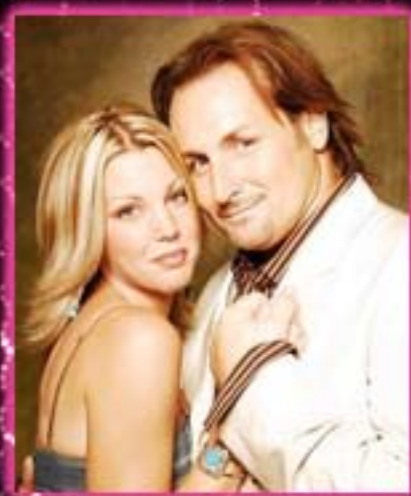




# Karen Peck & New River

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When God Wrote Their  
Love Stories:

Marcie & Michael English

Joel & Labreeska Hemphill

James & Laura Rainey

PLUS - A Guy's Perspective: Going Steady With Jesus.



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February 2011



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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.



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# Called to discern

Not much gets a Chicago girl more stirred up than a big, stinking blizzard...or the Bears losing to the Packers for a chance to be in the Super Bowl... Well, except perhaps for an attack on my family, or my friends, or our ministries. Those get me going, too.

Like most of us, I begin a new year asking God for a few specific qualities. In 2010, it was wisdom and peace. He was faithful to provide those very things to me...through trials I did not see coming in any way! It's just like our redeemer God to refine us through fire, so with that in mind, I was a little more careful about what I asked Him for in 2011.

## *I asked for discernment.*

Does that sound weird? It seems like there are so many *better* things to ask for...joy, prosperity, good health, a better singing voice, help in losing those 20 pounds. But considering what has happened in my life over the past several years, and looking ahead to an unknown future for my family (mainly: *Where are we going to live?* and *Where are we going to work?*), discernment seems like a good idea.

I subscribe to a notion I first heard in a sermon by Pastor James McDonald (Harvest Bible Church in Rollin Meadows, IL and [www.walkintheword.com](http://www.walkintheword.com)). According to his interpretations, God isn't overly concerned with where we live, what job we choose, and certainly not what we eat for dinner or whether we have pets or even how many kids we have. He expects us to study and listen to His word and follow it, applying it the best we can to our life decisions. *This, friends, requires a lot of attention to the Bible and a lot of Spirit-infused discernment.* And sometimes, I just plain lack it, especially in choosing how I spend my time (too much stinking Facebook), what I give my attention (too much negativity), and which battles I choose (ones I cannot possibly win on my own). When I

look around the "world" we represent with *SGN Scoops* – namely that of southern gospel music, though we do constantly strive to widen that scope – I see one that is often lacking discernment in those same areas. We spend so much time talking/writing/posting about how others should do

things, about how we've been wronged, about how we feel. How much more fruitful would our efforts be if we spent that same amount of time encouraging each other and finding ways to help? How much more of a testimony would we have if we truly, visibly turned the other cheek and sincerely, publicly forgave people we felt wronged us (even if we don't think they're sorry!)? I'm just not sure God cares about what stage we sing on or what award we win when there are lonely people, starving people, suffering people, people with no hope – and they are waiting for us to get over ourselves and be JESUS to them!

This month, *SGN Scoops* highlights a number of special entities. Karen Peck Gooch, Susan Peck Jackson, and Jeff Hawes share the journey of New River. Several gospel-music couples share their testimonies of God's hand working in their marriages. And *SGN Scoops* begins a new chapter of our journey with the Diamond Awards on the Road Tour – a limited concert series that we hope embodies our vision of inclusiveness and storytelling and glorifying the Reason we have gospel music!

My prayer for discernment is connected to this magazine as well. I do not take for granted the stories we choose to tell, and I pray they continue to be ones that enlighten, bless, and challenge a diverse and growing body of readers. But more than ever, this month, I pray the pages of this magazine reflect our heart for unity. In the long run, we have one job to do, and that is to bring glory to God by loving Him and our neighbors.



KELLY CAPRIOTTI BURTON,  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

dis·cern·ment noun \di-'sərn-ment, -'zərn-\

### Definition of DISCERNMENT

1 : the quality of being able to grasp and comprehend what is obscure : skill in discerning

2 : an act of perceiving or discerning something

See [discernment](#) defined for English-language learners »

### Examples of DISCERNMENT

- His lack of *discernment* led to his disastrous choice of business partners.
- <the *discernment* to know when someone is a true friend>



Love, Life, & Legends with Ms. Lou:

# Commanded to love



This page, from top | GMA Hall Of Fame Finale: Lou Hildreth joins the cast and other Hall-of-Famers onstage with Larry Gatlin and Trace Adkins; Ernie Haase & Signature Sound (Devin, Ernie, Wayne, Doug, & Ian ) saluting the Golden Gate Quartet; Larry Gatlin & Chonda Pierce, co-hosts of GMA Hall Of Fame Induction, TBN Nashville  
Next page | Oak Ridge Boys & John Cash Jr present the Johnny Cash induction  
Courtesy of Lou Will Hildreth.

Exciting events are in abundance for gospel music lovers. "Diamond Awards On Tour" is a great opportunity to broaden the influence of this terrific awards program, and we appreciate the Coastal Media Group and *SGN Scoops Digital* for their vision. We look forward to being in Branson on June 30th to present the "Lou Hildreth Award" at the fabulous Diamond Awards.

Mark your calendar and join us at Dallas Baptist University for the Texas Gospel Music Hall Of Fame Induction of Guy Penrod, Bob Wills & the Inspirations, Plainsmen, and other Texas notables. For information, call Randy Wills 214-934-5983.

Recently, I flew to Nashville to take part in the GMA Hall Of Fame Inductions at TBN January 24th. The show was taped to be shown at a later date. Millions of viewers will see it, and God was glorified throughout the evening. Our GMA committee can be so proud of the combined efforts of each member. A special commendation is due Rick Goodman for overseeing the production and to Judy Nelon for major contribution to the event.

This year's inductees were Johnny Cash, Bill "Hoss" Allen, DeGarmo & Key, and the Golden Gate Quartet. The beautiful TBN auditorium overflowed with artists and fans who cheered wildly for co-hosts Larry Gatlin and Chonda Pierce and performances by Donnie & Reba (Rambo) MaGuire, Ernie Haase & Signature Sound, Trace Adkins, Russ Taff, TobyMac, Fairfield Four, Lee Williams & The Spiritual QC's. The Oak Ridge Boys, Babbie Mason, Bob Farrell, and Bobby Jones were some of the presenters.

Those of us who are already in the GMA Hall Of Fame were sent a memo to wear our Hall of Fame medallions to be part of the finale. When Larry Gat-





lin called us to the stage, he greeted me with a kiss on the cheek. Looking around me onstage, along with the performers, presenters, and recipients, I saw Ricky Skaggs, Connie Hopper, Reggie & Lady Love Smith, my sister Betty Stephens, Aaron Crisler, and Ben Speer. Earlier I had talked to Joanne Cash, Nancy Sutton, Betty Holmes, Janis Gatlin, Bev McCann, Dusty Wells, Ken & Lisa Abraham, Joy & Landy Gardner, Joe Moscheo and expressed my love to fellow committee members Ed Harper, Jody Mainello, Stacy Merida,



Tom Long, and Charles Dorris. The excitement of being in Nashville for this ceremony reminded me that we are all a part of the gospel music ministry, and God will use us to His glory when we surrender our gifts to Him. I am still amazed when I think of that day in 2005 when Bill Gaither presented my induction into the GMA Hall Of Fame. Share the moment on my website by clicking under the photo of the two

of us. I close with one of my favorite scriptures—John 13:34-35 “A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another, as I have loved you. By this shall all know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one to another.”

In February and the months to come, **may the love of Jesus shine in all of us.**   
gosplvideo@aol.com www.louhildreth.com

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

**A**dmit that you are a sinner.

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

**B**elieve 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 sin. He offers this as a free gift to all 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**all upon Jesus and ask Him to come into your heart, forgive your sins, and make you one of His children.

*Romans 10:9- That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved... Romans 10:13- For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

If you would like to accept God's free gift of salvation, then all you have to do is pray and ask Him. Then, you must believe this in your heart as well.

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

# Going *steady* With

# JESUS

Would it bother you if I told you that Jesus is my valentine?

It's a strange way to put things, certainly, so I'll gladly clarify and qualify my statement. What I'm referring to is a mental exercise that helps me to keep me on the right mental and spiritual path.

First, let me explain where I'm coming from. I have been on a few dates every now and again, but I have not had a girlfriend for the last 20 years. The few Christian women I've tried to court have had no interest in me. That's fine; more power to them. On the other hand, I have met women with whom I shared a mutual affection—but these women aren't believers. So I don't act on my feelings, because I don't want to be mismatched with those women (2 Cor. 6:14).

What's worse is that I have a very "relationship-y" personality, so forming an attachment with a woman is a subject always

at the forefront of my heart and mind. I completely understand why, even in an unfallen world, it wasn't good for

Adam to be alone (Gen. 2:18). A lot of us guys need someone!

I often hear people say, "Don't try to fill that God-shaped hole in your life with other things." That's true. I don't want a woman to become my idol. I just want to fill the woman-shaped hole in my life.

Rebecca St. James made the situation a little easier by singing to millions of single men to "Wait for Me." She was easy to moon over in a healthy, Christian way. However, she recently announced her engagement, so she's off the "moon over" list now.

Since I really want to make some kind of connection with a female, and since gorgeous women are everywhere in today's media, I'm frequently tempted to think of women in a way that Jesus didn't allow (Matt. 5:28). It's a battle that I don't always win.

It doesn't get any easier year by year, as I see one friend after another get married and start a family. I can't help but wonder

when my number is going to be called—when it's going to be my turn in line. It also doesn't help that I don't fit into one of the neat little "boxes" that society tells me I need to fit in, as reflected in the shows and commercials and billboards:

**Young Single Person** – Throughout the 20s, it's not too surprising if a guy isn't married yet. (It's different when you're 36.)

**30+ Married Guy** – It's preferred by the vanguards of society that you have kids by this point, but you might be given a pass if you're lacking in this area for a few years. But you definitely are expected to be married, even if you marry badly and get divorced quickly thereafter. Seemingly, you're actually more likely to have sympathy and support from people if you get divorced than if you dare to violate the social norms by simply not getting married. That just puts

a person in the "hopeless and pathetic" category—there must be something really wrong with you at this point.

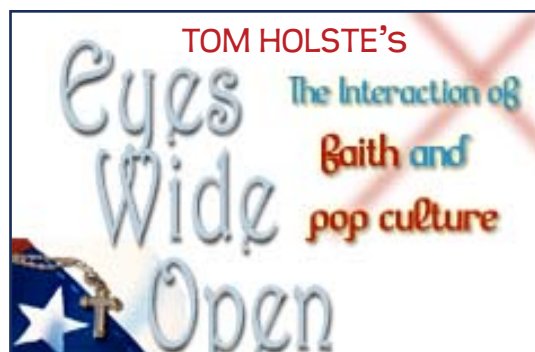
Within the church, being young and single or 30+ and

married are both accepted. In the world, there are two other groups that are accepted: people who live with each other out of wedlock (they're married whether or not they care to admit it – Gen. 2:24) and homosexuals. Apparently, people are willing to be "open-minded" and "tolerant" of those who want to be with their own gender, but not if you choose to be alone. Look at who the psycho killers and the comic buffoons are in movies and shows—the lonely, single people. (Notably, in the comedies, the buffoons stop being buffoons by the end, as marked by the fact that they start dating someone.)

The well-meaning church at large has done little to

help men in my position. Pastors frequently say that we're to ignore all of our natural biological urges for women, and focus all of our time and attention on a 30-ish bearded man. Oh, and did they mention, don't be gay? No wonder many single men just drop out of the church at this point. The impossible

*I don't want a woman to become my idol. I just want to fill the woman-shaped hole in my life.*





is being asked of them.

Thus, I'm starting to implement a new strategy. Every so often, I try to think of Christ as my girlfriend.

Let me explain what I don't mean. I don't believe that the Jesus of Nazareth who actually lived here on Earth was a woman. I don't believe in changing Christianity into some kind of pagan goddess worship. I don't believe that God the Father is a woman either, though if truth be told, do any of us really think that God has the reproductive organs necessary to define Him as either a male or female? God doesn't procreate; He creates. He is complete in and of Himself.

I do understand the analogy of referring to the people of the church as the bride of Christ. But, again, for a heterosexual male, this particular analogy can only go so far. I really don't want to go shopping for gowns anytime soon.

Then, one day, it finally occurred to me to reverse the analogy. What if, every time I thought of a woman inappropriately, I was hurting the feelings of my amazing celestial "Girlfriend"?

Expanding on my earlier idea—that God does not have a "gender" in the sense that we think about gender; that all wonderful aspects of the masculine and feminine must exist in the One who created them (I can think of lots of hymns that refer to the Lord as "most beautiful" and "lovely above all" but none that refer to Him as "handsome"); and that this same God loves me more than anything—now, suddenly, there's reason for excitement and joy for the single man!

So, let me tell you about this wonderful girl I know. She gave everything for me, more than I can possibly understand. She left me a whole volume full of love letters (66 books' worth). The best thing of all is that she's coming back to see me again! I can imagine the bus pulling up now, and I picture her come running to give me a big hug and tell me how glad she is to see me.

Granted, I don't want to dwell on this particular fiction too long. It's only one of the devices at my



disposal.

Sometimes I refer to Jesus as "Aslan"—it's not that I believe in talking lions; it's an affectionate nickname, another device to keep Him real and potent in my mind. My best friends have nicknames; why shouldn't my Best Friend have one? (Also, the most successful marriages seem to be the ones where the partners have married their best friends.) I try not to think too much of any one woman's face in particular—I don't want that person to become the object of worship herself. Also, I don't imagine any married women, and if it's a celebrity I'm picturing, it helps if I don't know how sordid her background really is. The less I know about the woman, in fact, the better it is for my imagination. The point is not about focusing on the image of the woman so much as it is about creating a spiritual metaphor for my mind.

So, while I'm still not perfect and still need grace, there have been times when it's been much easier to resist the mental temptation of thinking about other women. I would never cheat if I had a girlfriend on this Earth; I'm not going to cheat on my heavenly love either.

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# YOU SPEAK CHRISTIANESE OR *CHRISTIAN-EASE*?

BY SUE DUFFIELD



Many friends I grew up with back in the 70s weren't "churched." They weren't privy to all the religious sounding talk that was so common in my world back then. Once I brought a friend to a Sunday service; she became confused when I addressed everyone as "Brother Smith" or "Sister Jones." After the introductions, she pulled me aside and said, "Sue, I know it's a small church, but are you related to everybody here?"

During the nostalgic days of flannelgraph Bible stories and chalkboard dust, we would play some great little games like "Bible Baseball" and "Sword Drill." One little girl's first encounter with Sunday School and hearing "Sword Drill" caused her to say out loud, "Oh no, my mom will never let me play with anything sharp. I cut off my hair with scissors last week and I'm still grounded." (Just in case you're un-churched or too young, "Sword Drill" was a Bible quick-response verse search game where— with Bibles in hand—we'd flip through pages and race to find the chapter and verse the teacher announced. The winner was the first one to stand and read it aloud).

A new young Christian raised on the streets asked his pastor if he could participate in the Communion service. The young man begged to say something prior to the elements being distributed to the congregation. Apprehensively, the pastor slowly handed the Communion cup to the young man. In his exuberance and joy over his new walk with Christ, the young man lifted the chalice and shouted, "You see this cup? This blood's for you!" Then he raised both hands high, pointed to the ceiling and yelled, "You're the M-A-N!"

When my Jewish friend Mike went to a concert at a Pentecostal church, it was his very first time to be present in an atmosphere of exuberant praise and worship. When the music started and people began raising their hands, Mike couldn't figure out why so many people had questions about the concert that night. He asked us, "They just kept raising their hands, obviously having questions or comments about the music. Why didn't anyone acknowledge them?"

Years ago, I would not have been as prepared as I am today for opportunities to speak at secular or "outside the church walls" events. To assume that everyone will understand or comprehend Christianese is a real mistake. Today I am challenged and held accountable to keep from

getting caught up in the rhetoric of dated language and religious expression. If I say I am saved, for example, some will inquire, "Saved from what?"

## Letting GO OF CHRISTIANESE and SHARING MORE WITH CHRISTIAN-EASE:

1. The proliferation of the spiritual attitude that "I've always said it this way" is a real guarantee you'll be ineffective. It's nothing more than a habit. Be willing to examine what and how you communicate about Christ.

2. Words like redeemed, saved, sanctified, and blessed are incredibly endearing and meaningful to you and me, but to the new un-churched generation, our words may be perceived much like the droning teacher on the Charlie Brown cartoon series: "Wah, wah, wah, wah, wah, wah." The key is to practice effective commu-





nication rather than assuming someone will understand. Speak words that will draw them in—connecting words that create a desire for more of God's Word (which is the ultimate goal) rather than push them away.

3. Jesus, the Master of communication, told parables using secular examples from His own society and culture to convey more clearly to His listeners. Some heard it; some did not. Some "got it" and were radically changed. Others walked away. Jesus is the example we need to emulate in our communication with others.

"The Message is as true among you today as when you first heard it. It doesn't diminish or weaken over time. It's the same all over the world. The Message bears fruit and gets larger and stronger, just as it has in you. From the very first day you heard and recognized the truth of what God is doing, you've been hungry for more" (Colossians 1:5,6, The Message).

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# Diamond

## awards 2011

*the gospel fans have spoken.*

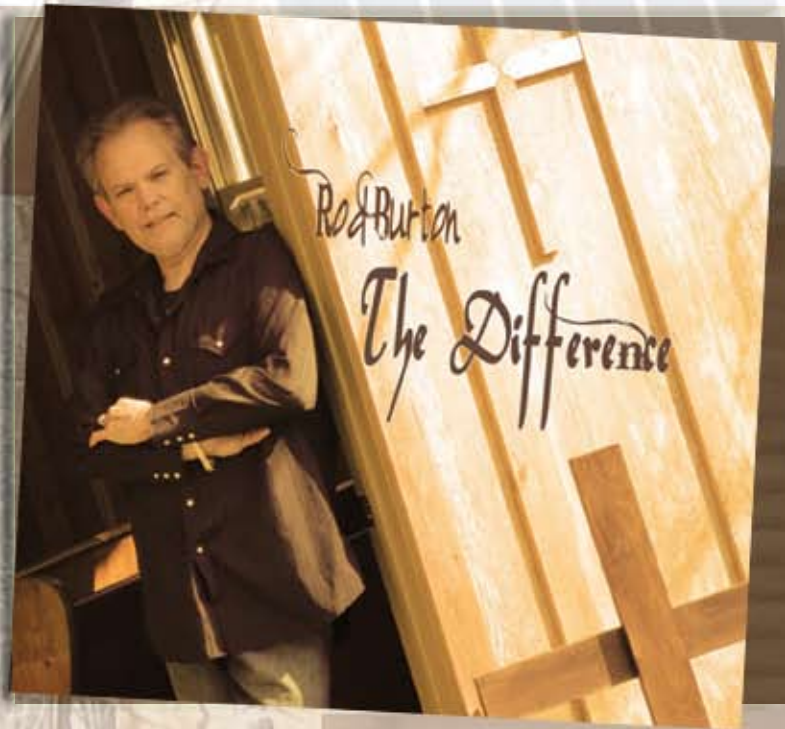
1. **J.D. SUMNER LIVING LEGEND AWARD** - A once-in-a-lifetime honor to recognize the living performer for whom the fans feel has made the greatest contribution to Southern Gospel music over a career spanning 25 years or more. PREVIOUS WINNERS: (No longer eligible for this award) Bill Gaither, Naomi Sego, Beb Speer, Dottie Rambo, Connie Hopper, Eva Mae LaFevre, & LuLu Roman.
2. **MIXED GROUP OF THE YEAR** - a group of any number with male & female members
3. **QUARTET OF THE YEAR** - a traditional group with 4-part harmony
4. **TRIO OF THE YEAR** - a traditional group with 3-part harmony
5. **DUET OF THE YEAR** - a group consisting of two singers
6. **FEMALE SOLOIST OF THE YEAR** - for artist recording as a soloist
7. **MALE SOLOIST OF THE YEAR** - for artist recording as a soloist
8. **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, 2011) This award is also a once-in-a-lifetime honor.
9. **SONG OF THE YEAR**
10. **ALBUM OF THE YEAR**
11. **CHRISTIAN COUNTRY GROUP OF THE YEAR**
12. **CHRISTIAN COUNTRY FEMALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR**
13. **CHRISTIAN COUNTRY MALE ARTIST OF THE YEAR**
14. **CHRISTIAN COUNTRY ALBUM OF THE YEAR**
15. **ANTHONY BURGER INSTRUMENTALIST OF THE YEAR**
16. **DOTTIE RAMBO SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR**
17. **BLUEGRASS GOSPEL ARTIST OF THE YEAR**
18. **VIDEO/DVD OF THE YEAR** - a short form video or a DVD release
19. **FAVORITE ARTIST WEBSITE** - independent, artist-owned website only (no Facebook, MySpace, SoGoCity, ShoutLife or fan sites will be counted)
20. **FAVORITE INDUSTRY WEBSITE** - news, magazine, supporting business, or event
21. **PAUL HEIL AWARD (Broadcasting)** - honors a disc jockey/radio or television host

The SGN Scoops Diamond Awards are returning for an 12th year! This fan-voted awards ceremony will take place THURSDAY, JUNE 30 at the Branson Gospel Music Revival ([www.bran-songmr.com](http://www.bran-songmr.com)). 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 continues until February 28. TO VOTE:

Go to  
**SGNSCOOPS.COM**  
to VOTE.

#### OFFICIAL RULES:

One vote per email address. Email address will be required to place a vote. Printable ballots are available for mail-in votes, but photocopies of completed ballots will not be accepted. *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. Votes should be based on an artist's work within the calendar year of 2010. Ballots must be filled out for at least 18 of the 21 categories to be counted. All fans are eligible to nominate.



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*"A Denzel, George Clooney,  
I'll never be. But I've got  
the Son of God lookin'  
after me."*



*Son of Man's Man*

The all new single

Written by Sue Duffield

Released on Airplay Radio

Promotion, November 2010



By Jennifer Campbell



Sometimes, God has a plan for our lives that is far beyond our wildest dreams. Twenty years ago, two sisters embarked on a musical journey. When they began traveling as Karen Peck & New River, they never dreamed this journey would literally take them around the world. Now in their twentieth year of ministering to others through song, they continue reaching out.

"Honestly, when we started New River 20 years ago, we thought we'd just be singing locally and had no idea of the places God has sent us," Karen said.

"When we were younger," Susan added, "Karen and I sang together in a girls' trio. We were so blessed when God allowed us to form New River."

# Karen Peck & New River

The 20 year old trio continues to REACH OUT through music, movies, & more.



The name Karen Peck & New River is synonymous with Southern Gospel Music. Their accomplishments are numerous, including their recent third Grammy Award nomination for their album, Live at Oak Tree: Karen Peck & New River. Even with their many acco-

lades, they remain true to the reason they sing and to the One they sing about. Karen puts it simply, "I owe everything to the Lord."

At a young age, Karen Peck Gooch developed a love for traditional Gospel Music. The youngest in her family, she would often go to the all-night sings in Atlanta with her parents and sisters, Susan and Sandra. Before long, she found herself fulfilling a dream that began at these all-night sings, singing and traveling with The Nelons.

"I heard the Rex Nelon Singers for the first time in the late 70's, and they became my favorite group," Karen reflected. "I would never have dreamed that a few years later, I would be traveling with them. I was very privileged to travel and sing with them for ten years. I am living proof that dreams do come true for hometown girls. I heard a preacher say the other day, 'Set your sights so high, that you know you will fail without God.' Trust me when I say, *nothing* is impossible with God. I am so blessed to be living my dream after all these years!"

*In 1991, God led her to follow another dream.* Along with her sister Susan and husband Rickey, Karen organized Karen Peck & New River. "I am very blessed to travel the last twenty years with my sister," Susan said. "We've had some ups and downs, but I always knew that God was there and He would carry us through any situation we might face."

The New River team now consists of vocalists Karen, Susan Peck Jackson, and Jeff Hawes. Having only traveled with New River for one year, Jeff says, "For me, it is truly a dream come true. Since I was old enough to sing, I have always wanted to travel and sing for Jesus. Singing with Karen Peck & New River is exactly where I feel God wanted me to be. They are great examples of Christians and love the Lord with their every being."

Karen "feels tremendously blessed to travel with my husband, Rickey, kids, Matthew and Kari, sister, Susan, Jeff, Dawn, and Tripp." Rickey serves as the group's road manager and sound technician, while Susan's husband, David, is the founder and owner of the Jackson Steel Guitar Company. Dawn Hughes has

traveled with the group for eleven years as Karen Peck and New River's assistant, making New River a complete family affair.

*Family is very important to all members of New River.* "Since my family travels with me on the road," Karen responded, "we try to make a point of having family time when we are home. I love to cook meals for them and we always try to catch up on the latest movies that hit the theater. I am very blessed to have them with me all the time."

Susan believes she finds balance by putting God as number one in her life. "My husband, David, is very supportive and understanding. My son, Joseph, has been on the road with us before, and he knows that God has called me to this work," she says. "But the hardest part is leaving my family, even though they are so supportive of everything I do. When I'm

home, I enjoy cooking meals for my family, spending time with them, and attending Joseph's sporting events."

While many days are exciting and enjoyable, life on the road does bring its share of challenges, the greatest of which, Jeff agrees, is being away from family and friends. "This is truly a tough part," Jeff added, "but the rewards are so much greater. I really believe you have to be called from the Lord to do this and not just wake up one morning and decide to travel and sing."

Karen adds, "My biggest challenge right now is my sleeping cycle. I think the older I get, the harder it is for me to sleep well at night. Once I'm used to sleeping on the bus, then I have to adapt to being back at home."

*One new experience for Karen is the role of an actress.* She had the opportunity to work with the director Todd Graff and music producer Mervyn Warren in her role as a choir member in the upcoming movie, *Joyful Noise*. The movie features Dolly Parton and Queen Latifah.

"I am doing what God has called me to do by traveling and singing Gospel music," Karen stated, "but I would love to do more small parts in movies if possible. This is something, honestly, that I've

*Last year was one of the best years we've had as New River, yet one of the toughest we've had. - Karen*



always wanted to do."

New River recently finished studio work on their upcoming project, *Reach Out*. "Each song is anointed," Karen says. "At this point, all of the songs are special because we have put so much prayer and work into the songs. We literally pray about every song that is included in the album."

Songs on their new project include, "Mighty Big God," "Broken Into Beautiful," "Don't Worry About the Waves," "Faithful Love of Jesus," "Good Things are Happening," "Love With All Your Heart," "More Than Ever," "Reach out and Touch," "Sustaining Grace," "This is What Mercy Does," and "Banks of the Promised Land," which Susan feels will be the group's new signature song.

Excited about his first recording project with New River, Jeff said, "Just being included in this project is overwhelming. However, if I must choose one [special song, it's] 'This is What Mercy Does.' The song was pitched to



"Karen's sincerity shows through her performances and enables her to communicate with just about any audience. Whether it's in front of thousands at a Gaither event, or a small country church, she is so gifted to communicate to her audience."

— Bill Bailey,  
Pastor & Promoter

us several months ago, and at the time, I had been praying for a song just like this one. I have always loved the

parable of The Prodigal Son. When I heard the demo for the first time, I knew God was going use it in a tremendous way. I was nervous about this being the first time I would sing lead, but when I stepped into the studio, Jesus took over. It was as if angels were in the room with me, singing the song with me. Chills! I can't wait for people to listen to the words of this song."

Karen, Susan, and Jeff all have their sights set on the Lord, knowing that He will direct their paths. "Proverbs 3:6 has always been my favorite scripture," Jeff said, "and I just want to share it with any young reader who may not be sure of the career choice God wants for them. 'In all thy ways, acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.' This verse has been instrumental in God laying the foundation for where I am today. Stay close to the Lord, and lean on Him!"



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Over the past year, New River has experienced many mountain-top moments and a few trips through the valley as well. "Last year was one of the best years we've had as New River, yet one of the toughest we've had. We had two bus accidents within two months. There was one fatality from the passenger car in the first accident, but praise God, in the second accident, no one was injured. These events were definitely turning points within our personal lives and ministry."

"After being on the road for twenty years," Susan adds, "I have come to realize that some things do not happen overnight. We have to trust God in everything, always believing in our dreams and always persevering."

"We've experienced emotions we've never been through before," Karen reflects. "To this day, we are still praying that God will give us the strength to step on the bus each week. I've come to realize that when these trials come, that it is just a preparation for where God wants us to be. In other words, there are just some things that we have to go through in order for God to get us where He needs us to be."

Karen Peck & New River is proof that God has a plan for each and every one of our lives. If we put our trust in the Lord, we can experience the joy of knowing that He will take us where we need to be: to places we never even dreamed of going. For twenty years, New River has seen God take them places beyond their imagination, and God knows what is in store for the next twenty years. 🇳🇵



## KAREN

Moment: My favorite moments are when people come to know Christ through our music and share their stories of how God has used the songs in their lives."

KPNR Song: Four Days Late.

Dream Job: to have my own music studio that would teach voice

and staging to young singers.

## SUSAN

Moment: "When my son, Joseph, took his first steps...on our bus."

KPNR Song: 'Four Days Late' is universal; everyone can relate."

Dream Job: own an accounting firm



## JEFF



Moment: "Bringing the group to my home church in Flat Rock, Alabama. The church was packed, and I'll never forget being able to give back to all those who prayed for me and supported me."

KPNR Song: My God Will Always Be Enough, Karen sings this as a solo, and I have a chance to sit back, soak up the lyrics, and feel the presence of God all across the room."

Dream job: Before singing with the group, I taught English, and it was another dream job of mine. However, just for fun, I'd love to be involved in print modeling."



# What God Has Joined Together

By Lorraine Walker

## Marcie & Michael English

The story of the life of Michael English is known to many and was detailed in his book, *The Prodigal Comes Home*. You may have read how he met and married the love of his life, Marcie. This month we asked Marcie for her memories of that pivotal point in their lives. Here is the English love story, as told by Marcie.

"In 1998, I had just re-dedicated my life to Christ after a long period of rebellion. I had a friend who was really big into Christian Music. She came to me one day and said that she had bought us tickets to a concert by Michael English. I had heard of him before because my father

was a pastor and even in my rebellion I was around the Christian and Church lifestyle."

"On the way [to the concert] she filled me in on Michael's long story of his own past rebellion and what it had cost him in his life. I was immediately drawn to him through his story. So I sat in the auditorium waiting to see Michael come out. As soon as he did, I was in awe.

"There was an initial physical attraction, but then as he started to talk and tell his story, it was more than that. I felt his pain, I felt like there was a reason I was there. There were feelings I can't explain. We went up to meet him after the concert and made our way home. I had a conversation with my mother that night and I told her I had met the man I was going to marry. She sort of laughed me off the phone. It is a conversation that we still reminisce and laugh about now, even after being married to Michael for 9 years."

**In English's book, Michael tells how Marcie continued to feel that she would marry Michael, and prayed for him during the years they were apart. During that time, Michael hit bottom but Marcie continued to believe that the Lord had His hand on the man she was going to marry.**

"Of course there was more that happened between that initial meeting in 1998 and our subsequent marriage in 2002. God had a lot of work to do in me, and a lot of work to do in Michael during those four years apart, but when he placed us together again at the right time it only took us 8 weeks to marry each other. I knew the minute I laid my eyes on Michael that God had made him just for me. It wasn't the stage, or the voice, but it was the man that was deep




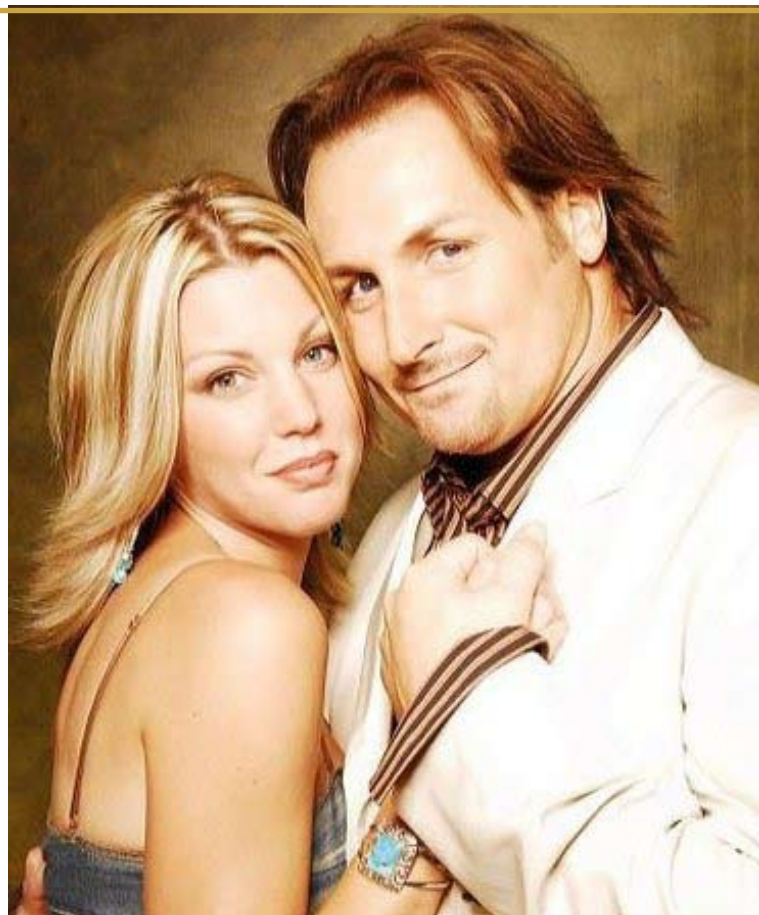


down behind those eyes that I knew was the man God had been preparing for me."

"[It is now] nine years later and we have one beautiful daughter! We are very happy. Our marriage hasn't been with out its ups and downs, some big, some small."

Marcie continues, "What we have earned heading into this 2011 Valentines Day is one of the most valuable lessons God can teach you in a marriage. It's not about mushy feelings, or romantic surprises; it's not about writing poems and leaving cards. Those are all great and important things that remind your spouse this day and every other how much you love them. But beyond that - beyond the romance and flowers of the

Valentines Day - when that passes what you have at the core of your marriage is this reminder from God: "What God has joined together let no one put asunder." That is what will get you through the other not-so-romantic 364 days of the year. So not only do I wish you a Happy Valentines day, but I wish you a happy, God-filled marriage!" 



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## *Sweethearts For A Lifetime*

# Joel & Labreeska Hemphill

By Sandi Duncan-Clark

In 1957, life was more relaxed, things moved a little more slowly, and almost everyone went to church on Sundays and for revivals. This was especially true in the south. That spring, Joel Hemphill met the love of his life, LaBreeska Rogers, at a church revival in West Monroe, Louisiana, and it didn't take long for him to make her his wife. The young couple began a lifetime of ministry and they have been sweethearts and partners in ministry for more than fifty three years.

Music played a major role in the life of young Joel Hemphill, the son and grandson of ministers of the Gospel. LaBreeska was part of the famous Goodman family, and when she was nine years old, she sang at the Ryman Auditorium with the Goodmans. Immediately following their marriage, the happy couple began singing together in their home church and for revivals around the area.

When the three Hemphill children came along, they joined the family's music ministry, forming one of the premier family groups in Southern Gospel music. Joey was only ten when he joined his Mom and Dad on stage playing drums. Trent followed at age fourteen, playing bass guitar. Candy soon joined in and with her strong soprano, she quickly became a featured voice in the group. Her first recorded song with the family was "I Came On Business For The King," written by her father.

The Hemphills were traveling extensively then, and decided to move Nashville, Tennessee,

to be more centrally located. Their music was original, written by Joel, and their close family harmony and exciting band found them much in demand by concert promoters and church pastors. Their many top-charting songs were penned by Joel, and at the same time, the children were honing their song writing craft.

The Hemphills had many number one songs in the industry charts over the years. Joel's songs were sought after by every artist planning studio time for a new recording. The Goodmans, the first professional group to record Joel's music, ("Pity The Man," "He Filled A Longing," "I Found A Better Way," etc.), The Blackwoods, The Speer Family, The Gaithers, The Florida Boys, and The Cathedrals all recorded songs written by Joel Hemphill.

In 1990, the Hemphill children chose to develop their individual ministries, and once again, as in 1957, Joel and LaBreeska were two sweethearts in the ministry. Singing and preaching dates filled their calendar, yet God chose to change their direction.

Joel had successful surgery for colon cancer, yet the enemy launched a battle of clinical depression and for two years, Joel faced debilitating days, for the most part being home-bound, often bed-ridden. On November 8, 1992, his home church anointed Joel and prayed for his healing. From that day till this, Joel and his doctors agree the healing miracle came for God.

Joel and LaBreeska became even more excited about the Lord and pursuing the ministry. Joel's sermons had new meaning, and where he had not written a new song in over two years, he received two new songs from the Lord on that Sunday, and six new songs the following week.

LaBreeska wrote a book about that dry spell in their ministry, titled, "Partners In Emotion." She shares that although Joel was the one suffering from the trauma, she and the entire family were greatly impacted.

Regarding Joel's illness and depression's affects on her, LaBreeska shared, "It hit me in the pit of my stomach. I have prayer time very early every morning and I just talked to God about it. I prayed throughout that battle and was able to be the strength Joel needed to get through till the healing came."

In October of 2010, Joel experienced a new health issue. He tells the story, "The doctors found cancerous tumors in my bladder and did two surgeries to remove them. I completed six chemotherapy treat-



ments and will return to the doctor on February 1 for a biopsy."

He continues, "Unlike my first battle with cancer, I have no depression and no doubt that this is another

avenue added to our ministry, whereby we can testify to God's amazing grace and healing."

Joel has written several insightful books dealing with Biblical doctrine. His most recent book, *Glory to God, In The Highest*, strips the teachings of many Roman and Greek philosophies from the Christian doctrine, and presents Joel's research into those influences.

Joel and LaBreeska continue to minister, both with preaching and singing. They find joy in presenting the Gospel as "Sweethearts for a Lifetime," and as an evangelistic team, "Partners in Ministry," ironically, the title of one of their recordings!

And to quote LaBreeska Hemphill, the beautiful wife of Joel Hemphill, as she laughingly states, "More correctly, we're the Sweethearts of the Geritol Generation!" 🍷



Joel & LaBreeska Hemphill  
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**J**ames Michael Rainey, southern gospel pianist extraordinaire, has been a regular name in industry circles for many years. Beginning his career by playing a song with the Speer Family at the age of seven, he was soon learning riffs from the likes of the Downings, Rambos and Bill Gaither Trio. He went on to play for The Hoppers, The Greenes, The Singing Americans and many others.

Life on the road can be lonely and after many years in the business, Rainey was beginning to wonder if he would spend the rest of his days without a life partner. Little did he know that God had other plans. Rainey picks up the story:

"In the little town of Fort Branch, Indiana, there was a beautiful girl thinking the same thing [that I was]," says Rainey. "Laura was thinking that she would finish her journey out by herself without anyone to share it with. Laura was in a mall in Nashville, TN with a famous tenor singer and pastor, Royce Taylor, who currently sings with Elvis' Imperials. Laura was sharing her heart with Royce about her disappointments of being alone and wishing God would answer her prayers and send her someone. These are the words that Royce shared with her: 'Laura, stop looking for your husband. God has already picked him out for you. It will be a quick, fast work. Don't let it scare you when it happens.'"

Rainey continues, "Twelve-hundred miles away, I was sitting with a pastor friend, Pastor Ron Horner, who told me these very words on the exact same day: 'James, stop looking for your wife. God has already got her picked out for you. It will be a quick work, so don't let it scare you when it happens.'"

**We have learned how to work through issues without arguing and fighting. We both had enough of that in the past. ~ James**

ing down the isle. She said, 'Hi, my name is Laura.' I said, 'Hi, I'm your husband.'"

"We were talking within three hours of meeting each other. We had our first date two weeks later in Louisville, KY. Nine days later I asked her mother for her hand in marriage. Notice I didn't ask her dad? I still



## Our Love Story: Laura & James Michael Rainey

*As told to Lorraine Walker*

haven't asked him to this date. I figured he probably has figured it out by now."

Sparks flew and things happened quickly for the Raineys. "I gave her the engagement ring on June 15, 2009 in Barboursville, WV, and we got married June 24, 2009 in Stamping Ground, KY. Some say it was fast, but when God is in it and He puts it together, time is immaterial."

Laura and James' courtship was

fast but relaxed and informal. Their engagement and marriage was casual as well, as they were married in the basement of their Pastor's house, and wore t-shirts, shorts and flip-flops. They were baptized in the Pastor's swimming pool. The pictures reflect their love for each other and the joy they are experiencing in their relationship. Waiting for the right one and learning through the tough experiences of life have allowed them to develop a good strong bond in a short time.

"Our relationship is very unique," says Rainey. "We don't spend a minute apart. We have learned how to work through issues without arguing and fighting. We both had enough of that in the past. We communicate to the fullest, speak lovingly and honestly to each other, and share a love and passion that has now lasted nearly two years and is growing stronger by the day."

The Rainey's love for each other not only produced a marriage but also a new gospel duet. "After much prayer and consideration, we finally gave in to the call and started a ministry of our own," says Rainey. "Laura and I go by 'The Rainey's', and travel all across the country ministering the Gospel in song and from the piano. We are currently scheduled to do a cruise to Alaska, and are already booked at the great Branson Gospel Music Revival."

"Traveling and ministering together has strengthened our relationship," Rainey continues. "Instead of saying goodbye to each other each week, we plan our trips together, stay together, sing together, and form new relationships with people daily. All of our accomplishments are made together, not separately." Rainey says that this ministry

together is greater than anything he experienced alone.

"I know that I played for a lot of famous groups and got to live a lot of childhood dreams, but never has my ministry been as powerful as when Laura and I started ministering together,"

Rainey shares. "We are seeing souls saved, lives changed, and a body of Christ encouraged through our music and testimony. I never thought that a girl from Fort Branch, Indiana could sing like she can. Sometimes I am jealous of the way Laura can run scales on the piano compared to me. I told her the only difference between us is that I learned to cover my mistakes well. She thought that was funny."

The Rainey's travel every weekend and operate a digital recording studio for gospel artists at affordable prices. They view everything they do as a ministry to God, working together to build a marriage and a lifework that honors their King.

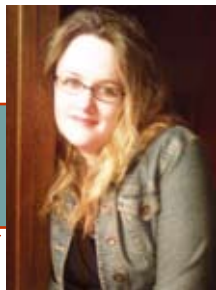
"God put together an unbeatable ministry team to help enlarge the Kingdom. We are honored to follow in the footsteps of Henry and Hazel Slaughter, Roy and Amy Pauley, the late Great Anthony Burger, the late Roger Bennett, and all the other husband and wife teams. Thank you guys for paving the way for us."



Pictures courtesy of Laura and James Rainey.  
Engagement picture by Jennifer Crisp.



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



**KELLY CAPRIOTTI BURTON** is a former teacher and IT project manager, and a current gospel wife, mom of 2, stepmom of 2, homeschooler, event promoter, and writer/editor, recently featured on [www.incourage.me](http://www.incourage.me). She currently lives outside of Chicago sometimes and on a bus the rest, and survives to tell about it at [mylifeastheglue.com](http://mylifeastheglue.com)



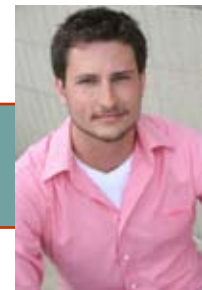
Born and raised in southern Ontario, Canada, **LORRAINE WALKER** has been interested and involved in Southern Gospel Music since the mid-80s. Since 2005, she has also authored the popular 'Reality Check' column and other features for [sgmradio.com](http://sgmradio.com).



**MS. LOU WILLS HILDRETH** is always smiling, is married to Howard, is a member of the legendary Wills family, a member of the Gospel Music Association Board, and a television host, songwriter, publisher, journalist, an industry leader. Get to know her at [louhildreth.com](http://louhildreth.com)



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



Through a series of events, **JEFF HAWES** has moved from the classroom where he taught high school English in Jackson County, Alabama to the tour bus of gospel great Karen Peck & New River. Jeff chronicles the fulfillment of his gospel music dreams and his road life exclusively for SGN Scoops. Learn more about him at [karenpeckandnewriver.com](http://karenpeckandnewriver.com)



**ROB PATZ** is the owner & publisher of SGN Scoops along with the owner & voice of SGMRadio.com & The Southern Styles Show. He resides in Seattle and loves Jesus, music, food, people, and talking as a job and hobby. [sgmradio.com](http://sgmradio.com)



**TOM HOLSTE** is a writer living in Chicago and a graduate of Act One, a screenwriting program specifically geared toward Christians. He has written and directed numerous short scenes for church events. [tomholste.com](http://tomholste.com).



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

Special guest **SUE DUFFIELD** is a heart-warming and honest storyteller, singer/songwriter and freelance writer who travels extensively sharing her faith, her music, and comic relief. She and her keyboardist husband of 36 years, Jeff, travel in and out of the country doing retreats, conferences, concerts and special events. Visit her at [www.sueduffield.com](http://www.sueduffield.com) or follow [www.facebook.com/radiosue](http://www.facebook.com/radiosue).



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 [www.praisemoves.com](http://www.praisemoves.com) [twitter.com/Fit4Christ](https://twitter.com/Fit4Christ) [facebook.com/praisemoves](https://facebook.com/praisemoves)



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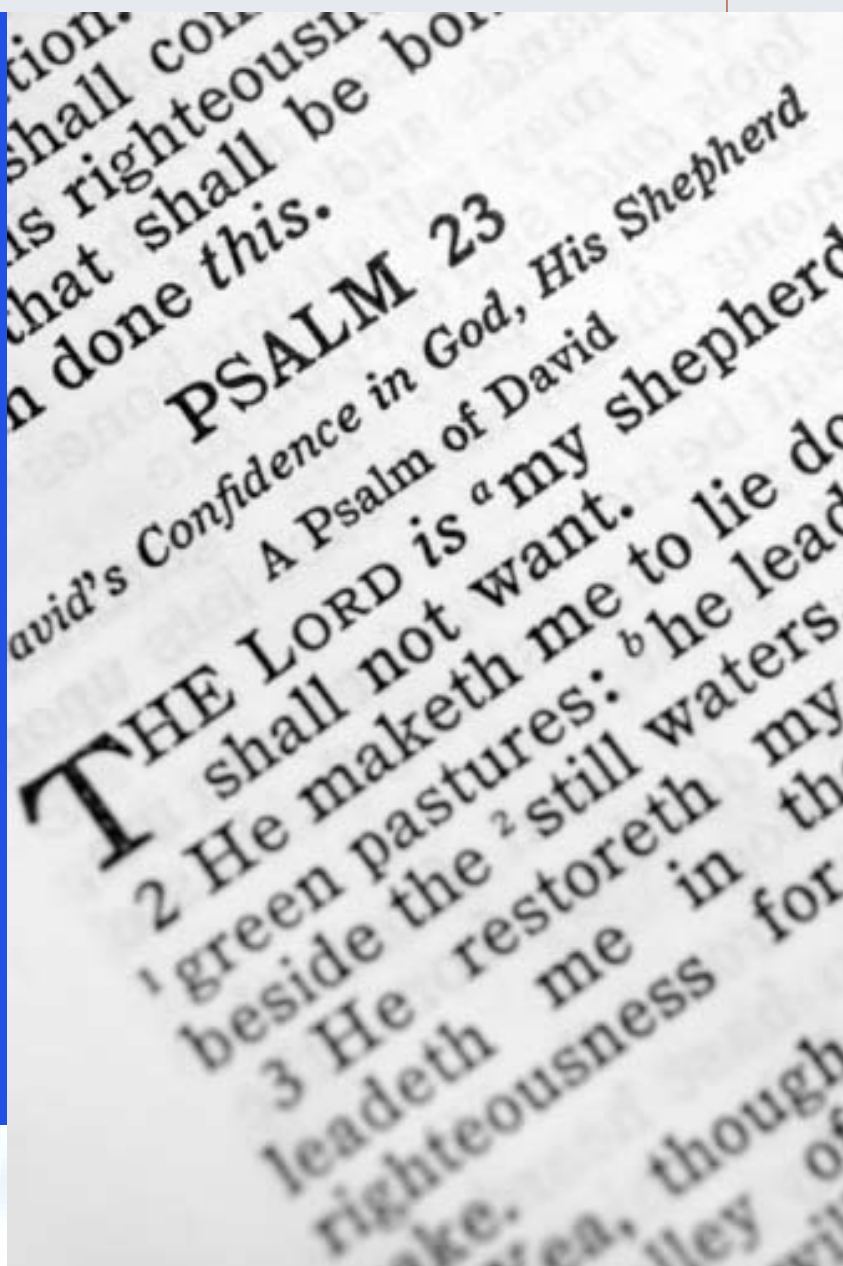
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# Seven *Names of God* in Psalm 23



One of my favorite PraiseMoves Scripture Sequences follows the 23rd Psalm.

A Scripture Sequence involves taking a portion of scripture (such as the Lord's Prayer or one of the Psalms) and linking it to a series of PraiseMoves postures. We flow from one posture to the next, seeking to mirror the beauty of God's Word as we meditate on the scripture and endeavor to glorify God in moving prayer.

In this way, we hope to express the foundation scripture of PraiseMoves, "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Corinthians 6:20).

## *There are HOW MANY Names of God?*

Our Father has many, many names in the Hebrew bible (some say as many as 144!), each describing a different aspect of His greatness and power -- from Adonai (The Lord; mentioned 360 times) to Yahveh ("I am that I am"; mentioned 6,800 times). Jehovah is an Anglicized translation of Yahveh.

Understanding the protection and provision of the Lord in this psalm of David gives us a picture of 7 other names for God. You may meditate on these during your prayer time, or as you enjoy the Ps. 23 Scripture Sequence:

**1.** "The Lord is my Shepherd"  
*Jehovah Rohi (The Lord is my Shepherd and*

*my Guide)* - "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will GUIDE you into all truth" John 16:13.

**2.** "I shall not want"

- *Jehovah Jireh (The Lord is my Provider)*, so I do not want; He supplies all my need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus, Philippians 4:19)

**3.** "He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters"

- *Jehovah Shalom (The Lord is my Peace* -- my calm in the midst of a storm) - "Now may the God of PEACE Himself sanctify you completely" 1 Thess. 5:23.

**4.** "He restores my soul"

- *Jehovah Rapha (He is my Healer)* - "And by His stripes we are healed" 1 Peter 2:24 (and Isaiah 53:5)

**5.** "He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake"

## Fitness cont'd

- Jehovah Tsidkenu (The Lord is my Righteousness; in Him I have right standing with God) "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin

for us, that we might become the RIGHTEOUSNESS of God in Him" 1

Corinthians 5:21.

6. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me"

- Jehovah Shammah ("The Lord is There"; He is our Ever-Present God)

- "For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you'" Hebrews 13:5.

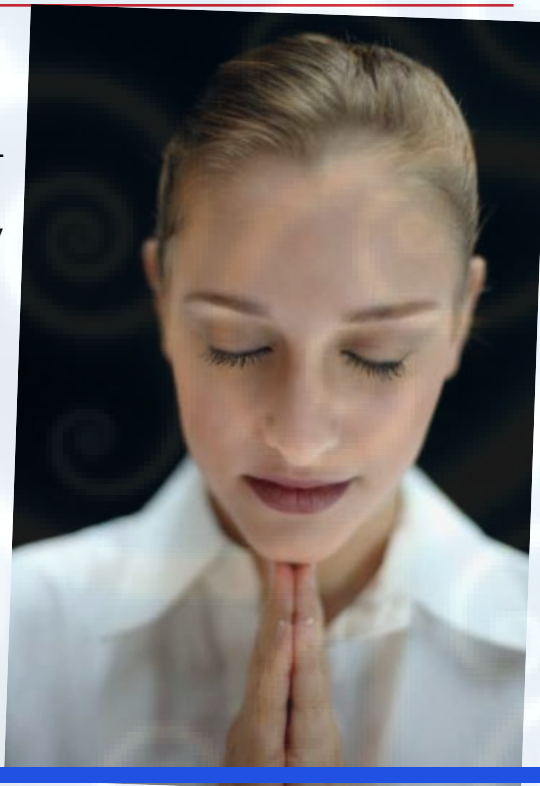
7. "Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies"

- Jehovah Nissi ("The Lord is my Banner," my standard, He covers me) - "When the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD will lift up

a STANDARD against him" Isaiah 59:19.

"You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." Amen!

(Adapted from Fit Favorites Devotional Book by Laurette Willis, 2008) available at [www.PraiseMoves.com](http://www.PraiseMoves.com).



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## Introducing CHARLIE GRIFFIN and **SECRETS**

Produced By  
Christopher Sutton  
and Charlie Griffin  
Independent

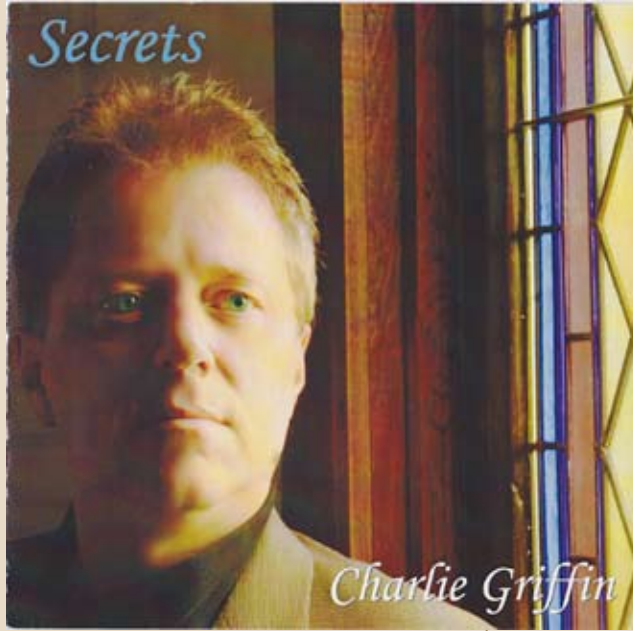
Several years ago I was honored to meet and work with a gifted young man whose talent ranges from singer to concert promoter, to booking agent as well as Radio DJ and concert Emcee. I first met Charlie Griffin when I served as a judge at the Singing American's annual concert and talent search at Union Grove, North Carolina, and Charlie was Emcee for the event. My association with him has truly been a blessing and I've always enjoyed hearing him sing.

Charlie Griffin has shared the stage with a number of well-known artists during his career. He sang lead and managed the Vanguards, and is currently performing as a soloist. He has booked many artists to concert dates and last minute "fill-in" dates all across the southeast. Charlie served as the Director and Talent coordinator of The Hallelujah Supper Club in Newton, N.C. Many evenings at the supper club following the concert, Charlie could be found cleaning up in the kitchen while sharing coffee and conversation with the artists who performed that evening.

I was honored to write the liner notes for Charlie's new recording, **SECRETS**, and was excited about the music he chose to record. Receiving a copy of the brand new album recently just made my day! This professionally produced album with solid music tracks and smooth vocals made me realize once again, just how vocally talented Charlie is!

**SECRETS** was released in late fall and is a delightful tribute to Charlie's Mother, Mrs. Geneva Johnson, featuring songs he heard his mom sing in church. The resulting album is a wonderful collection of songs we all grew up hearing, both in church and on radio.

Charlie shared with us, "We grew up with music in our family and Mom used to sing at home and at



## Behind the Music CD Reviews "Plus" by Sandi Duncan-Clark

church. That's where I learned to sing and enjoy Southern Gospel music."

Charlie's smooth, clear vocals and easy listening arrangements are enjoyable and refreshing. I have several favorite songs on the recording, (which I have played incessantly since receiving!) I really like "Look For Me," "Now I Have Everything," and "I Will Glory In The Cross," which are tops in my book.

There is a balanced mixture of upbeat tunes along with slow, meaningful songs, allowing one to experience the rhythm and joy of "He Set Me Free" and "Better Hurry Up," as well as the promise and hope of "It Is No Secret" and "I Want to Stroll Over Heaven." A bonus thirteen songs make for hours of listening pleasure and encouragement.

**SECRETS** is recommended for its pure listening enjoyment, and you may have your own copy or have Charlie at your next Southern Gospel music event by contacting him at [Charlie@charliegriffin.net](mailto:Charlie@charliegriffin.net), or by phoning him at 704-552-9060.



## SHERI LAFONTAINE

### SOMETHING MORE

Produced by: Marty  
Funderburk, John-  
ny Sansom, Sheri  
LaFontaine  
Independent

One of the sweetest voices and personalities in Gospel music hails from Toledo, Ohio and inspires fans with her music and her testimony. Sheri LaFontaine also entertains Monday through Friday on local radio station WPOS 102.3 FM. The daughter of evangelist parents, Sheri has been singing since she was two years old. "One of my earliest memories is traveling in our van with my family to a ministry date singing harmony," Sheri



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recalled.

After singing with her family, Sheri joined Frank Arnold Ministries at age eighteen, singing with them for four years. Since then she has ministered as a soloist and has an exciting new recording with all original new songs, titled "SOMETHING MORE." The first single shipped to Gospel radio, "New Every Morning," debuted at #65 in the *Singing News* Top 80 chart, and is Sheri's first song to ever hit the *Singing News* chart. "New Every Morning" is one of those toe tapping, sing-along songs that just excites you about living for God!

Since November, I've been blessed by every song on the recording. Several, however, have become favorites. "I Love This Living For Him" has a jazzy arrangement and is another song that leaves one praising the Lord and singing along.

"Child, I Know The Plans I Have For You," "New And Improved Me" and "Shine Like The Star You Are" have wonderful, encouraging messages for the listener. The message in "I Could Have Been Something" can speak to each of us. The "something" we are in the Lord, Sheri calls "Heavenly Celebrities!" What an awesome thought!

"The Hand Of The Lord" is a song with a black Gospel flavor and an awesome organ on the music

tracks. "Everywhere," co-written by Sheri and Jerry Kelso is so beautifully done. "I walked into the studio where Jerry was playing the piano," Sheri shared. "It was a beautiful melody and I asked what it was. Jerry said he only had the melody, no words. Within a few minutes God gave me the words and I was singing along with him."

If you have a loved one who has been called home to Heaven, you need to hear another of Sheri's new songs, "Congratulations." What a comfort and a blessing this song will be.

Sheri has written many other wonderful songs, but the ones on this new album are fresh and exciting. "More than anything, I want the songs to be anointed, no matter if I'm singing them or someone else is singing. I want people to be encouraged and uplifted when they hear the songs," Sheri said.

As a listener and fan, I can tell you each new song here IS anointed AND encouraging. "SOMETHING MORE" will lift your spirit, reassure your salvation, inspire you to live for Christ, and nurture your faith. What a blessing!

You may have your own copy of SOMETHING MORE or have Sheri at your next Gospel music event by phoning 734-740-8460 or contacting [meade.pr@gmail.com](mailto:meade.pr@gmail.com).



Well, it is hard to believe that the hustle and bustle of the new year is over and the anticipation of spring is in the air. New River hopes that each of you had a blessed holiday season. It seems unbelievable that Christmas has already come and gone. For New River, we have hit the ground running this new year.

*From finishing our latest album, preparing for the Grammy Awards, to Karen filming her much anticipated movie role, we are excited to see where God will take us this season, and at this moment, it is heading west.*

We made our way to California to meet up with the Gaither Homecoming Tour, and we were so excited to be with the whole crew again. We had not seen most of them since before Christmas, and could not wait to take the stage with them again. We sang in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. I had never been to a few of these states before, so we definitely had to do some sight-seeing. On our way out, we visited Tombstone, Arizona, which looked exactly like the set of a western film. We imagined that cowboys were going to come riding over the hills at any minute. While we were there we watched a re-enactment of the historic fight with Wyatt Earp and Doc Holiday against the cowboys. It was GREAT!!! We also visited the Grand Canyon; I'll never forget the presence of God that I felt while taking it all in.

Another exciting adventure for New River is the recording of our new album, Reach Out. We began recording in December, but because of snow storms the last two months, we were unable to get back in the studio until this past month. I am especially excited about the release, which will come out later this spring. The songs are so inspiring, and it is amazing to see how they have come together in the studio. I love this creative process. With a wide variety of songs, that we feel

relate to all Southern Gospel fans, it will be exciting to see where God takes this project. This is my first album with the group, and we are excited to embark on this new chapter of the 20th year of Karen Peck and New River.

In the midst of recording in December, we were given the exciting news that New River had received a Grammy nomination for the project Live at Oak Tree Studio.

Ladies, let the dress shopping begin! We have had a ball watching Karen,



### The Chronicles of a Singing English Teacher:

*Great Things  
Are Happening!*

A Counting Series by

*Jeff Hawes*

of Karen Peck & New River



Susan, Dawn, and Kari hunt for the perfect Grammy dress. Can't you just hear Karen now as she tells Ryan Seacrest she's wearing..... Faded Glory? As for me, I have always watched the Grammy Awards while sitting in my recliner at home. It is going to be such an exciting night, and I will have to give you the full update in the March issue of *Scoops*.

As for what I will wear to the show, most likely a black suit will do. Guys do have it much easier when it comes to dressing to impress. All eyes are on the ladies. The award show will air Sunday, February 13. This is the third nomination we have received, and couldn't be more thankful. You can purchase the album/dvd at our website [karenpeckandnewriver.com](http://karenpeckandnewriver.com)

We are also thrilled that in 2011, Karen is making her film debut. She has been cast to sing in the upcoming film *Joyful Noise*, starring Dolly Parton and Queen Latifa. She will be the lead vocalist for one of the choirs in the movie. Karen's role will also include three speaking lines, including one of the most popular southern words, ya'll. When Karen returned after her first rehearsal she said "So far, everybody has been incredibly great to work with. I feel very honored and blessed to be a part of this movie." We cannot wait to see her in the film and we know that God will really use her to encourage people all across the globe. With "Great Things Happening," God is great and greatly to be praised! 🇺🇸

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