track-record, the song is sure to bless.

"He Bore a Cross" quickly rose to #44 on the Singing News Top 80, #1 on Gospel Music Times, and other charts; including Christian Voice, PowerSource Magazine, and SoGospelNews.com.

With a brand new project, Sunday Worship, on the way, (projected to be released by late winter) group members, Deon, Chris, and Amy Unthank are realizing the success and fulfillment of their original mission: Spreading the Gospel through song and reaching as many souls as possible.

Deon, founding member of Sunday Edition, always had a deep appreciation for Southern Gospel music. In addition to Sunday Edition, Deon had a brief stint singing with The Lesters as well as many other local groups in the St. Louis, Missouri area before forming his own group in the 1970s - which later took on the form as this family trio of father, son and daughter.

Deon's work as a Southern Gospel DJ helped cultivate the talents God had in store for him. In the greater Memphis area, Deon devoted his time and talents to an audience that seemed starved for a program dedicated to Southern Gospel music. With basically no other broadcast devoted to this genre, the popular program gave him a voice that reached thousands of fans and served as a spring-board



A Family in Ministry: Sunday Edition

By Evie Hawkins

for his own talented family trio, the Unthinks, currently known as Sunday Edition.

By the time, the Unthinks arrived on the scene in Nashville, this already popular group had built a fan-base that was more than ready to hear what the group would produce next. They soon became part of the most popular venues in the industry, including showcases at NQC, Heavensound, and their own popular SoGospelNews Music Fest.

In the mid-90's, at an outdoor venue, near Hernando, Mississippi, this writer's family group shared a stage with the trio, when Chris and Amy were quite young. The weather was terribly cold, with wind and rain threatening to shut down the Lord's work. Workers began to move sound equipment out of the weather. Many people had traveled from other states to get to hear the Unthank family, and nerves were beginning to become frayed. A decision was quickly made to move the stage inside the nearest building: a big barn!

That night was truly one of the most memorable of a decade of singings. Gospel music lovers were shivering from the cold and digging through cars to find blankets and anything to stay warm. As the Unthinks took the stage and children began to take seats on the fresh hay-bales, a peaceful warmth began to envelope the chilled crowd. Dad, son, and daughter soon became the distraction rather than the ripping, cold wind. Their blend of smooth harmony took the "Barn Singing" to a brand new level. The small, Amy Marie, raised some old barn rafters that night, with her high notes, a range only shared by a few polished and seasoned vocalists. Along with her brother and dad, she was well on her way, to becoming a favorite among those that consider themselves die-hard Sunday Edition fans.

It's hard to imagine that Sunday Edition is only now seeing the national exposure that they were always destined to see. Glen Bates and BSA World Records have taken the group under their wing to ensure some solid radio success - and this new partnership has already

proven successful with the single "He Bore a Cross." Bates' goal is establish Sunday Edition as an artist with a great sound, but more importantly, a group that sings anointed songs.

Although, Sunday Edition is reaping much success from their harvest, the last few months have been especially trying for the entire family who has grieved over the loss of close loved ones. Their biggest supporter and prayer warrior, Deon's wife Susan, who lost her mother, says, "This has been a very difficult holiday season for our household as my husband, Deon, lost his father and aunt earlier this month. While death is never an easy thing to grasp or come to grips with, we are so very thankful that my Mother is now worshipping her Savior whom she faithfully served for many years."

As manager Deon carries on this family tradition of singing and spreading the Good News, he realizes that neither his family or his ministry will be immune to life's trials and heartaches. In a recent blog on his family owned news website, SoGospelNews.com, he talks about faith: "I can choose to believe in Christ who offers me hope of not only a good life here, but an eternal life after this one ends...I choose to live by faith where I have hope of better things to come."

With the group's past success, the hope for "better things to come," appears evident to fans. It's obvious with the latest, upcoming single, "Mercy Walks a Road," Sunday Edition will be raising some more rafters!


Be watching for Sunday Edition's latest release in late winter.



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Ryan and Heather Stutzman and their three daughters, Belinda, MaKayla and Rebecca have been singing as a family for ten years. During that time they have learned much about traveling as a family and surviving the childhood-into-teenage years that can often be difficult. This past fall, Belinda stepped off the stage to start college. The remaining Stutzmans took time over the holiday season to chat with SGN Scoops about life as a Gospel singing family.

Scoops: Why do you sing Christian music? More specifically, why do you sing Southern Gospel?

Heather: I can't imagine singing anything else. Southern Gospel music in general has lyrics that stick with you through the years and gives you something to draw on in the hard times.

MaKayla: I've always grown up with it and I love the harmonies in Southern Gospel that you don't hear in

other genres.

Rebecca: I like all kinds of Christian music, but I sing Southern Gospel because that's what my family sings.

Ryan: From an early age, I can remember my Grandparents loading us up in their VW bug and driving two to three hours to hear their favorite gospel group, The Promise Land Singers. They were an all girl group except for the bass. I loved listening to the old Stamps groups and of course Bill and Gloria Gaither in the early years. Then junior and senior high came, The Promise Land broke up, and there was no Southern Gospel on the radio up here in Northern Indiana. So I started listening to Christian Rock: Petra, DeGarmo & Key, and White Heart. I thought that is what had evolved and that old gospel music died with those who sang it.

Then in 1995, a friend invited me to a Southern Gospel concert with The Martins, Common Bond, and Anthony Burger. It was a Christmas tour someone put together and did I ever fall in love again. I went home started calling booking agents and booked my first concert. I booked this little no name group just getting started, called Greater Vision. The rest is history.

I became great friends with Gerald and in 1999, I called him and told him I thought God was calling us into a singing ministry. He agreed to produce us and off we went. Southern Gospel is just telling a story and I love to tell stories.

We like all kinds of music, except rap or rage, but our love is Southern Gospel as we just love the stories. Someone once told me that fluff is ok, and the younger generation will like that stuff, but Southern Gospel will never die because once the young folk live a little, experience heart ache, walk thru the valleys and the mountain tops, then they can appreciate the message of Southern Gospel and fall in love with it. It is the best music on earth!

Scoops: What is your favorite song to perform on stage?

Heather: I love to do I'll Ride A Cloud Of Glory. That is a song that we sing in shaped notes. Up here in Indiana that is a novelty that many people have never heard so it's fun to see people's reactions.

MaKayla: I like to sing Your Wall's About to Fall because it's upbeat, and I get to do the lead!

Rebecca: I like to play my violin in concert sometimes. My favorite song to do is Sweet Hour of Prayer.

Ryan: This changes every night, or week, but right now I really like the song off our latest CD, Somewhere in My Past There is a Cross. The song speaks to my past failures and regrets, and the moments of shame

The Stutzmans 2010 publicity photo



A Family in Ministry:
The Stutzmans
Interview by Lorraine Walker

that I don't want anyone to know about. Then it talks about one moment of shame, the moment when all the world's shame came down on my Savior. That is one moment I am glad was in my past.

Scoops: What is your earliest memory of performing?

Heather: I remember the first time I ever sang for church when I was just two-and-a-half years old. I remember standing on a chair behind a podium and Mom standing beside me turning the pages to the big songbook that she used for the Good News Club. I couldn't read, but I knew the words by the pictures. It was the song Alleluia but it was sung in Swahili.

MaKayla: One of my earliest memories was singing at Stamps Baxter School of Music when I was about eight years old. I was singing for performance training and they were suppose to critique my performance but when I got done the teacher was so choked up he couldn't say anything. So, Mr. Ben Speer stood up and said, "I'll critique her. It was a perfect song for her and she sang it perfectly." I sang Lord It's Me.

Rebecca: I sang my first song on stage when I was three. It was Jesus Loves Me. It made mom cry! I sang it at every concert after that for a year or more, but the time I remember the best was when Dad was singing harmony along with me. I turned around and told him, "Dad, don't sing!" and I just kept right on going.

Ryan: While in Junior High, I went to a Christian school and they went to a state competition of Christian schools. I sang a duet with a girl named Marcia Webb and we sang Statue of Liberty. I was so nervous I didn't want to do it. My teacher had eyes in the back of her head. We sing at her church every year and I look for those eyes but can't find them. I know she had them when I was in school. Mrs. Allen made me sing! I told her she couldn't make me do something I didn't want to do but I was wrong.

Scoops: What is the most important message you want to communicate through your music?

Heather: God loves you no matter where you've been or what you've done.

MaKayla: That's simple: God loves you.

Ryan: God's love for his people. He is our father and He loves us more than we could ever comprehend. I am beginning, just beginning, to understand this love as I experience fatherhood. When my girls do something that blesses me, I in turn want to bless them beyond their wildest dreams. When they disobey, it

hurts, but I still love them and would do anything for them. If I multiply these feelings by infinity, then I might understand God's love for us and His grace and mercy.

Scoops: If you suddenly were not able to have your music ministry, what would you like to be doing?

Heather: I would like to be a teacher.

MaKayla: Just hanging out with my friends!

Rebecca: I'd like to do more things with my friends: sleepovers, movies, etc. Oh yeah, and riding horses.

Ryan: Nascar driver. Yes, that would be me. Driving fast and getting paid for it.



An earlier version of the Stutzman girls. *Family photo.*

Scoops: Do you, or have you ever homeschooled? What challenges would that present? How does school mesh with your schedule?

Heather: We did home school the girls for many years and I enjoyed it very much. It was pretty easy to work school around our schedule. The younger two now go to a Baptist school in town. They are very considerate of what we do and are willing to send homework with us when we have to be away for more than a few days. But as a whole we try to stick with mostly weekend trips during the school year.

MaKayla: I used to be home schooled, but in fifth grade I moved to a small Christian school. I enjoy it a lot more because I have some really great friends and I can do sports. I hope to attend college. I'm thinking I'd like to study Music Education and/or English Education.

Rebecca: I get to do a lot at school since we are mostly singing on the weekends. I play volleyball and am a cheerleader.

Ryan: This has been a fine balancing act that we have not always mastered. Heather covered this I believe, but I would add that I am pretty much the odd one out here. Forty weeks out of the year, I strap myself in a motor home, traveling the country, singing gospel music, with four women. Enough said.

We have had a very tough 2009 when it comes to schooling. Belinda is a freshman at Anderson Univer-

continued>

sity and majoring in Music Business. She hasn't been able to travel much this year due to her studies. We would consider prayer for God's will a blessing.

Scoops: What is the best thing about traveling with your family? What is the greatest challenge?

Heather: The best thing about traveling as a family is being together all the time...that's also the greatest challenge!!

MaKayla: Being comfortable with each other is the best thing. Getting on each other's nerves is the hardest thing.

Rebecca: The best thing about traveling is eating at lots of different places and all the great church carry-in's. The hardest thing is trying to get in the bathroom.

Ryan: The best thing would be being together. I almost went off and sang with a quartet when we first started singing, but never felt peace about it. Today I know why: God had wonderful things planned for my family. I often wonder how some folks can leave their family so much, but understand that they have a calling. God calls each of us in different ways. I am

so blessed to be able to do this with my family. The greatest challenge: Being together!

Scoops: When you come off the road, how do you spend your spare time? Do you do things together or separately?

Heather: When we are off the road for the most part we are working. But, we try to spend as much time together as we can doing fun things. As far as hobbies go I enjoy reading, going to the gym, hiking, bike riding and board games.

MaKayla: Most of my spare time is spent doing homework. In my extra time I like to read and text my friends.

Rebecca: When I'm not doing homework or chores I like to read or play Crash Team Racing on the Playstation.

Ryan: We pretty much spend most of our time together and we love to watch movies and eat. The last three years we have been consumed with a community project involving affordable housing. We received a state grant to help people with first time home buying and debt counseling. It has taken all my free time. I do manage to make it to all Notre Dame home foot-

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ball games as Belinda and I both work the games in crowd management. This year MaKayla is going to start with me as well. It is a fun daddy/daughter day. Go Irish!

Scoops: What new things are you planning for 2010?

Heather: The Stutzman Family is actually cutting back on our touring schedule. We are trying to do more select dates and making our weekends out fuller. We hope this will help keep our busy lives a little more sane, give the girls a little more of a normal life and make us better stewards of God's money. As for plans for the New Year, I want 2010 to be a healthier year for my family. We made a lot of progress health-wise in 2009 and I'd like to see that expand.

MaKayla: We are taking a fun trip to Chicago to see a show and shop, but that is technically before the New Year.

Ryan: We are looking forward to making an announcement about partnering our ministry and a national tour. Also, we are working on putting a hymns project together as we have wanting to do one for a long time now. We are working on a special project that I can't

say anything about, really I can't even tell you we're thinking about it. But it will be really cool and it is so needed in our country today. And that's all I can say!

Scoops: What is the Lord speaking to you about today?

Heather: Our family's new motto for 2010 is "Nevertheless". Last year was really rough for us in many ways and we want to go into the New Year with the attitude of...nevertheless (in spite of). The past is just that, the past; and we will go on nevertheless.

MaKayla: I want to work on reading my Bible more. And I'm really being convicted about eating too many Christmas cookies.

Ryan: As we dive into the New Year, I am reminded that God doesn't need me to accomplish His will. He chooses to use me if I am willing. I spend so much time working on The Ministry and sometimes forget the important things. A dear friend and mentor once told me, "You take care of the depth of your relationship with God and He'll take care of the breadth of your ministry." That statement is so true. God doesn't need me; He wants me, all of me. When I can grasp that completely, then God can do amazing things.



The Collingsworth Family is taking their place in the rich heritage of family singers in Southern Gospel. Since 1986, this wonderful band of vocalists and musicians has blessed audiences across the United States. Parents Phil and Kim both began their music ministries in college and went on to serve time as ministers of music before going on the road in 2000. Daughters Brooklyn, Courtney and Olivia, along with son Philip complete the family ensemble. Members are proficient on trumpet, piano and violin, making this group one of the most versatile and talented in Southern Gospel today.

With thirteen recordings, several top 40 hits and many awards to their credit, it seems incredible that audiences are even now hearing this Family for the first time. Appearances with the Gaithers have increased their fan base and many in Southern Gospel are beginning to appreciate the excellence of Kim's piano artistry. The musical expertise of the Collingsworth Family is only part of the reason for the rapid expansion of their ministry. The main reason for this growth is that they sing to build the Kingdom of God.

"I feel that each Child of God has a job to do to build the Kingdom," says father Phil. "God equipped our family with the desire and initiative to fulfill a spot in His Kingdom, using the medium of music to encourage fellow believers and allowing the drawing power of the music to bring others to know Christ. We do not specifically sing Southern

Gospel, rather, we perform music at the highest level we are capable of, always striving to better ourselves."

Phil continues, "We simply allow that music to pour from our souls, knowing that the reason we do it is to fulfill the calling of God on our lives. It's just that the music from our souls that happens to come out seems to fall into the Inspirational/Southern Gospel category."

Phil's wife Kim discovered the desire to express herself through music at an early age. "My earliest memory was playing a piano solo for a Sunday evening offertory

in the Wesleyan Church my father pastored in Southern Indiana. I was either five or six years old and I played Fill My Cup, Lord."

The old songs still hold a special place for Kim. "One of my all time favorite songs is It Is Well," continues Kim. "The history and story behind the song, the swelling melody and themes makes it almost unbeatable, when it comes to the wedding of lyrics and melody." The group's repertoire ranges from hymns to newer anthems such as Blessed be the Lamb. The variety of voices, instrumental expertise and personalities provide the op-

The COLLINGSWORTH Family: Building The Kingdom



"Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not break!"

-Kim COLLINGSWORTH

portunity for the Family to present a concert with something to please every musical taste.

Phil and Kim's children range in age from 20 to 11, and this provides a unique sound for the group as well as a challenging travel experience. "We are all comfortable with each other and there is no awkwardness of having outsiders on the bus," remarks Phil. "Good, solid Christ-honoring attitudes are something we work at, with the help of the Lord. Being together 24/7 does have a tendency to work on your nerves, so we enjoy some alone time when we can."

"We do enjoy our own lives, since we are so close together in the bus," says daughter Courtney. "Brooklyn, my older sister, is into soccer and softball and is a member of a city league. I love my photography and have quite a growing business. My brother and little sister both love the outdoors and we have ten acres in the country, so we use our Four Wheelers, fish in our pond, swim in the pool, and we all love to hang out with cousins and friends at the mall."

Unfortunately, life is not all about fishing and swimming, and the Collingsworth children are being blessed with a good education as well. The parents noted that balancing school and traveling could be difficult at times. "Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not break!" laughs Kim. "Many challenges, but incredible rewards. Two of mine have already graduated from High School and I am the one who taught them to read. You can't imagine

the flood of memories that washed over me when I stood with them in their caps and gowns. Great ACT Scores were music to my soul!"

"We all have loved home schooling because of the flexibility it gives," says son Phillip. "We would prefer home schooling. We all love our lives on the road and miss it when we take time off. We all have to earn a college degree, as per my dad. Both of my older sisters are doing theirs through online programs. I'm not sure yet what I will do. I still have two more years of High School after this one."

Youngest daughter, Olivia, is already considering her post-secondary education plans. "I most likely will attend the University of Cincinnati, right here at home," says Olivia. "They have a great College of Medicine and an outstanding University Hospital. John Hopkins is also another possibility, since I want to be a pediatrician."

Besides education, the Collingsworth children have a variety of interests and skills to fall back on, should they decide to leave the concert stage. Courtney shares, "I

that more. But I do love singing so much, that I know I would be involved in it somehow."

With a busy schedule on and off the road, the future is looking bright and busy for this talented family. "2010 kicks off a new series of concerts that our own production company, Regency Productions, is planning and promoting," says Phil. "They are titled A Special Evening and each of these events feature The Collingsworth Family along with a guest. We completed our Hometown Special Evening this past November in Cincinnati with our guest, Larnelle Harris. What an evening! We have several of these events planned in our schedule for 2010. We also will be recording a new live project in April in Flint, Michigan. That should be an exciting evening. Then, next December, our oldest daughter Brooklyn will be getting married. Quite a year!"

Phil notes that God has been talking to him about the same verse his pastor used to begin the New Year: "Be still and know that I am God". What a great message to begin a full and exciting year.

"Serving God is the best way to live your life, the most fulfilling, and the most wonderful way to live."

-Brooklyn COLLINGSWORTH

already have another career as a portrait photographer, so I would most likely just concentrate on

The Collingsworth Family's projects and interests may be taking each member in several different directions in 2010, but the group's message within their ministry remains constant. Brooklyn, the eldest daughter clarifies that message: "That

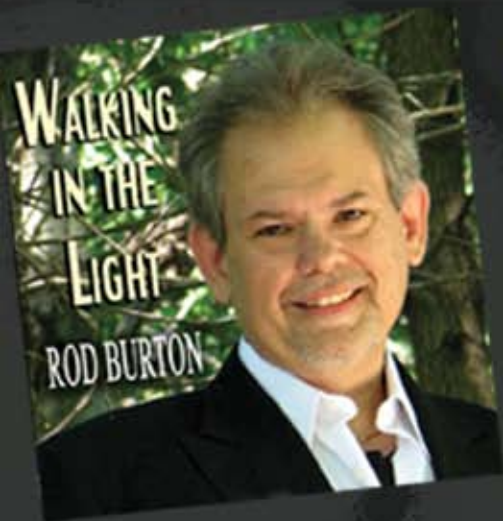
serving God is the best way to live your life, the most fulfilling, and the most wonderful way to live."



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Ron Brewer:

Solo artist, family ministry

- INTERVIEW BY JERRY 'J.T.' TINKLE

SCOOPS: Being a southern gospel artist is tough enough in and of itself. What are some of the unseen pressures of being a soloist in a group-dominated industry and how do you overcome those pressures?

RON BREWER: Number one, most people that listen to Southern Gospel Music are for the most part, used to listening to trios and quartets. I am not typically your Southern Gospel Artist. I am more your Christian Country Artist with a twist of Southern Gospel. I can actually cross both lines and do so very comfortably.

The main way that I am able to overcome the pressures is "I can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens me."

Second, I have an awesome record label and company, Church House Music/Chapel Valley Records. They are an outstanding record label and the best, par none in producing. I am produced to sound like who I am. When I do a concert, I am me, the one I was created to be. You overcome the obstacles by giving people the genuine you.

I am humorous, (you would never believe the people who ask if I am related to Jeff Foxworthy); maybe I

need to explain this one before going further. I am a born and raised Georgia boy. I get a lot of ribbing about it from my friends. When we toured into Pennsylvania, New York, and Canada a couple years

back, they really ribbed me about my Southern drawl. That first tour took us into Pennsylvania first where I did a two night revival, which was absolutely awesome. At the close of the second night, my wife and I were standing at the product table as many of the people were coming up. One lady told me how much she enjoyed the singing but had one problem. My wife immediately elbowed me. I said, "Yes ma'am?" She said, "I couldn't understand a word you said." My wife never let me live that down.

But, it is so wonderful the friends and family you make and how you can sense the spirit even in the simplest of things if you will allow the Lord to minister to you. Be obedient to the spirit and definitely mindful of the souls that need to be won to the saving power of Christ. Being raised a minister's son; I also know that you cannot shove anything down a person's throat. You can love them into acceptance long before you can force them. I truly feel that my raising and background has also been a helpful tool in overcoming some of the pressures. The main and most important answer would be Jesus Christ.

Another pressure that a lot of people see as a downfall to a soloist and a benefit to a group is the harmony and having the ability to maintain a full stage. I really don't perceive this as a downfall. I came from the trio Heartfelt, which I formed and was with for 12 years. I sang lead, played keyboard, and sang harmony [when needed]. I traveled with this trio and was very happy. If someone would have told me I would be a soloist today then, I would have said, "No way."

In 2002, I was called into the full-time ministry, and God knew what he was doing. When He first called me into the solo field, I shook. I thought, *God, I can't talk*. Now, my wife asks if I know how to be quiet. I honestly feel that you have to look at yourself and realize that you are capable of doing whatever God created you to do.

If you have the opportunity to work with another artist, do it with gladness. Right after NQC, one of my fellow artists, Rick Alan King, stopped at a concert I was doing and we did a few numbers together. Even though



'My family is never a distraction to me. They help me.'

- Ron Brewer, pictured with wife Trish

our styles were different, they sounded good together. The audience loved it and we enjoyed doing it together. The church booked us back together. My belief is that God has doors for us all to walk through; we have to learn to use those doors.

SCOOPS: I have done solo work as well as group work, and I have heard, several times, that 'once you hear a soloist sing one or two songs, you don't need to hear any more'. What are your thoughts on that comment, and how do you arrange your concert appearances so that you maintain the 'interest' of your audience throughout the concert/service?

RB: Honestly, I cannot say that I agree with that statement, and not everyone else does either; at least 90 percent of my dates booked are rebooked.

[I recommend having a] recording company that will direct you to will direct you in knowing not to ever overdo a set, to always be mindful of the spirit of the Lord. Too much talking will bore a person to tears, singing all slow songs will make a person want to crawl into a hole, including me, and of course, not ever sharing a smile or laugh will lose an audience. Even Jesus Christ gave us this example when he said, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine."

Jerry, I use Emcee Pro and that is the best tool that has come out for artist. Regardless of how you have your set lined up, if the Lord leads you to change directions, you are able to do so without interruption. Both my wife and I play keyboard and I like to work live music into my set. For the most part, I normally will do this at the close of my last set, unless the spirit is leading me in a different direction.

I still believe in asking how much time or number of songs I am allowed I believe in being respectful of the place I am entering. In return, they respect me. I also give the singers of the "venue" whether a church or concert the same respect I like to have when I am with them. If I want them to listen to me, I am going to listen to them as well.

SCOOPS: You travel around with your family. Give us a complete, typical day of 'life on the road' with your family.

RB: We are a family of three. It is me, my wife, and our eleven year old son. Some days he is like having three teenage boys and other days, like having three in diapers. Of course, we home school him, as I do travel full time. There are days that if you walked up to us, you would think it is a shouting arena. Momma is shouting, "You had better get that math work done, Joseph is shouting, "I don't know how, Momma,"

Momma is shouting, "Yes you do!" It seems it is always over math. He is a tremendous help to me. He has turned out to be a very handsome young man and of course, my sound engineer. If you come upon us and it is 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. or 2:00 and after 6:00 p.m., you will find Trish with her nose in the computer, doing my bookings, public relations work, sending out all promotional materials, etc

She is my gift that God gave me. You will find us singing, laughing, crying and even snoring together. Are there any disagreements on board the "Brewer" van? We're married aren't we? Ha! You don't live with someone 365/24 hours a day and never have a problem, but God is our strength and our problem solver. He has blessed both of us with a beautiful life and beautiful family.

SCOOPS: How are the expenses of travelling with a family on the road met as far as when you are discussing a booking with someone? Does your family's needs play a part in how much you charge a venue?

RB: When I was with Heartfelt, I was in charge of all the bookings, making sure all the expenses were met, radio promotions, etc. When God called me into this capacity, I wanted to be able to travel without that burden. Unfortunately, I didn't have a booking agency to sustain that area for me. Trish had tremendous experience working in the capacity of owning her own company for 10 years as a Nationwide Recruiter. She is good with people and loves them, as I do. When her business went down, about 4 years ago, God just slid her right into the area of booking for me full-time. To answer your question, yes, the expense of the family does play a part. However, it is easier for a church with us, as there is only three of us. We don't require a lot of the normal expenses that some would require. Example, if the venue was putting up a hotel, we would only need one room. We have even had pastors ask if we would be willing to share a room in their home and take the extra money. We have no problem in that.

I was raised by a minister, so was my wife! Before he passed, my wonderful father-in-law would would say, "Son, a servant is worthy of his hire." And they are! Regardless of how you look at traveling on the road, expenses of traveling are high.

Recently during a two month tour in Florida, I had the opportunity to sit down with a pastor friend whom me and Trish have really grown to love and "educate" him on the myths of gospel music. He, like so many others, thought that the expenses of the artist were covered by their record label. So often, it is misunderstood by pastors, ministers of music, choir lead-

continued

ers, etc., that if you are signed under a label, that all your expenses are covered. All you have to do is show up, sing, and go on to the next concert. You actually draw a paycheck from your "Record Label." I had heard this from a few other pastors, however, did not feel comfortable addressing this with them, as I did not know them as well as I did this pastor. As, me and my wife sat with this pastor and his wife over dinner, he brought this up to us and in a loving way, not disrespectful. There in the presence of God, we talked and he learned something he had never known. As we discussed the fact that you have your projects to pay for, your releases, promoting your releases, your ads, your reorders on your projects, etc., then your travels, eats, upkeep of your way of traveling, insurance on your vehicle, plus your home expenses. He was totally shocked. He kept telling us how he was so in the dark and how God had really opened his eyes to something he had never seen before. I am afraid there are many that do not realize the cold, hard truth behind the myth. It is a wonderful life, but it isn't a lot of money. You earn more in the rewards you see from the souls that are brought into the kingdom. I do feel that people need to help keep ministries on the road.

SCOOPS: Are there outside sources of income to the family besides your singing? Do you or your spouse have income from outside jobs, do you have sponsors, are you subsidized by your local church, etc?

RB: This is a very simple answer, no. We never felt compelled to ask our church to subsidize any part of it. Two years ago, our pastor who had been with the church for nearly 26 years became very ill and retired. At this point, the church went through a major turmoil and several of the members left. The new pastor came in and backed the ministry totally. (Still does!) He is no longer at our church, however, is with a church about an hour and a half away. Even though they don't give to it financially, they give with their presence at venues such as SGM FanFair, NQC, and supposed to be at Branson [Gospel Music Convention] this year as well. They also bring their church. That means the world to me.

SCOOPS: Are there obstacles to your ministry as a solo

artist that you'd like to share with our audience, that a typical southern gospel fan would not know about otherwise?

RB: Jerry, I think if I answered this as honestly as I knew how, I would have to simply put it like this. The biggest obstacle would be getting ahead. It isn't the fans, the fans are there. It isn't the fact that radio doesn't play my songs, they do. It would be getting charted on more of the charting stations. Now, I will say this, charting isn't always everything. Airplay is huge to me. If I am not getting airplay, then no one is going to know who Ron Brewer is. There again, I don't complain, as I know that I have an unbiased promoter that is fair in all their promotions. I have heard it has a lot to do with me being more Christian Country. My first release was "I'll Make it Someday." It took off like a wham. Written by my producer Shane Roark, it is an awesome song. It just recently fell completely off the charts after being released last year. Shortly after this song was released, another one of the songs Shane wrote "Footsteps on the Clouds," showed up on

the charts. It was a total shock as this song was never officially released. To God be all the glory, as I felt this was a song that God wanted to be heard. There are several songs off the first project I ever recorded with Shane that I wrote and I am looking toward releasing one of those songs as well. Truthfully, that would be the biggest obstacle.

There is one obstacle I would like to share that I have really struggled with over and over. I have not allowed Trish to voice this in any email newsletters she sends out or in any correspondents she makes. This is not some-

thing I even make reference to often at our concerts. I have even had concert promoters, pastors, minister of music leaders and others ask me to reference this and I can't for some reason. Maybe it is a block within myself. Currently, we travel by means of van. We were in the process of upgrading to a motor home, only to find the motor home was not in the physical capacity to handle the road as much as we stay on it.



Ron sings at the 2009 SGM Fain Fair.

Photo by Trish Brewer

The physical year of 2009, we were at home 48 days out of the whole year. The rest of the year was spent on the road. We have really been praying and asking God for a motor home. We do not want to go in debt for this. We want to stay debt free. I guess this is why I have a problem referencing this to anyone, I don't want anyone to feel I am begging! Regardless, if anyone knows of someone who may have a motor home they can refer me to, I would greatly appreciate it. That is definitely an obstacle for me currently.

SCOOPS: *Being a soloist, you have to do set-up, CD sales, singing, promotion, etc, pretty much by yourself, true? Or is the family involved as well? Tell us about that angle of your ministry.*

RB: You know Jerry, I am a very blessed man. Our 11 year old son is one of the biggest help God ever gave us. We have a total of five children. Our other four are grown and out of the house. Two are married and have their own families. The other two are still single, but have their own lives and at the present time. Even though they love the singing, traveling is not their cup of tea. Joseph on the other hand, eats and lives it. Our next to the oldest son plays drums and is one of the best drummers you could find. He is very active with the youth in their church. The rest of our children never took up instruments but work with their church in various other aspects. Joseph has taken a total different approach. He loves the drums, running sound and has become one of the best in setting up equipment I have ever worked with. He is a very hard worker. Trish ran my sound for a number of years, but Joseph became so interested that we wanted him involved. Now, he will not allow his mother to get near the sound board. He is a definite plus with the audience, as they love the young face and he is a mellow thing too. Trish handles my CD sales, product table,

promotions, well, all of that. All I have to do really, is show up, make sure the sound is set up, change clothes, sing, be present at the table, she handles the rest and good night...We make it a family thing. We want everyone present to know that. Family values are important to us. We promote and emphasis strong family relationships.

In my travels and even in my bookings, this question is posed so often. Do you travel with your husband? Of course, Trish will tell them she does. The typical response: We like to see the wife travel with her husband. Not only does it look good on him, it also helps him. We feel that a wife that travels with her husband not only supports him, but is there to pray. I have to agree. My wife is my supporter in more ways than I could ever tell you. She uplifts me in prayer, as well as in spirit. Many times when I am singing, I can look out and she is sitting there with a beautiful smile on her face and a prayer in her heart. There has been times when there is a tear running down her cheek, as I know she is praying as well. My family is never a distraction to me. They help me.

SCOOPS: *How do you get fed from God while on the road? How do you stay 'fresh' on a daily basis with all the outside pressures of being husband, father, and business leader?*

RB: Well, we have been called weird regarding this that is ok, too. On our Sunday morning services, we ask the pastor not to turn his pulpit over to us. Not all do it, but some appreciate it. Many will still turn it completely over. There is definitely a reason behind this. Even though you are going to feed the congregation through song, you still have the need to be fed. If a person never hears the word of God they will die spiritually. Man cannot live without the meat (preached

continued

Carol Sanguinette-How

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- Psalm 92:1

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word of God.) I love to sing and it is me, but we still have to have the word. If we are going to be in an area for an extended period of time, we find a church to attend through the week for midweek service. It is important to us to fellowship with other Christians and have the word of God in us.

God always sends pastors into our lives to help as well. We have pastors in different states that encourage us, call us and share with us. Presently, we have several pastors in Virginia, Florida, Alabama and Pennsylvania, that want us to take part in things pertaining to the ministry when we're in the area. This is what keeps me fresh, the people that God sends into "OUR" life, as it is not a "ME" thing, it is a "WE". I may be the one who delivers it through song, but it is definitely "WE," as God ordained it through me and my wife.

SCOOPS: Is there something about your ministry that I haven't asked you about that you'd like to share with our readers? Here's your chance to tell us what's on your mind that our readers need to know about Ron Brewer and his ministry.

RB: Jerry, if I could just take a moment and say a thank you to a gentleman who has really blessed me. I didn't want to start naming names, but I really feel led to do this. I met this him face to face last year at FanFair. He and his wife made a huge impact on both Trish and me: who they are, the life they live, and their dedication. I reference this as he is also a solo artist. Later on that year, I had the wonderful pleasure of working with him in Branson, MO at one of the best events I think I have ever done. Such a sweet, sweet spirit was at the Branson Gospel Music Convention the entire week. I really don't know if there were dry eyes that en-

tire week. At just about any given time, you would find artists talking, praying, encouraging, uplifting, one another, as well as others. Then onto NQC, there was a reunion, as I would call it, from Branson and the warmth of all the artists could be felt again. It was like the heavens had opened up. My record label sponsors an event yearly in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee called, Christmas in the Smokies. This gentleman and his wife were there. My, how they are always mindful to the spirit of God. I haven't forgotten the words spoken so humbly by now a wonderful friend, fellow artist, and Christian brother, Mr. Rod Burton and his wonderful wife, Kelly. Rod, thank you so much for being obedient to God that night and for words of wisdom. You don't know how you changed my life and how much we love and appreciate you. You don't know how you were led of God to say what you said. God is an on time God. He is never late, never short, always delivering right on time. Thank you for your obedience. We love you guys very much. *Editor's Note: I had no idea this was in here until the magazine was going to press. Don't you love being in the family of God? Thank you, Ron and Trish... we feel the same about you! - Kelly*

Jerry, thank you for interviewing me and to all the staff at SGN Scoops. I have always and still do believe in you. I know your life, as I have followed you for a very long time. God Bless you all I pray we all have the opportunity to share together somewhere in 2010.

Rob Brewer is a full time national artist and travels throughout the United States. Anyone who wishes to secure a date with him may contact Trish Brewer at 706-508-5406. They can also visit his website at www.ronbrewerministries.com He would like to emphasis that he works with churches on revivals as well as concert dates.

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'I don't know if we're brave or crazy' A few true road tales from The Glovers

Interview by Kelly Capriotti Burton

When I sat down to talk with Adam and Kathy Glover at National Quartet Convention last September, I had two goals in mind: hear straight from them about their unique and powerful post-abortion healing ministry, and find out how in the world they travel and minister full time with five children! The first question, of course: **How do you do it?**

[Kathy simply laughs]. Adam: We have 5 kids and we have a bus that was given to us free and clear by a man in Minnesota who never met us, two years ago last October. He had a bus for sale and I called him, talked to him. He went to our website, read our testimony... long story short, he gave us the bus. When his daughter was 16 years old, she became pregnant and had an abortion scheduled, but he got her to go to a pregnancy counseling center & saved the baby. He saw what we did [post-abortion ministry] and gave us the bus.



Glover family photo by Amber Butler Photography

Kathy: It was just 3 months after we surrounded to [traveling and singing] full time. We didn't know what we were going to do. Right after Adam had quit his job, we found out we were pregnant with our fourth child. What are we going to do? We had a Ford Expedition with 250 thousand miles on it! We couldn't afford a bus and didn't know what we were going to do, and God said, 'Well here...'

I can't get over five kids on a bus! Do you have any help?

Adam: We either take help with us or arrange it – we've made friends all over the place. People will fight to hold our kids. There have only been a few occasions when it's really been hectic and we haven't had enough help.

Kathy: We even make a joke out of it... Anyone want to hold a baby today? We are thinking about taking someone on full time. .. We're very blessed.

I gave the Glovers my worst case scenario... You're in a service. Two kids are screaming. One is running around, maybe writing on the pews (not that my children ever do that....now way!) Do you stop a service? What do you do?

Kathy: I've done it! [stopped a service]

Adam: A few years ago, [son] Carter, while we were on our second song, had dirtied his diaper.

Kathy: [Older son] Justin had been trying to take care of him; he was two. Carter came running toward the stage with his diaper sagging and nearly losing his pants. Justin grabbed him and tried to stop him, and Carter's pants fell down! Justin was running trying to get Carter out of there... that's when a man from the church took Carter and changed him. We've had many moments like that.

Adam: I've had to come off the stage to correct them. They're in the front row and don't think we see them and will be sitting there bickering.

Kathy: Another time, Carter had fallen on gravel during a concert and bloodied his face. He comes screaming into the church and there's blood everywhere. I know everyone saw my eyes! There was a guy with us who had traveled six hours that day just to help us; he took him into the bathroom and cleaned him up and took care of him. Either we handle it or someone does!

Adam: Carter is allergic to peanuts. Another time, someone had given him a snack bar with peanuts in it, and he didn't know it. He's very conscious of it. I could see him in the front row starting to swell up! Luckily, someone in the church had a Bena-dryl...

Kathy: We could go on all day!

I can imagine! Have you considered writing a book?

Adam: We are, but it's not about that...that might be next! We are working on Hidden Secrets, Woven Lies: Overcoming Abortion in Your Past.

Kathy: ... that will be coming out hopefully in the next year.

I commend Adam and Kathy on the honesty bravery of their ministry.

Kathy: I don't know if we're brave or crazy.

****Read Part I of The Glovers interview - on their post-abortion testimony and ministry - in the December 2009 SGN Scoops.**

Last spring my group, McMillan and Life, took part in a revival in Desha, Arkansas. As always we had a great time with our friends there who have almost become a second family to us. The time we spent there left a lasting impression on us and I would venture to say that in some ways it changed my life forever.

The services were great that week but I have to say that the moment that brought it all home took place the last afternoon we were there. Pastor asked us if we would go to lunch with him and another man from the church. As we sat together the man began sharing his story of addiction to methamphetamines.

He told us how he had lived a double life while on the road for years and how the drugs finally destroyed that wall of secrecy and completely engulfed him. His choices cost him his successful career, wealthy lifestyle, and most importantly, almost completely shattered his family.

As he shared his story it was heartbreaking to hear and understand how this addiction was able to completely destroy his powers of judgment.

It caused him to be oblivious to the loss, pain, and destruction taking place in his life and the lives of those around him.

I had heard stories in the past about the disease of drug addiction but I had never before sat face to face with its "leftovers." But these leftovers were nothing to be thrown away. He continued on to tell us how God had gotten his attention, healed him of his addiction, and given him a ministry to others walking that same road to destruction.

I wish every story of addiction had this same ending or perhaps not even a beginning, but sadly that is not the case. Little did I know as I sat there that it would only be a short time before this issue would lash out and affect my own family, and this time not with such a happy ending.

Less than two months after that revival I got the call

saying that one of my family members had been arrested, jailed, and was waiting trial on Meth and a myriad of other charges. Everything he was charged with was a direct result of his addiction and the combined charges carried the probability of years in prison.

In recent months this demon has hit even closer to my doorstep with an immediate family member. This time it is prescription drugs... addiction is addiction. I cannot explain the pain and frustration of watching someone you love take this dark downhill road. Nor would I ever wish this trial on another.

The effects of addiction are far reaching and in some cases the full

impact may never really be known. Lives are thrown down the drain, families are destroyed, careers are ruined, and the list never ends. Of all the undermining forces destroying our society today, this one is right at the top of the list.

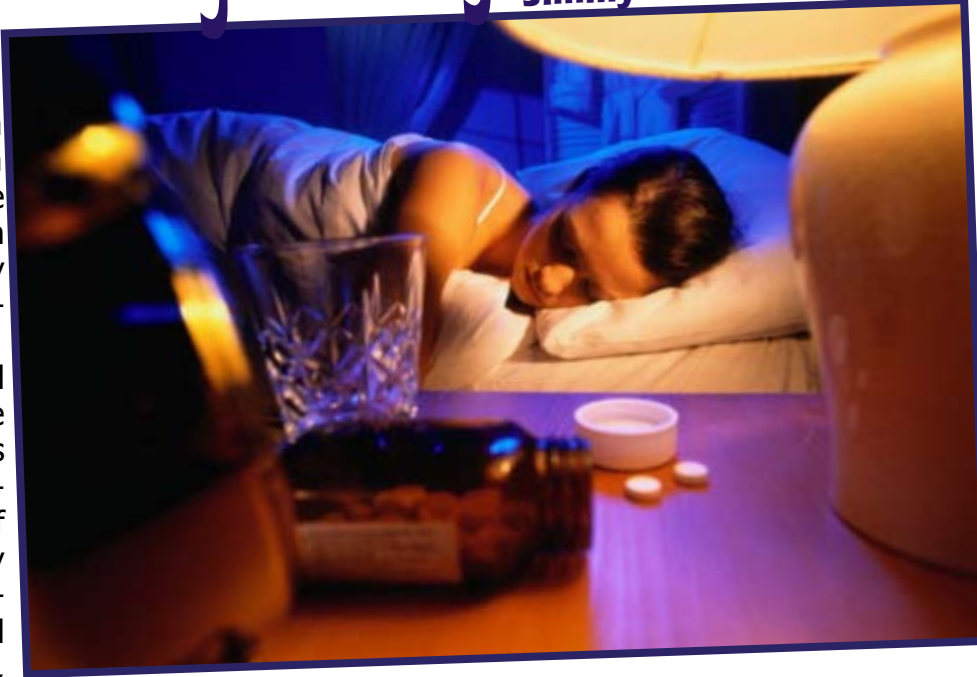
When I first wrote about this subject on my blog awhile back I prayed I was as close as I would ever be to it. Sadly this epidemic has continued to hit closer and closer to home for me.

This may be a topic that has never affected many of you. If that is the case, please take a moment and count your blessings. Perhaps you have never given this a moment's thought, but it is time to think about it. As you walk through this new year, gathering with friends and family, take note. If you suspect that someone you know has a problem with an addiction of any kind, please reach out to him or her. Don't wait for people to reach out or come to their own end for it very well may be too late.

Above and beyond anything we may try to do about this epidemic, we need to pray. Pray believing for a mighty move of God to fight this battle. Although it is hard at times we still need to remember that the battle is the Lords and He does have the power to save, heal and restore. Let's do our part and let Him do His.

Facing a silent giant

Jimmy McMillan



The "C" Word: The True Story of Dottie Williams' Miraculous Victory over Cancer

By Jenny Berens

If ever there is an ugly word that makes me cringe, it would be the 'C' word... Cancer. So many lives are torn apart and destroyed by this unforgiving disease. It is no respecter of persons and doesn't care if your life is just beginning, in its prime or at its end. But, for one special lady, the 'C' word was just a battle of faith, determination and pure will. My mother, Dottie Williams, was one of those ladies in the church who sang, played piano, prayed with anyone she felt may have a need and was "Aunt Dottie" to every child who knew her. I grew up waking in the night to hear her crying out to God in prayer. Never was the prayer one for herself, but for my sisters, myself and countless others. No need was too small to bring her to her knees.

She has had such a strong relationship with God throughout her life. She was a working mother scraping to keep the family afloat, yet, she was the most giving person you could ever meet. Coming from an abusive home, she vowed to love her family and never treat them the way she had been mistreated as a child on into adulthood. No matter what the circumstances may have been, my sisters and I never questioned whether or not we were loved. Mama made sure we knew it.

In 1997, Mama began having dizzy spells. She would be otherwise fine, but then fall down for no apparent reason. After her falls, she felt light-headed and assumed she had an inner ear infection. After several such spells, she went to her doctor thinking an antibiotic would correct the problem. She was treated for an ear infection, but her blood was also tested for other physical ailments. She was called back with blood results and diagnosed with cancer. It was one of two types, leukemia or lymphoma. Her next step was to go back for treatment options and more testing. At that visit, she never left the car. The Lord quickened her and told her that He was her healer, He was her source. She sat in the car crying and praying. She never returned to the oncology center.

During a church service, God spoke to her in a mes-



Dottie Williams is pictured with: top - children during a trip to Haiti, middle - youngest daughter Bekah during Dottie's bout with cancer, and bottom - with daughter Trish. Photos property of Jennry Berens, pictured at middle right.



>continued

sage, saying, "Nobody knows what you're going through, but I know. Lean not on the arms of flesh, lean on me. You will walk out of this trial." And truthfully, no one had any idea what that message was about except Mama. She hadn't uttered a word to anyone. After receiving that message, Mama thought she was healed right away. She thanked God for her healing. She even went on a 40-day fast and had a specific list of needs that needed to be met for various people. From sicknesses to a new car that a family was in need of, she prayed earnestly during the fast. By the end of the 40 days, every need had been met and her faith in God was on top of the world. All the while, cancer was continuously spreading inside her.

Soon she began to see large bruises form on her body, and she felt a tiredness she had never experienced. Bruises would appear on her chest and up her throat. And soon, she would pass something from her mouth that looked and felt like sharp, brown rocks. The pain was excruciating and after they would pass, the bruising would be horrific, only for this to happen again and again. It got worse. Tumors began to grow in her body the size of soft balls. We could feel them in her stomach, small ones in her forehead. They would move around like a child kicking from within, only, they were angry. I have never seen or felt such a thing. It would take three of us to hold them down to keep them from hurting her so badly. She would pass out from the pain. While she was in that state, she would begin to softly sing, eyes closed, body nearly lifeless, but we would hear her singing and even talking. After she would regain consciousness, she would remember that she heard angels singing and that would be the unfamiliar, but beautiful songs we heard her sing.

Other times, she would be having a conversation with Jesus - usually about helping the lost to find Him and how badly she wanted to work for Him.

She got to the point that she couldn't walk, her speaking was diminished, her hands and feet had drawn in, and she had lost an extreme amount of weight. Most cancer patients are given morphine for this kind of pain. She took normal doses of Tylenol and Benadryl. Aside from the outer physical inabilities, she was losing blood from almost all places imaginable in her body. Blood poured from her nose, ears, eyes and breasts to name a few. Her kidneys quit functioning as well. When she went to the bathroom, all she released was more blood.

We were all terrified. Her mother tried to declare her incompetent because she wouldn't go to the doctor. We all wanted her to go to the doctor at this point out of fear for her life, but she stood firm on God's promise. We could only respect and honor that, and pray for increased faith. Her good friend, Sherry Clark, was with her around the clock most days, caring for her, praying with her and never leaving her side. I could hear her praying for Mama all thru the night. Mama never once complained, she wouldn't even let us put a wet cloth on her head when she was burning up with fever. She called it a "wuss rag." She would always tell us she was fine. She never wanted anyone fussing over her.

God spoke to her a lot while she was sick. When she was lucid, she would write down what He was saying to her. Her journal is full of God's promises to her. She continued to study and pray when she

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was able. If you ever asked her what she wanted, her answer was always the same, "Revival." Her only desire was to preach for Him. In fact, just prior to her diagnoses, God had released her to quit her job and step out in faith as a preacher. She was so excited to begin spreading the gospel. However, the "C" word has a way of changing our plans.

Mama received a phone call asking her to preach at a ladies meeting. The date would be February 20, 2001. She was thrilled for the opportunity. When she realized the

special significance of that day, it took on a whole new meaning as it hit her like a ton of bricks. On March 25, 2000, God had said to her: "Just as my ministry on earth was three-and-a-half years, so shall your ministry of suffering be, from the time of your first attack." She didn't know what that meant at the time He said it. The first attack on her body happened Aug 20, 1997: three-and-a-half years from the date she was asked to preach. She was thrilled!

The days leading up to February 20 were difficult. She was still in a wheelchair, passing blood and having countless attacks on her body, throwing her into states of unconsciousness. We were eagerly awaiting that day. Then it came and when she woke up, to her disappointment, she was still sick. She just knew she would wake up in a new, healed body. She didn't. But she was determined to fulfill that obligation and preach.

There was still so much excitement about that service that the church's pastor opened it to everyone, rather than just ladies. It was a Tuesday night and the house was packed. Mama was so weak and frail that she had to be carried into the church. She preached from a chair, barely strong enough to hold the microphone. Her message was about the fields being ready for harvest. God needs workers in the fields, will you work for Him? The message was powerful and the anointing was so thick. People flocked to the altar.

Mama managed to get around to people to pray with them and suddenly, she felt something. It was a familiar feeling, but it took her a moment to figure out what it was. *That's it! She had to pee!* Twenty-three months had passed since her kidneys had functioned and here it was, she had to go! The bath-

The Servant (Mama's story)

by Jenny Berens

Three o'clock in the morning I
wake up to hear my name
She's crying out in the dark-
ness, 'Lord please keep my baby
safe'
Soon my sisters' names she'll
cry, from on her knees to the
Lord on high
She doesn't know I'm listen-
ing, or how she's touched my
life

She's the one that I look up to,
the one who led me straight to
you
She taught me how to seek
your face, when I don't know
what to do
When I'm troubled when I'm
scared, together we go to you in
prayer
She's a servant for your king-
dom, Lord I want to be one too

Three o'clock in the morning,
I hear someone call her name
She's crying God please heal
her, make her body whole again
Soon she'll wake up and say
'I'm fine', though her body's
fevered, worn and tired
She doesn't know I'm listen-
ing or how I prayed for her
tonight

She's the one that I look up to,
the one who led me straight to
you
And now I've got to seek your
face, cause I don't know what to
do
Lord for you she longs to work,
I know you'll heal her, that's your
word
She's a servant for your king-
dom, Lord I want to be one too

Ten o'clock one evening, the
spirit's been poured out
From the Father comes a mes-
sage, the church makes not a
sound
"You've kept the faith, you've
served me well
And now the things you've
asked for I'll fulfill
And child because I love you,
you are now healed!"

Now I can go on for a page or
three
Telling the things you've done
for me
Lord I thank you for my mother
Help me be like her some day

Lord, I thank you for
The Servant

room was outside in an adjacent building. My sisters, Trish, Rebekah and I, along with "Aunt" Sherry, helped her get there. We cracked the door and had our ears as close to the crack as we could get them. Sure enough, there was a trickle and soon after, a stream. We were jumping up and down rejoicing God and praising Him.

We helped her back into the church where people were receiving miracles left and right. It was near 10:00pm at this point. Soon, a message from God was delivered saying that some would say it was just emotion, some would say it wouldn't last, but that that Mama had been faithful to Him and she

>continued

was an obedient servant. He said, "this night, you are healed!"

Mama wasn't the only one to receive a healing that night. Prayers were answered all over the church. In fact, someone stood in prayer for a man who had severe diabetes, and the next morning when he took his insulin, his sugar continued to bottom out. His doctor told him that was happening because he no longer needed the insulin. He was healed! He wasn't even at the service, but his need was brought before God that night. It was the best church service of our lives.

The next morning, the small tumors in her forehead were gone, we could feel no more balls in her abdomen, the bleeding had ceased and she started regaining strength. Day-by-day she continued to improve and get her body back to functioning properly. Mama never failed to study and pray for revival. February 20, 2010 will be nine years since her healing. She has been to Haiti numerous times to conduct revivals anywhere there she is called. She and Aunt Sherry have teamed together to direct many revivals and have seen miraculous healings and God's abundant power in full force.

Mama rarely talks about her sickness. She will tell you that she had cancer and God healed her. She would much rather talk about Jesus than herself. She only wants to be a mouthpiece for Him and wants "Dottie" to be out of the way so that others only see Him. She is a true servant for the kingdom. I am so grateful to God for leaving her here on Earth. I don't get to see her much because she always seems to be in revival elsewhere. She is living her dream... LIVING to see souls saved and following God's call.

A lot of 'C' words apply to her now that aren't overshadowed by the ugly one. Called, courageous, competent, considerate, compassionate... and the list goes on. Through her trial, many eyes were opened as to what God can really do. God can sustain a body with no functioning kidneys for 23 months and countless pints of lost blood with no dialysis or blood transfusions. Mama is a firm believer in doctors and medicine. But God told 'her' no. Therefore, she is a living, breathing, preaching testimony to His mighty works. My sisters and I are beyond proud to call her ours. Thank you Lord, for healing my Mama, the mightiest woman of God I know.

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Can I Start Over Again in 2010?

"Christian Fitness" by Laurette Willis

The simple answer is, YES! The how-to might be something you've never heard before.

"Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" Isaiah 43:18–19.

The beginning of the year, a new year and a new start: perhaps you've talked yourself into believing this month will be like last month, or this year will be like last year. Maybe you have heard whispers in your ear that the mistakes you've made before will be repeated again. Someone may have told you, as was once said to me, "a leopard never changes its spots."

Funny about that saying about the leopard never changing its spots. Did you know that comes from the Bible? It's from Jeremiah 13:23. Before I came to know the Lord in 1987, I was that leopard who could never change her spots. I had so many "spots" on me that only the Lord Himself could see something salvageable beyond the spots and stains caused by a life of sin.

It is true. A leopard cannot change its spots. I could not cleanse myself from sin. Neither can you. Are there some things you would like to do differently in 2010? Are there certain paths you've taken that you do not want to take again? Do you want to improve your health, lose some excess weight, and become more physically fit? Would you like to improve your relationship with God, with members of your family, and with friends and co-workers? Would you like to improve your family's lifestyle financially, get a new or better job, pay down some debt, perhaps simplify your life in some way? Things have gotten a bit complicated, haven't they?

Would you consider asking yourself this question: **"What are the three most important things in my life?"** Please write them here in the spaces provided. Write them in the order of their importance to you.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

For most people, their relationships with God, family and loved ones are usually somewhere in the top

three. Health, finances, work, education or ministry-related goals are often in the top three as well.

Holy Spirit Spot Remover?

Let us consider for a moment the Scripture from Isaiah 13:23 "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil."

Wait a second! Surely an Ethiopian, Norwegian, Israeli or Cherokee cannot change his skin, neither can a leopard change its spots. So why does the Lord then follow this statement with the admonition that we are to do good, we who are accustomed to doing evil? Oh, I know you are not "accustomed" to doing evil. However, would you agree there are some areas in which you are more prone to sin than others?

It seems on the one hand, that we are being told we cannot change, and on the other hand, we are told to change. It reminds me of Paul's words in Romans 7:24, "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

The answer to this perplexing and soul-wrenching dilemma is found in the next verse. "I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin."

No, you cannot change your spots. Only God can. We can with our minds choose to turn to



the Lord to help us. The Holy Spirit lives on the inside of your recreated human spirit once you have surrendered your life to Jesus Christ. By ourselves we can do nothing, but with Him all things are possible (Matthew 19:26).

How can we show our willingness to make 2010 better than last year—to be more of the person God created us to be? Take a look at the three things you wrote in the spaces above. Ask the Lord right now to tell you something you can do right now to see improvement in each of these three areas. You may be surprised how simple the ideas may be which occur to you. I've found that the Lord leads us in STEPS, not LEAPS.

The word of God says, in James 1:5-8 we are told, we can ask God for wisdom, and he will give it to us. Write down a few words in each of these categories. Please do that now.

Then May You Also Do Good

Perhaps one of the things on your list was to grow in your relationship with God. Investing time with the Lord at the start of each day is something the Lord told me to start doing years ago. When I was a young Christian, I remember hearing these words in my heart: "Read, study and pray for 20 minutes a day." That is where I started. Sometimes I would do more, sometimes, I would do less – and sometimes I would forget! But in time, investing time with the Lord every single day became a habit and my delight. Even after all these years, however, my flesh still balks and wants to go back to sleep!

One Bible teacher I know used to get up at 5:00 in the morning to read the Bible. To keep from falling asleep, he would read standing on the edge of the bathtub! His flesh soon got the idea that no matter what, he was going to read his Bible every day and not fall asleep!

The point is, we can take action in the new direction, and trust God to take us the rest of the way. Often, a willing heart and a step forward is all that is required. I believe that is where "then may you also do good" comes in. You do what you can, following the leading of the Lord, and He will take you the rest of the way.

In time, that good thing will become a habit. If you want to become healthier, more fit, lose some excess weight and keep it off, it will take a change of lifestyle. Remember, you cannot change your spots. You cannot work only on the outside of you and expect permanent change. All of the diets and the best exercise plan in the world will never feed a hungry heart. Only the Lord can do that. The change must come from the

inside. With God's help, it can be done, and you will succeed.

Take one more look at those three areas in your life that are most important to you. Consider the things you can do right now, the small steps you can take right now – even today – to start seeing improvement in those areas. Hold your list up to the Lord and give them to Him. "I give these to You, Lord, and ask you to help me do better every day, by Your grace, in Jesus' name. Amen."

There! You have already taken action. You are acknowledging that you are not trying to "change your spots." You are, however, doing good by asking help from the only One who is all good.

Now, take a step and do one more thing on that list. Whatever it is, do that one good thing – whether it is taking a walk, saying a prayer for someone else, reading your Bible, calling someone on the phone you have not spoken with in a long time, drinking a glass of water instead of a soda pop, hugging your child or telling your spouse how important he or she is to you – do that one thing IN FAITH and see the beauty of the Scripture from Isaiah 43 come to pass in your life.

Lastly, speak these words aloud with me, these words the Lord spoke through the prophet Isaiah thousands of years ago—speaking to you in 2010 or wherever you are TODAY: "Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, now it shall spring forth; shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert."

Yes Lord, together we can start over again in 2010. Amen!

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

WEB-CIPE BOX

RECIPES SHARED BY OUR
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Meringue Cookies - Amy McCurry

*1 Weight Watchers ©
point per 2 cookies

Ingredients:

4 large egg white(s)
1/2 tsp distilled white vinegar or cider vinegar
1 cup sugar
2 tsp vanilla extract
2 Tbsp unsweetened cocoa, powder

Directions:

* Preheat oven to 200°F. Line 2 baking sheets with foil.

* In a large bowl, beat egg whites with an electric mixer until frothy. Add vinegar; beat until soft peaks form. Increase speed to high and gradually add sugar; beat until glossy stiff peaks form. Beat in vanilla.

* Remove half of meringue to another bowl; stir in cocoa until blended.

* Spoon tablespoons of both meringues onto prepared baking sheets about 1 inch apart each, making about 44 cookies – half vanilla-flavored and half cocoa-flavored. Or you can make marbled cookies by spooning 1/2 tablespoon of each type of meringue into a mound and then swirling the 2 together with your fingers.

* Bake until meringues feel dry and crisp all the way through, about 3 hours. Turn off oven; leave meringues in oven for 1 hour. Transfer baking sheets to wire racks to cool completely. Peel meringues off foil and store in an airtight container. Yields about 2 cookies per serving.

Sometimes I add mint extract or a couple tablespoons of mini chocolate chips for variety

Give all our healthy tips a try! For February, we're looking for recipes for a romantic evening! Submit them to facebook.com/sgnscoops or kelly@sgnscoops.com

Quick Tip: Our new fitness writer Laurette Williams recommends the Zero-Calorie noodles found at miraclenoodle.com Her favorites: fettucini and angel hair pasta

Whole Grain Italian Spaghetti

- Vicky Miller Edwards fulllifetrio.com
Full Life Trio – Keyboardist

Ingredients:

1 pound whole grain (or whole wheat) spaghetti
2 TBSP mixed colored peppercorns, coarsely ground
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
1 1/2 cups grated (6oz) pecorino
6oz thinly sliced prosciutto, chopped
1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1/4 cup chopped fresh basil leaves

Directions:

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the pasta and cook until tender but still firm to the bite, stirring occasionally, about 8-10 minutes. Cook a little longer if you like your pasta soft.

While the pasta is cooking: heat a small heavy-bottomed skillet over medium-high heat. Add the peppercorns and toast for about 20-30 seconds. Add the oil and cook for 1 minute. Remove the pan from the heat.

Drain the pasta reserving about 1/2 cup of the pasta water. Transfer the spaghetti to a large serving bowl. Add 1 cup of the pecorino and toss to combine, gradually adding reserved pasta water, if needed, to loosen up the pasta. Add the oil mixture, prosciutto, 2 TBSP of parsley, and 2 TBSP of basil. Toss well to combine all ingredients. Garnish with the remaining pecorino, parsley, and basil.

I don't know where my husband got the recipe but it is fantastic!

The Church and the 'Why' Generation

First in a series by
Lorraine Walker

Originally published at SGMRadio.com

Southern Gospel appears to be embracing more youth as new groups and soloists appear on the horizon. Artists who are teenagers and twenty-year-olds are putting their stamp on music that existed years before they were born. The youth who are called the "Y Generation", those born after 1981, are breathing new life into gospel but it appears that when it comes to filling pews, they are the "Why" Generation.

Why is this generation leaving our churches? Why aren't they attending concerts where the same-age artists are highly skilled, entertaining, solid evangelists proclaiming an uncompromising Gospel? Why is this emerging generation exiting the organized church, regardless of denomination?

Lauren Talley, Southern Gospel artist and part of the Y Generation, recently shared her thoughts on this phenomenon. "I think there is a deeper spiritual issue in play here," says Lauren. "I believe that 20- and 30-somethings are looking for answers, acceptance and significance. In my opinion one of the biggest keys to the success of the MySpace and Facebook phenomenons is the fact that one can create a place

of significance."

People in Lauren's generation are looking for their place in the world, like most young people who are coming of age. This reflects in their appearance, their hobbies and their music. Lauren continues, "I think this generation is looking for music with life in it, in its lyrics and in its style. I think people are drawn to music that reflects real life and gives hope. I believe that young people want the church to be a place where they can be loved, encouraged and uplifted."

Christian author and speaker, Daniel Darling, says it this way: "We're clearly in a post-Christian society, which doesn't necessarily mean we automatically start throwing out all the old truths and invent doctrines. Honestly, as in all ages, people want authenticity when it comes to faith. They want to see that what you be-

lieve and what you say you believe are actually lived out in your daily lives."

"One thing that saddens me about the late teens/20's generation of believers is that they are not as deeply grounded in the orthodoxy of the faith and are more susceptible to doctrines and to poor interpretations of Scripture. It's a reflection of a youth culture in the evangelical church that has largely dumped theology down to a few fun and relevant facts, cool music and relationships. Essentially we've never taught them to grow up."

Daniel Darling is the Senior Pastor at Gages Lake Bible Church in the suburbs of Chicago. Author of "Teen People of the Bible" and many other publications, Daniel has written for and about teenagers for many years. His knowledge of the Y Generation is extensive

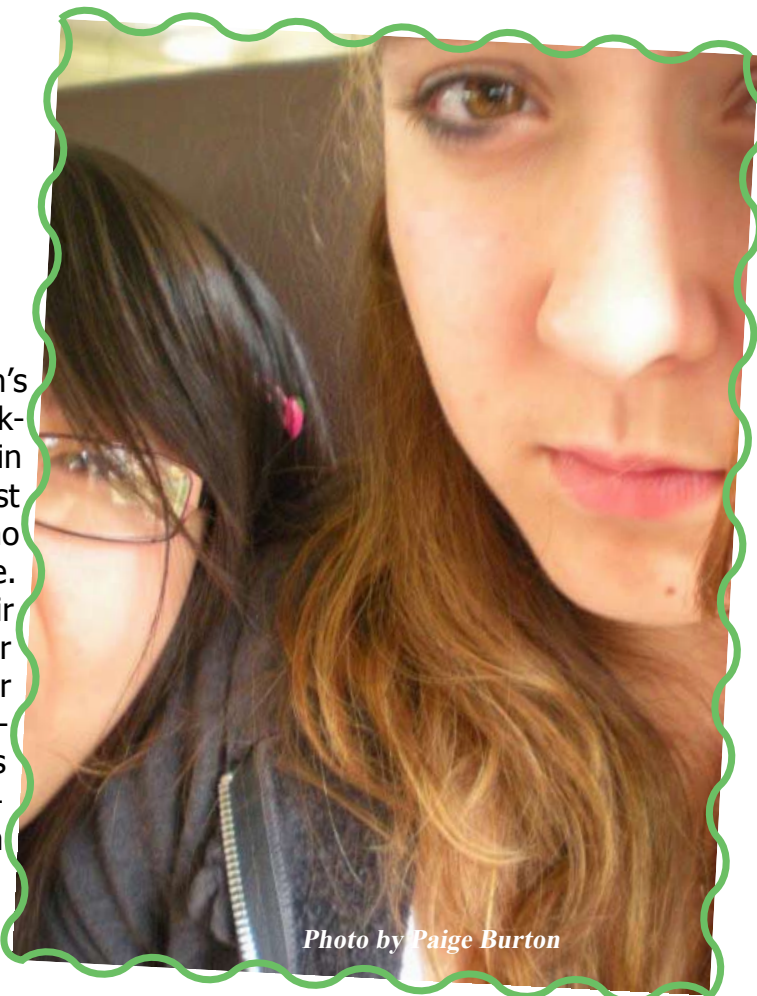


Photo by Paige Burton

'I believe that 20- & 30-somethings are looking for answers, acceptance & significance.'
- singer
Lauren Talley



continued>



'I think we need to immerse our youth in the Scriptures, live out our faith in an authentic and real way before them, & pray that their hearts are aflame with passion for God.'

- author Daniel Darling

and he shares his opinion about the current music of youth today. "The music of this generation, like the music of every generation, reflects what is in the hearts and minds of people, including their angst, their emotions and their longings. I'm in favor of Christian music, both historic and current, that affirms the "old paths" laid out in Jeremiah, the holiness of God, the awesomeness of grace, the passion of a life lived in obedience to God."

However, this generation does not often embrace the "old truths" as they find it often wrapped in old music and tradition that is irrelevant to their culture.

"There is a great push toward a kind of feel-good spirituality," says Daniel. "It's sort of an Oprah-like tolerance that doesn't poke Christianity, but doesn't like Christianity's exclusive truth claims. Jesus is 'a way'; instead of Jesus is 'the way'. And this has crept into the church."

Daniel continues, "Churches have tried every conceivable thing, from segregated youth services to rock bands [to attract this generation]. I'm not sure a lot of it has worked. Instead, I think we need to immerse our youth in the Scriptures, live out our faith in an authentic and real way before them, and pray that their hearts are aflame with passion for God."

"We are losing a generation," says Daniel. "And every kind of evangelical church is losing them. They're walking away."

Lauren agrees. "I have been to many churches where the Generation Y demographic was nearly nonexistent; it seemed as if they simply were not acknowledged. I think if more churches made an effort to create a place of belonging and community for this group of people, they would

see a real difference."

Daniel weighs in on how the church can create this place of community. "Be authentic. Be real. Don't talk down to them. Get involved in their worlds, their likes, dislikes, hurts, and relationships. And most importantly, live out your faith every day so it's visible to them."

"People everywhere are just looking for Jesus," says Lauren. "I think if the church gives young people Jesus and helps them understand that He is relevant in today's society and apply His Word to their lives, they can win this generation for Christ."



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Who's making new music...

CD Reviews by Chad Hayes

THE KINGSMEN

Missing People

kingsmenquartet.musiccitynetworks.com

The Kingsmen are one of the longest-tenured quartets in the industry today. (Including their years as the "Carolina Boys") Some of the best and most well-known singers in Southern Gospel history have come through this group. Current personnel include Harold Reed (tenor), Phillip Hughes (lead), Bryan Hutson (baritone), Ray Dean Reese (bass), Brandon Reese (drums), and Cody McVey (pianist).

Missing People is the follow-up album to last year's *When God Ran*. It contains 10 songs from a strong list of songwriters: Dianne Wilkinson, Woody Wright, Dave Williford, Dustin Sweatman, Scott Inman, and Rodney Griffin. The album cover is clean and simple- kudos to the graphic designer. However, I would have preferred that the song lyrics be included in the cover.

Now, the moment you've all been waiting for: THE SONGS!

The album starts off with its title track, the medium-tempo "Missing People." Baritone vocalist Bryan Hutson is featured on this more contemporary-sounding song that seems to continue the musical direction that "When God Ran" took. Hutson does a fine job here, putting some "soul" into his voice in just the right spots. The tempo then picks up a bit for the second song, "Someday". This is a more traditional, country-tinged number that will really get the listeners' toes tapping. Song #3 is lighter, mid-tempo number entitled "They Went To Pray." This one is a nice change-of-pace in the song lineup. Next up is the first power ballad of the album. "Mountain Of Grace" has a slower tempo that lead vocalist Phillip Hughes uses to his advantage. Hughes' vocals have a softness to them, and yet they still project their well-known power. I also like how the song builds from a simple arrangement to a fully-orchestrated sound by the end.

Song #5 picks the temp back up again for a song called "When It's All Said And Done." This is an up-tempo song that is more in the classic Kingsmen vein. Bass vocalist Ray Dean Reese has some nice pickups on the chorus. The next song is an old spiritual called

"Cheer The Weary Traveler." This mid-tempo song is one that I first heard recorded by the legendary Cathedral Quartet. The Kingsmen's version is done very well, but I must say that I could have done without tenor vocalist Harold Reed's ultra-high note on the turnaround. Reed is an excellent tenor vocalist, and he sounds fine at any other point in the song. I just think that the screaming high note was unnecessary. The group still could have gone up into the high ending without it. Speaking of Reed, he gets the feature on the seventh song, a ballad called "God Saw A Cross." This is some of his finest singing, in my opinion, and the message of this song is strong enough to hit the listener like a ton of bricks.

The eighth song is an up-tempo, driving number called "He Picks Up A Beggar On The Way." I really like the arrangement of this song, and the vocal blend is tight throughout. Phillip Hughes is again featured on Song #9, a mid-tempo ballad called "God Knows." His voice is a perfect fit for this lighter, country-styled song. Finally, the album ends with a slower, "jazzy" number called "He Is The Only One." A slower number like this was a good choice to close the album.

Missing People is a very good Kingsmen album. I have to wonder if it might be judged a bit more harshly than it should given that it comes directly on the heels of as strong an album as "When God Ran." I admit that it doesn't quite reach the level of "When God Ran" in my opinion, but it comes pretty close. I think that the Kingsmen are headed in a good direction with a good vocal lineup, and I'm anxious to see what that musical direction continues to bring us. Overall, I give this album a rating of 8.5 out of 10 microphones!

Favorites: "Someday", "When It's All Said And Done", and "God Saw A Cross"

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