

SGN SCOOPS

MAGAZINE

MARCH 2016



BRIAN FREE AND ASSURANCE

ALSO FEATURING:

COLLINGSWORTH A PERKINS , HOPES JOURNEY & JAQUITA LINDSEY



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OUR MISSION

SGNScoops exists to promote the gospel by unveiling what is intriguing and real about Southern Gospel and Christian Country music. With integrity, we aspire to strengthen Christians, highlight people who are fulfilling a call to minister and emphasize the music that inspires audiences and glorifies God.

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Have a SCOOP to share? For news consideration, email us at news@sgnscoops.com

PUBLISHER'S POINT

by Rob Patz

Welcome to the March edition of the Publisher's Point! I want to say a big thank you to my entire staff for all the tireless work that they put in each month to bring you our magazine. Without them, we would be unable to cover the great music that we all love. So I want to take this opportunity to tell them how much I appreciate each and everyone of them.

Can you believe it is almost Easter? Easter has deep meaning for each of us that have accepted what Jesus did for us when He died on the Cross. Not only that but He rose from the grave and is alive today. I'm so glad that He lives and because He lives, I will too. I will see those I've loved; Christians who have passed away. Have you accepted His abundant and eternal life? I hope so!

Just a few days and we will be headed to Oxford, Alabama, also known as Lick Skillet for those of you that follow our inside joke. If you don't know what it means, before Oxford was called

Oxford it was originally called Lick Skillet, Alabama. I still believe we should get shirts that say: "I'm headed to Southern Gospel Weekend in Lick Skillet, Alabama." I do want to invite you to come be there with me and 35 great Southern Gospel Artists. It's going to be three days that you won't want to miss. We have some surprises, so keep checking the website and follow updates about Southern Gospel Weekend in Alabama.

I also want to tell you to make plans for our event which is in April in Sherman, Texas. Southern Gospel Weekend Texas is going to be an outstanding three days of Gospel music in the great state of Texas. Be watching for more information!

You've probably already done this, but I do want to remind you it is time for you to get in your nominations for the 2016 Diamond Awards! We are excited to have Dr. Jerry and Jan Goff back with us for the Diamond Awards. This year it will be November 1st at Creekside Gospel Music Convention in beautiful Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. If you haven't already reserved your room, they are going fast, so we recommend that you get your room today. Contact Salina Clay for hotel reservations at hotels@sgnscoops.com or call her at 256-239-7716.

I want to thank you again for taking time to read our magazine. Each month of the last year we have seen tremendous growth, and that's because people like you take time to share with their friends about our website, about our digital magazine and now about our printed newspaper. I appreciate each and everyone of you and from the bottom my heart I want to say thank you for all that you have done.

If you haven't yet subscribed to our newspaper, let me take this opportunity to invite you to do so. The cost is only \$25 for 12 issues and we would love to have you as one of our subscribers. I appreciate each and everyone of you who have stepped out and supported us over this first month of offering subscriptions.

Now you know the Publisher's Point!



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LOVE OFFERING RECEIVED TO COVER GROUP EXPENSES

THE GRIFFITH FAMILY: SEND ME

By Jaquita Lindsey



A trio that is fresh on the Southern Gospel scene is The Griffith Family. Based out of Nashville, TN, this Mansion Records labeled trio got their start in November of 2014. The Griffith Family consists of group owner, Tony Griffith and his wife, Julie, along with Amber Smith. They are awaiting the release of their newly recorded project, *Give His Love Away*, due out this month.

Although The Griffith Family is still considered as new faces to some, they have already made appearances at a couple of events held at Dollywood, and are currently sharing some dates alongside Adam Crabb. They are excited about their new single, “Give His Love Away.”

After a five-year break from traveling, Tony felt impressed to return to the road. He and Julie had taken time off to focus on their children and their relation-

ship with the Lord.

“Isaiah 6:8 is my absolute favorite scripture,” Tony states. “It says, ‘Also, I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then said I, here am I; send me.’ It is our utmost desire to not just simply stand on a stage and sing, but to do our part in helping the kingdom of God to grow. If we can share with *one* person the joy that God has so graciously given to us, then every mile traveled will be worth it.”

Meet the singers...

The Sylacauga, AL native, Tony Griffith, began singing around age five. Great artists such as the Hinsons, Mike Bowling and Randy Perry, influenced him. Tony says that he has been involved in music his whole life, singing and playing various instruments.



“My mom and dad originally sang under the name, The Griffith Family, back in the ‘80’s. I played the drums for them for as far back as I can remember. Music has always been a big part of my family,” Tony tells us. He occasionally plays the piano, harmonica and guitar on stage.

Tony takes care of the management and office duties for The Griffith Family. He also serves as producer for their studio work. Tony enjoys lending his producing talents to others as well, such as his input on a recent Christmas project for T. Graham Brown. He and Julie lend their voices to background vocals when given the opportunity. Tony, like most men, loves sports, when he is not concentrating on music. He also enjoys spending time with his four kids.

From Hayden, AL comes the soprano of The Griffith Family, Julie Griffith. She began singing at age three. She is the youngest child of a very musical family.

“My mom sang with her sisters when they were teenagers. My dad is a great tenor singer. All five of my siblings can sing and hear harmony. Any opportunity

that we had to sing growing up, mom would load all of us up and go,” Julie shares.

In her childhood years, Julie listened the Martins and Gaither Vocal Band the most, progressing into more contemporary Christian music in her teenage years. Her family attended the National Quartet Convention every year from the time she was five or six years old, which she always found to be a neat experience.

“I remember singing along with my brother and sister to the Martins in our kitchen. We would use flashlights for microphones,” Julie laughs. “The Martins are siblings and we wanted to be like them. I am thankful that my parents instilled a love for God and Southern Gospel music in us.”

When she is not singing, Julie is busy caring for and homeschooling their daughters, Jaidyn, age six, and Payton, age five. Although the road life can be tough as a family, she is reminded why she puts in the miles when their ministry sees souls come to Christ.

“God gives us the opportunity to share our testimonies and tell people what He has done for us. We want



to share that hope with people who are struggling. We want them to know that God can move and bless exceedingly above anything we could ask or think,” Julie states.

Amber Smith sings the alto part for The Griffith Family. She is originally from Attalla, AL but now resides in Franklin, TN. Amber recalls her mom buying some



Southern Gospel soundtracks for her to sing with around the age of six. She began singing with her

mom in church and leading worship at age 15.

While in college at Southeastern Bible in Birmingham, AL, Amber traveled with the school’s worship band. She later went on to travel with Eddie James Ministries as a part of his worship team, Ultimate Call. Amber holds a degree in church leadership, with an emphasis on music and a minor in theology.

Amber’s musical influences span across a wide range of artists. “I listen to so many different styles of music growing up that I feel have had an impact on me. I’d have to say that the Martins, Karen Wheaton, Avalon and Natalie Grant are some of my favorites,” says Amber. “But, I would have to say that my mom and my aunt, who passed away when I was 11 years old, serve as two of the greatest influences that I have ever had. When people tell me that I look or sound like my aunt when I sing, I take that as the biggest compliment that I could ever receive. She’ll always be one of my heroes.” When Amber is not on the road, she enjoys dabbling in photography and journaling.



If the shoe fits...

Like all of us who travel in ministry can relate to, this trio shared a story of forgotten dress shoes: “The Griffith Family was scheduled for some appearances at Dollywood back in October. I had an injured ankle and was limited on what shoes that I could bear to stand in for long periods of time,” Julie begins. “I forgot the pair of shoes that I had intended to bring for the day. I ended up having to wear a pair of boots that I quickly borrowed from our nanny, with our first set just minutes away.” Amber recalls that it was not funny at the time but that looking back, the pictures are comical to see Julie singing with Ugg boots on.

There must be something about Dollywood that causes this trio to lose their shoes. Tony recalls an incident in January that happened to him while they were there: "I had left my stage clothes in a dressing room that was locked. I specifically remembered leaving my shoes in there on a table. Sound check ran a little long, so I didn't have much time to get dressed. I hurriedly put my clothes on and reached for my shoes but they were gone. It was five minutes until show time and all that I had was a pair of tennis shoes. I called my son on the bus to bring another pair to me. I was stepping in them as they announced our name to come out on stage." The shoe gremlin, as they laughingly call it, is still at large. Tony did add that if whoever were to try and take Amber's shoes, they might need a couple of hefty bags and a partner to get away with all of the pairs that she carries with her.

The Griffith Family will host their first annual homecoming this year on April 29th and 30th at Cathedral of Praise Church of God in Gadsden, AL. There will be great artists such as Randy and Sherri Miller, the Bowlings, Aaron and

Amanda Crabb, Adam Crabb, Terah Penhollow, and Three Bridges. Concert begins at 7pm nightly. If you live in that area, make plans to attend these two nights of talent. For more information on this and other Griffith Family events, visit their website at www.griffithfamilymusic.com. For booking information, contact Beckie Simmons Agency at 615-595-7500 or visit www.bsaworld.com.



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“Can You Handle It”

TRUTH: Why It Matters

By David Staton

I know there are a lot of things screaming for your attention: Facebook, Twitter, publications, television and countless other things; but I'm asking you to take a few minutes and read this. If you know me, follow me on social media, been to one of my concerts or speaking events, you know that I do my best to center my life, my ministry, my political views and my world view, around truth.

For some, truth is something that they amen on Sunday, but run from on Monday through Saturday. For others, truth comes down to their own perceptions and interpretations. I have always believed that following Christ changes everything. It's not religion, it's not a lifestyle or something that we do. Following Christ, knowing Him, and pursuing Him is a world view.

When you realize that there is truth that is unchangeable, indisputable and absolute, it has to change the way you see the world. If life were a baseball game, truth would be first base. You can be the best at what you do, you can hit the ball out of the park every time, but as you round the bases, you have to touch first base. If you don't touch first base, it will not count or matter. If we fail to see truth for what it is, nothing else will matter and our lives will have been in vain.

Kevin Kookogey is a Christian attorney here in Nashville, and one of the wisest men you will ever listen to. I heard him use this illustration not long ago concerning truth and

I thought it was brilliant.

Two men were standing on a beach in California watching a cruise ship leaving the harbor going west. Both men were intelligent and influential, but they had two totally different views of the world. One knew that the world was round, but the other believed that the world was flat.

As the ship got smaller on the horizon, the man who knew the world was round was fully confident that the ship would safely reach its destination. The man who thought the world was flat saw the ship approaching what appeared to be the edge of the earth and he panicked. He just knew that the ship and all of its passengers would fall from the edge of the earth to their doom.

He immediately went to congress and told them that we have to stop making passenger ships because the danger of falling off the edge of the earth is too great. He then took things even further by insisting that we pass legislation that would not allow kids to play in the ocean. The fear of an undercurrent that could pull them out to sea was too great! They could fall off of the face of the earth.

Before it was over, anyone who had to come in contact with the ocean faced fines and penalties for doing so in order to show the world that no one should play or work in the water. Those who knew the world was round tried to explain to the man that there was no impending threat

and that his work to try and save people was useless because the danger he feared was not real. This man was smart. He knew how to go to congress, get laws passed and his efforts influenced and affected many people. Was he crazy? No. He simply missed first base. He missed the foundational truth that the world is round. Welcome to the United States in 2016.

Let me tell you, that when you base your worldview and see the world through the lens of truth, you will not be a very popular person. In fact, I understand why Jesus said that if we follow Him (the One who said He is truth), we will be hated and persecuted. I have had conversations with people concerning politics, Jesus, the Muslim religion, Islam, and they will get upset. I cannot ignore facts concerning history and scripture and go along with their opinion of what truth is.

I was witnessing to a man who is Muslim. He said that Muslims believe in Jesus. They don't believe that He was the Son of God, but rather a high prophet whom God empowered to do many miracles. I asked him if he believed that his god would allow a high prophet to be a liar. I quoted scripture where Jesus said that He was God and how God has exalted Jesus to the highest place. He simply said, "We don't believe that." I told him that I cannot ignore and disagree with real history that was written by eyewitnesses

who heard what Jesus said before and after His resurrection. I would have to ignore and disagree with every major world historian that says that the Bible is by far the most accurate historical document ever written. To say that Jesus didn't say that would be like me denying infamous quotes by past Presidents. Although I wasn't alive when Abraham Lincoln gave the Gettysburg Address and freed the slaves, I can't believe that he didn't do it. Why? Because eyewitnesses saw it, heard it and wrote it down for future generations to learn from.

While this gentleman seemed like a nice guy, intelligent and hardworking, he missed a fundamental truth that has warped his world view.

I've watched our leaders cry and become outraged because a crazy person with a gun killed kids in a classroom, but will fight for millions of unborn kids to be killed through abortion. We live in a world where right has become wrong, where the criminal has more rights than their victims, and common sense has left the building. Why?

When you miss first base, running the bases no longer has meaning. When we miss truth and drift farther and farther from it, life gets more and more out of control and chaotic. How about you? Can you handle the truth? If not, go back to first base. It's a whole different game and the outcome is much better if you don't miss it.

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BRIAN FREE AND ASSURANCE: A NEW ASSURANCE

By Craig Harris

One of Southern Gospel's favorite artists doesn't skip a beat in its transition from a quartet to a trio as a new project and a homecoming awaits

It's evident to Southern Gospel Music fans that Brian Free and Assurance has undergone changes. However, Brian Free is hoping the most important changes involve more than just in the tangible composition.

"I just want our ministry to be more effective," Free explains. "In the time we're in, we need to do more than just stand on stage and sing songs. We need to be a lot more involved. I want to do anything we can to reach the people, Christians and the lost.

"I see God open new doors and new avenues that are exciting and fresh. In today's society, we Christians need to realize that we need to get much deeper in the word of God and much stronger. We want to just help people do that ... in everything that our ministry stands for."

One less individual is standing than has been the case. The

former quartet transformed into a trio after long-time bass vocalist Jeremy Lile left the group due to health reasons.

"This is the first time we've gone from four parts to three parts," Free says. "I expected it to be a little weird. It was for the first few nights, but after that first weekend, it wasn't.

"We miss him. I love him, but it was a God thing."

Lile spent more than eight years with the group.

"It's been different, but not in a bad way," lead singer Bill Shivers points out. "With the music that we sing, it doesn't lean toward to being bass-friendly. I don't mean that in a negative way. I enjoyed singing with a quartet, but I also enjoy singing with a trio. I enjoy both really."

Fellow vocalist Mike Rogers adds, "We miss him, and we wish him the best. It's been good (transition). It's been a little different than I anticipated, but in a good way."

However, it's not the first time that group has operated as a trio. "The first three and a half years of the ministry, we were a trio," Free remembers. "I didn't make a decision specifically to go quartet at the time. A good friend of mine – Bob Caldwell – came and just fit in really well with us. We just decided that was the thing to do, but we had a great time the first three and a half years as a trio.

"We've just found that God can use three individuals to deliver the message as effectively as He can four."

Despite the transition back to a trio, the award-winning tenor isn't closing the door on the group ever being a quartet again. "For this chapter right now in Assurance, we're going to stay trio," Free says. "I never say never. If God sends the right one (bass singer) along and it were to feel like the right thing, I would consider it."

The more things change, the more ...

The group hasn't released a project since *Unashamed* hit the scene in February of 2014. That will change on March 18 when *Live Like We're Redeemed* becomes available.

"It just hits home with me," Rogers explains. "It has kind of a grace theme. Anybody can identify with it. We are all shown grace, and not one of us deserves it. We just mess up so much, but God works through us in spite of that.



"I can't get into singing something that doesn't mean something."

The group's rendition of "Say Amen" – a chart-topper from the *Unashamed* project – won a Dove Award for Southern Gospel Performance of the Year. However, the trio is just as excited about that project's successor, which is stylisti-



cally similar.

"It's unmistakably Brian Free and Assurance ... it really is," Free points out. "I've always said that I want our music to be us. I don't want us to be white noise. That's what this is. It's the same thing as the last five or six projects."

Shivers adds, "It's pretty much in the same vein. It's lyrically strong. The message is definitely there. We've been blessed to have 10 amazing, anointed songs. There's no chance in the message being lost. I'm amazed at how God has always come through with the songs. We say, every album, 'wow, how are we going to top this one,' but He seems to always come through. It's a God thing."



Among Shivers' favorite songs on the project is "He Will Carry You." "It's about how that Christ accepts you for who you are and that you don't have to try to do it your-

self,” Shivers shares. “He will carry you. A lot of people think they can do it on their own. They try so hard, and they fail. If they just lean on Christ and on His arms, they will succeed. Too many times, we think we can do it. In

former drummer and Brian Free’s son. There will also be devotionals catered around each of the project’s songs that will be released on the group’s web site (www.brianfreeandassurance.com), along with videos and song lyrics.



reality, we just need to lean on Christ, and He will carry us through any situation.”

Rogers adds, “There are three or four that I really like. ‘One Mile World’ ... it talks about how that we get so caught up in what we’re doing, and we’re selfish, to the point where we’re kind of blind to what is going on around us. Anybody is only a couple of bad decisions away from messing [their] life up. It could send your life in a bad direction. So, why do we walk around with our chest poked out like we’re too good to help anybody? People need help. The line in the song says, ‘you can turn your head so that you don’t see the hurt, so you don’t ever have to go the second mile in a one-mile world.’ How strong is that?”

“One Mile World” has been a long time in coming to life.

“It’s one song I’ve held on for three and a half years,” Free notes. “It just didn’t fit the projects. I’ve chosen to cut it on this one. It’s just a song that addresses how we look at people around us – somebody in need, somebody we pass when we come out of the grocery store, somebody who might need a hand. We need to be willing to go the second mile, because we live in a one-mile world. **One line in the song says, ‘convenience and compassion never travel hand in hand.’**”

A DVD of the making of the project will also be released in conjunction with the audio component. The project was comprised by long-time producer Ricky Free, the group’s

Home, sweet, homecoming

Live Like We’re Redeemed isn’t the only new item on the horizon for the group. Their first-ever homecoming event will be held in October. “I’m very excited,” Shivers points out. “We have never had a homecoming.

“Being as this is Brian’s 35th year of being in Gospel Music, he wanted to do something special for his fans ... he and our creative directors – Candace Mills and Lynn Mills (of Ex Nihilo Graphics) – they came up with the idea. It’s different than what anyone else is doing. It’s an amazing place. I can’t wait to be there with our friends.”

The three-day event will be held at the Ridgecrest Conference Center in Ridgecrest, N.C.

“I’ve been kicking around for the last six to eight years, some type of homecoming event,” Free explains. “When Candace approached me about doing something special, I wanted to do something different. It’s something we want to do for our fans, our friends. There a lot of people out there who are very special to us, who support our ministry on a regular basis. A lot of times at a concert, you don’t get to spend any one-on-one time ... maybe a little bit, but nothing where you really get to connect.”

In addition to concerts, there are a variety of activities planned for the homecoming, including devotions by Free,



While the homecomings, new projects and other doors that open continually breathe new life into the group, there's an even greater fulfillment. "It's seeing people's lives changed," Rogers emphasizes. "If I didn't agree with Brian's mission, I wouldn't be here."

"Heaven is going to be great. I look forward to seeing streets of gold, but that doesn't help anybody down here. I believe that this music impacts people right now. It impacts me and my family's life. If I didn't believe in it, I'd go home and sing at church on Sundays and get my fix that way. I believe there's a real mission here. I'm just trying to do my part to help. Music speaks to people in ways that other things can't. That's a lot of what I appreciate about the relevancy of our style of music. It's not for everybody, but it appeals to a different audience."

Photographs courtesy of Craig Harris and Brian Free and Assurance

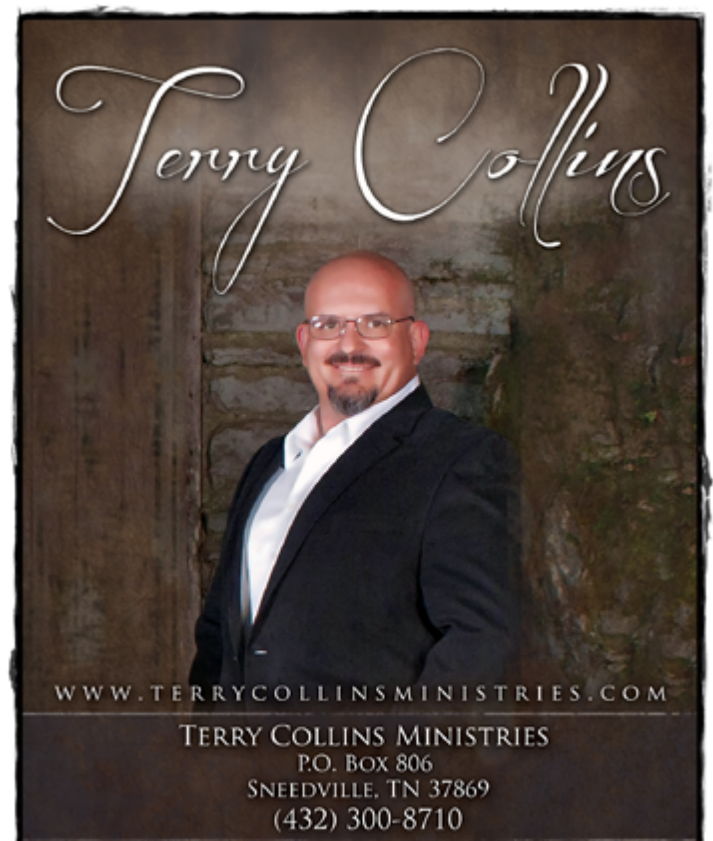
campfire worship and activities, a variety of on-campus recreational options and some surprises that the group has in store for its fans.

"It's going to be a laid-back atmosphere and fun," Free says. "We will sing a little every day, but there's also going to be some special stuff. We'll sit around in the lobby with a guitar and sing and roast marshmallows. Our families will be there. We'll have a live band that week, which will include my son Ricky. It's going to be a lot of different stuff."

A learning experience

While Shivers has stood alongside Free for the last 15 years, Rogers has tried to soak in all that he could during his two-year stint as the group's baritone.

"You learn a lot from people that have been doing this for 20 or 30 years," the 26-year-old Rogers points out. "I don't care what you do – whether you weld or whatever – you can always learn from somebody ... whether it be Bill – who is a machine (vocally) – or Brian, who has run his own group for 22 or 23 years. I watch him. I pay attention. He just does it right in my opinion. It's been great meeting people and learning from one of the best. He's very respected out here."



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CHRISTIAN COUNTRY EXPO 2016 UPDATE

By Lorraine Walker

Pigeon Forge, Tennessee will soon hear Gospel music with a twang as **Christian Country Expo 2016 (CCX16)** arrives August 15th through 18th. The nation's biggest gathering of Christian Country artists and fans will converge on the Smoky Mountain Resort Center. CCX16 is four terrific days of evening concerts, daily showcases, special events and fellowship times. Fans will have the opportunity to meet and talk with their favorite artists in the large exhibit hall, pick up the latest CDs and take selfies with the stars.

SGN Scoops has announced that this year at CCX16 the Christian Country Diamond Awards will be presented for the first time! The nominations are now open so vote today at this link: <http://www.christiancountrynews.com/diamond-awards/> Everyone is invited to the website to enter the Nominations area and list their top three favorite picks for each Christian Country Diamond Award category. Artists and industry personnel are also invited to vote and to encourage their friends and fans to vote as well!

We are excited to announce some of the latest artists to be added to the lineup of CCX16. We are sure you will know these Christian Country artists:

Kenny Gardner, from Columbus, Mississippi is no stranger to the world of Gospel Music. *Kenny G*, as his friends call him, is a Preacher's Kid from Columbus, Mississippi, who

has been singing since the age of three. He was profoundly influenced by close friend, Kenny Hinson, and also comedian, Aaron Wilburn. Kenny began singing professionally with the Stalls Family, who were well known for the song, "Stepping On The Clouds," written by John Stalls.

De La Croix is also coming to Christian Country Expo. Based out of Oakdale, California, de la Croix is a family band who call themselves "musicianaries". Their music is an eclectic blend of Country, Folk/Rock and Blues with a Christ-centered message. Their high energy shows appeal to both adults and youth, combining music and audience participation.

Chuck Day is returning to CCX! Chuck has written and co-written more than 16 number-one songs in the Christian and Country genres. He has had songs recorded by such names as: Gold City, Clay Cross, The Hoppers, Rebecca St. James, Barry Wayne, Bob Carlisle, and more. Chuck and his brother Greg Day co-wrote the beloved anthem, "Midnight Cry," made popular by Ivan Parker and Gold City, among others. This award-winning musician and vocalist traveled extensively with his family in his early years, as a soloist and also with Country music artists including Freddy Fender, Marty Haggard and others. Chuck now tours throughout the United States and the world, singing Christian Country.

Kevin Rowe and Greg McDougal will be returning to the event, and for those who attended last year, you know to come expecting some terrific music and awesome entertainment. Other artists newly added to CCX16 include **Joe Loftus, the Pace Brothers** and **Carol Barham**, among others.

Artists will be singing to a diverse audience from many different backgrounds, states and churches. Listeners will find new sounds and bands to enjoy, friendships will be formed and industry agreements signed. The **Christian Country Expo 2016** from **August 15th through 18th, 2016**, is a joyous time of music and foot-stomping fun.

Ticket information at <http://www.christiancountryexpo.com/> VIP tickets are also available. Call Rob Patz at 360-933-0741 to reserve your VIP spot. Christian Country artists that would like to be involved, please contact Vonda Easley at 256-310-7892. Contact Salina Clay for hotel reservations at hotels@sgnscoops.com or call her at 256-239-7716. Like us on Facebook and be sure to check there for all the information! <https://www.facebook.com/christiancountryexpo/>



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Grace Friday

"All are justified freely by his grace through
the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

Romans 3:24



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Good Friday is a day that I hold very dear to my heart. But sometimes I wonder why it is called *Good* Friday. Just think about it. We often say, "That was a good dinner." We say, "Good morning," even to passersby on the street. Let's face it, the word "good" is used so frequently that it has nearly lost its credibility as an adjective. So maybe we should rename the day and call it Great Friday. That would give it more significance, right? In reality, it matters not what we call this particular day. What matters is whether or not we have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Over 2,000 years ago, Jesus Christ gave His life for you and me. It wasn't about fame or fortune. He wasn't trying to do a good deed or striving to be great. He died on the cross to cleanse our sins, to grant us eternal life, and to shower us with love and mercy we don't even deserve. When you really stop to think about it, the name most befitting of this important day on the calendar would be *Grace* Friday.

Perhaps you look at the calendar and wonder what Easter is really all about. Deep within your heart, do you feel as if there must be something more, beyond the chocolate bunnies and plastic eggs? If you are

searching for answers, look no further. Jesus Christ is the answer you seek. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." The King of Kings and Lord of Lords gave His life as a ransom for every man, woman, boy, and girl on this planet. That includes *you*. Why? Because of the unconditional love He has for us.

Jesus could have called ten thousand angels to save Him from the cross. He didn't have to endure the pain and agony. He could have simply told His Father, "I can't do it. I've had enough. I'm going home." But He stayed there, because He knew that you and I needed a Savior. He knew that we would have no lasting hope on our own. Jesus wanted to give us the most heartfelt and important gift given in the history of mankind: eternal love and everlasting life. It is the gift that truly keeps on giving, through all eternity.

You may be sitting there, thinking, why would a King do this for me? I've failed, I've sinned, and I've done so many wrongs. The Bible says we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

Not one of us is without blemish. We have all made mistakes. Still, His love for us is never-ending. Jesus shed his blood to forgive our sins. He bore all of the earth's diseases to heal our sicknesses. On top of all of that, He granted us eternal life in Heaven with Him, for everyone who has a personal relationship with Him.

This Easter, cherish the time you have with family and friends. Enjoy the delicious dinners and sweet bunny-shaped treats. Above all, remember the reason for the Easter season. Jesus Christ gave His life for love (I John 3:16). On Good Friday, Jesus died. On the third day, He rose again. At this very moment, He is sitting at the right hand of God, interceding on our behalf. He bestows upon us unconditional love, even though we are undeserving. God's Word says, "All are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). No matter where you have been, what you have done, or who you are, His redeeming love is free to all. That is true, divine mercy. So whether you call it Good Friday or Great Friday, remember that Easter is really all about *grace*.

JERRY Branscomb

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YOUNGER PERSPECTIVE

Jaquita Lindsey

BY ERIN STEVENS

A word from the writer...

First time for everything! What a delight it is to be interviewing a fellow SGN Scoops writer. Today it's all about the lovely Jaquita Lindsey of 11th Hour. Their group may be newer to our industry, but once you hear their tremendous harmony and blend, they are a trio you will not soon forget! Jaquita was ready to hit the ground running when I contacted her to be my next interviewee. So, why am I still rambling? Jaquita, it's all yours...

Erin: When did you first discover your love for music?

Jaquita: My dad promoted Southern Gospel music when I was growing up. I would be so in awe as I sat and listened. Music became my passion. Even now, when words will not suffice, a song always will.

Erin: What is the story behind how you came to join 11th Hour?

Jaquita: Amber and I have a mutual friend who knew that she was looking for a female singer back in the fall of 2013. I went and filled in a weekend for them. I had always dreamed of being able to sing full time and had been praying for God to open a door for me to do so. Although the timing was not right then, I felt like the Lord kept telling me not to shut the door on 11th Hour. So when Amber called in January of 2014, I knew why God had me leaving that door open. I just celebrated two years with them. I am so thankful that God granted me the desires of my heart.

Erin: Where is one venue you have always dreamed to sing in?

Jaquita: Carnegie Hall or Brooklyn Tabernacle

Erin: What is your favorite 'roadie food' and your favorite 'home food?'

Jaquita: I always have graham crackers on the road with me. I also love eating anything gummy (bears, worms, etc.). When I'm at home, I love a bowl of cereal. I do enjoy cooking when time permits. But whether at home or on the road, I usually have coffee in hand!

Erin: What is something no one would ever guess about Jaquita Lindsey?

Jaquita: I love watching cartoons. I love anything Disney. I have a collection of movies. I am still a kid at heart.



Erin: Other than singing, of course, what are some of the other 'hats' you wear in the group?

Jaquita: I do the product pitch on stage. I always like to make people laugh, on and off the stage. Sometimes, it doesn't go well if people do not laugh at me. I get nervous and tend to make a mess of things!

Erin: How do you unwind after a long haul out on the road?

Jaquita: I always enjoy catching up with friends. I like going to eat and chatting. I have several artist friends here close to me who can relate to the road life. It is always fun to get together and tell of our weekends.

Erin: Who have been voices of encouragement who have spoken into your career life in recent history?

Jaquita: One of my best friends in life is Nicole Watts Jenkins, who sang for the Perrys for years. She always shoots it to me straight but builds me up when I need it most. Troy and Katy Peach are close friends and very encouraging. The Williamsons are also special to me. But, I have so many great friends in the industry who will celebrate our achievements with me. Some of my heroes along the way would be Libbi Perry Stuffle, Mike Bowling and Heather Ruppe Bennett.

Erin: What is the craziest road story you or 11th Hour have encountered?

Jaquita: Not too long after I started with 11th Hour, we sang at a church in Alto, TX. There was a guy there that night who approached the stage and wanted to sing "Just A Little Talk With Jesus," during introductions. Later, he came to the product table and took out his glass eye for Amber. It was a very memorable night, to say the least.

Erin: If anyone follows you on social media, they would know you've just gotten back from an enchanted visit to Disney. Do you have any favorite experiences to share with the fans about 'the most magical place on earth,' as well as other favorite stops?

Jaquita: I LOVE going to Disney! It's truly my favorite place to visit. We've had the privilege to sing in Hershey, PA which was very neat. Everything there is centered around chocolate. We had the opportunity to be a part of an IMC cruise last year and that was a cool experience. I've never sung on a swaying stage before! Grant almost lost his balance at one point while we were singing, which was comical. But, it is the testimonies of how much our music has helped lives during hard times that makes the biggest impact on me.

Erin: Is there something special the Lord has been teaching you lately through your devotions that you would like to share with the readers?

Jaquita: TRUST. I believe that trusting God is one of the hardest things for Christians to do. We all know that the Bible states throughout to trust God in what His plan is for our



lives. God gave me a song last year, that we have recorded on our latest project, called "I Trust." I went through the most difficult time of my entire life last year. It was one of those life changing moments that I knew deep down only God could help me through it. Every time I sing the song now, it serves as a reminder that we have to trust that He sees the things that we cannot see down the road.

Closing words from the writer...

I heard it said recently that, "The Teacher is always quiet during the test." As Jaquita so beautifully shared, it IS all about trust. I, myself have had my fair share of moments where I haven't seen God's hand in what I was going through. What's so awesome about those moments is that He IS at work even when we can't see His plan. That is where trust comes into the picture again and again. Jaquita had to trust the Lord about making her decision to become the third member of 11th Hour, and we are so grateful that she held out for His perfect timing. The same can happen for you. Trust. Wait. And have faith. God's up to something. Just stand back and watch His plan unfold. Thanks for stopping by, my sweet friend!

Until next month, Scoops fans.

And that's my take on it.

You can connect with Erin on Twitter - @photosforkeeps • Instagram - @photos_for_keeps.

Who would YOU like to see Erin interview next?



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WISDOM FROM WELLS

by Dusty Wells

Do you know what God wants from us?

How many times have we heard that question asked, or even better yet, how many times in the depth of our own struggles, have we cried out to Him, "What do you want from me, God?"

Oh, let me assure you my friend, I have yelled and screamed that question many times along this journey. In fact I have been asking it daily for the last year or so. I have asked it in a quiet demure way, a calm way, an aggressive way and a downright angry yelling way...yup, I have.

Even this morning, while walking, I asked the question again, "God, what do you want from me right now?" I know His Word and I know His promises to be true. I have climbed the high mountain and been blessed beyond measure, and I have also laid in those dark, black, cold valleys, crying

and begging Him for answers. I have trod down the road of life in those in-between times, and through all of those times, I still have daily asked the question, "What do you want from me, God?" Of course, deep inside I know what He wants. It's quite simple, but yet so difficult to comprehend in this crazy mind of mine at times.

He wants me to love Him with every crevice and part of my heart. He wants me to listen so much more with a listening heart and He wants me to strive to have an obedient spirit and a genuine love for others that far surpasses what I think or feel like love should be.

He wants every part of me - the good, the bad, the ugly, the beautiful - every part of me. You know what? He wants every part of you as well. He does. He really does.

He wants us to snuggle up in His warm tender

arms of mercy, grace, forgiveness, hope, peace and His love, and feel those feelings that He so freely affords each one of us. He offers all of those to us as only He can. He wants each and every one of us to draw closer to Him in all of the areas that we daily struggle with, that we deal with, and all of the questions we continually have.

We just have to be honest, open, real, vulnerable, sensitive, and to listen closely to what He has to say to us. He may not ever speak audibly to us (but He could) but He does speak to our heart and soul, and I promise you dear one that if you are seeking Him, you will hear from Him. Not always in our time, but always in His time.

So go ahead now ask yourself the question, "Daddy God, what do You want from me?"

Listen closely. Pay attention and don't be afraid of what He wants. It's quite simple once again. He wants every part of you and He will be there with you to always lead and guide you. Stay close to Him. You can't go wrong.

You are loved friend. I am cheering you on!

Dusty



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And....Action!:

A Spotlight on Josh Allen

and his film debut in Providence

By Justin Gilmore

Gospel Music has a grand tradition of great family groups. One such group, The Allen Family, has been blessed to travel and spread the Gospel in song all over the world during their 20-year career. This talented family is comprised of Todd and Michelle Allen and their children Caleb, Gabrielle, Joshua, Jared, Danielle, Abigail, Zachariah, and Christian. Josh Allen serves as the group's bass vocalist as well as sometimes singing lead or baritone. The third Allen child also has an affinity for acting which is showcased in the new film *Providence*. The faith based independent film was released on February 12, 2016. Allen had this to say about the film:

Providence is truly an original and unique film in an industry screaming for originality. The entire 80-minute story is completely free of any dialogue whatsoever. Instead, the film relies on the performances of the actors, and an excellent musical score, (as well as lyrical music), to expertly convey the action of the story. It is a moving artistic love story between the two main characters as we follow them through three stages of their lives: childhood, high school, and finally, adulthood. The film contains a valuable lesson about God's timing, and how He has a better plan for our lives than we do.

In his feature length debut, Allen portrays the film's main character, Mitchell Little, in his high school years. "He isn't popular, he doesn't have a lot of friends, so he gives himself completely to God. He's very kind, prays for those who treat him badly, and studies his Bible intently," Allen states. Allen found that he could learn a lot from this character and is grateful for this incredible opportunity. This being his first major role was the most difficult aspect of the project. Allen says, "I had done a lot of study to prepare myself but it was still a new and somewhat frightening experience for me. Thankfully, everyone one on the set always made me feel comfortable and at ease." The cast and crew of this film welcomed him and made him feel at home.

This artistic film was brought to life by the director Sharon Wilharm and her husband Fred Wilharm, director of photography. Allen was honored to work with these talented artists. Allen states, "Fred and Sharon Wilharm were an absolute delight to work with! They were exactly my kind of people, down to earth, good-humored, and godly. They had a way of making you feel like one of the family." The young Allen also has high praise for the rest of the cast which includes Juli



Tapken, Rich Swingle, Stacey Bradshaw, Emily Knapp, Chase Anderson, and Irene Santiago. "The cast was amazing. All highly professional people and great to be around. Some were friends that I'd met on previous productions. We had a wonderful time together and I miss them all dearly," Allen says.

Allen formed many great bonds while working on the

film as well as making memories that will last him a lifetime. One of his favorite moments on set involved a scene with fellow cast member Nathan Jacobson. Allen states, "In the scene, I'm at school reading a book and minding my own business. He plays the high school quarterback who decides to bully me. So he and his friends start pelting me with paper footballs and I look up at them and run away. The problem is, whenever I looked up at them, he was smiling at me. Now keep in mind the camera didn't see his reaction, only mine. So while I'm supposed to look frightened, he's trying to make me smile, which I did, over and over again! It took several takes before I could do the scene without a smile on my face. And eventually, we ended up getting a really good take. But that moment is now a memory that I'll enjoy for years to come!"

The music of this film is a highly important aspect due to the lack of dialogue. Caleb Allen, the eldest child of the family, performed his song "I Will Fight," for the film's soundtrack at the suggestion of younger brother Josh. Allen states, "My older brother, Caleb, is an extremely talented singer and songwriter. I knew that the Wilharms were looking to feature independent artists in the film, so I sent them a few of his songs. They ended up loving one in particular that made it into the film entitled, 'I Will Fight,' a song that Caleb both wrote and performed. It talks about fighting for our commitments, even when we don't feel like it. It speaks strongly that love isn't a feeling; it's a choice. I love the message of the song and it is my favorite song that Caleb has ever written."

It is songs like this the film relies to convey its message. In addition, the filmmakers utilized Mise-en-scene (setting, lighting, props, staging and performance) to



help convey the message of the film as well. Allen says, "While some might say that being dialogue-free is creative enough, the Wilharms went the extra mile to put additional messages into the film. For example, there are places where clock times correspond to Bible verses. Moments where, if you blink, you may miss



them. They were little things, but they showed great attention to detail." Many films rely on the setting to tell the story and this film does it well. This attention to detail adds to the excellence of the film.

This will not be the last film for Josh Allen. The talented young singer will continue to act in addition to spread the Gospel through song. "I absolutely love to act!" says an excited Allen. "The only thing I love to do as much as act is sing. I plan on acting in Christian films in addition to traveling and singing with The Allen Family. As long as I feel that it is where God wants me to be, then that is where I want to be. To me real success is staying in the center of His will." He hopes that



people will allow God to speak to them through this film.

Allen says, "Overall I hope people come away from the film knowing that God has a plan for our lives, that He has something far better for us than we could ever hope



to get ourselves. And it's worth waiting for!" From what I gather, this film is a unique and creative work of art that grounds itself in the Gospel. Southern Gospel Music fans should go and support Josh and independent faith based films. *Providence* is in theaters now!





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TOP 40

CHRISTIAN COUNTRY SONGS

1	Arkin Terrell	Clean Slate
2	Tommy Brandt	Broken
3	Chris Golden/ The Freemans	A Different Light
4	Bev McCann	24 Hours A Day
5	Shellem Cline	Blue Jeans and Biscuits
6	Hope's Journey	On My Way Back
7	Jim Sheldon/ Rachel Taylor	New Again
8	Carter Robertson Band	God Against The Law
9	Bridge of Faith	Tougher than Nails
10	Kevin Rowe and The Prodigal Sons	He's Coming
11	Tina Wakefield	Jesus Take A Hold
12	Chuck Day	Stand Up
13	The Drummond Family	I Stand
14	Bruce Hedrick	Better Man
15	Brandon Poole	I Remember The Day
16	Big Mo	One
17	The Partons	Homesick for a Home
18	David House	Happy Anniversary Honey
19	Johnny Rowlett	Old Mustang
20	Crossfire Gospel Band	Gimme Back My Country
21	Debbie Seagraves	Where Was God
22	Charles Scarlettte	In The Morning
23	Paul Pillman	When Jesus Passed By

24	Mitch Pullen	Cross That River
25	Wyatt Nations	Guiding Light
26	New Hearts	Follow Me
27	The Fowlers	I'm Nothing Without You
		Church Like We Knew Back Then
28	Jim Sheldon	One By One
29	Peter McDougal	You Are My Praise
30	Becky Wright	My Father Is Near
31	The Wards	It's A God Thing
32	Steve Roberson/Randy Finchem	Call On Him
33	Bruce and Betsy Mullen	Just Before Dawn
34	Cornerstone	God, Guns, And Amazing Grace
35	Kevin Woodall	There Is A God
36	Carol Hogner	A Man Named Jesus
37	Mike Sanford	You Can't Do Wrong And Get By
38	Chris Golden	Old House
39	The Parish Family	The In Crowd
40	John Steed	

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By Lorraine Walker

Have you reserved your rooms for the Creekside Gospel Music Convention? We hope you've already made your plans to join us. It all happens in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, on October 31st through November 3rd, at the Smoky Mountain Convention Center. Tickets are free but must be reserved. Contact Salina Clay for hotel reservations at hotels@sgnscoops.com or call her at 256-239-7716.



Travel To the Mountains

Creekside takes place in Sevier County, one of the most beautiful settings that the Smoky Mountains has to offer. Rugged mountain trails, trickling streams and fall foliage bursting with color are only one side of Sevier County that visitors to Creekside Gospel Music Convention will enjoy. Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg together form one of the greatest tourist destinations in Tennessee, showcasing the entertainment of theme parks and attractions, shopping malls and flea markets,

and restaurants offering everything from home-cooking to fine dining. Convention attendees can participate in nature escapes and city experiences, as well as music and ministry, reveling in a retreat to rejuvenate body, mind, soul and spirit.

Back By Popular Demand

We are happy to announce that the afternoon Jam Sessions will be returning. Beginning at 4:00pm each day, Scott Roberts and the Five O'Clock Band will be headlining a stellar cast of artists to warm up the listeners for an evening of song. Don't miss this fun time where you never know quite what will happen!





Honors Night

One of the special events during the Convention will be the Creekside Honors on Monday, October 31st, in the evening. Each year, we honor someone special, someone who has made the Gospel Music World just a little nicer! From Lou Hildreth to Jerry and the Singing Goffs, each year has been a wonderful celebration of music and stories. Be sure to join us this October and stay tuned to this column to find out who is the Honored Guest this year.



The 2016 Diamond Awards

The Diamond Awards will be presented during the Convention on Tuesday night, November 1st, 2016, during a celebration hosted by Dr. Jerry and Jan Goff. The Diamond Awards are completely voter-driven, starting with nominations which will close this month. From the artists nominated, the Top Ten lists are calculated and posted, allowing voters to select their three favorites in each category. That will bring us to the Top Five lists, allowing voters to select their top choices to bring us



one winner of the 2016 Diamond Award in each category. Make sure your voice is heard and vote today! <http://www.sgnscoops.com/the-2016-diamond-award-nominations-2/>

Exhibit Hall

If you like to hang out with your favorite artists, talking to them and getting to know them in a more personal way, Creekside is your place to be. The Exhibit Hall is filled with artist booths and the singers are waiting to chat with you. The Hall will be open every day and is part of your free admission to Creekside. You never know when a special guest will walk by or an impromptu concert will begin. Don't miss this!



VIP Bracelet

Last year we started something new for our most devoted fans and we are continuing this year. We want you to be a VIP! For only \$25, a VIP bracelet will be your entry into the preferred seating at each event plus other

special gifts and select backstage happenings. Purchase your VIP bracelet today from Vonda Easley at 256-310-7892 or by email at vonda@sgnscoops.com.

Other Events

Other special events at the Convention include daytime showcases, afternoon jam sessions, midnight prayer and much more. Joseph Habedank will be our special guest on Wednesday. Keep watching for more exciting announcements. Don't miss four days of great Gospel music, fellowship and fun. Tickets must be reserved here: <https://www.facebook.com/Creeksidegospelmusicconvention>.

Final Notes

Creekside Gospel Music Convention would like to hear from you! Tell us what you want to see and hear in November. Creekside also needs your help. If you would like to volunteer through various promotional activities throughout the year, or with onsite tasks during the convention, please email Rob at rob@sgnscoops.com. For more information, latest news and artists scheduled to appear, visit the Creekside page on Facebook here: <https://www.facebook.com/Creeksidegospelmusicconvention>.



The Creekside Gospel Music Convention offers a terrific vacation destination and attendees should make their plans now to experience everything that Pigeon Forge and the Smoky Mountains have to offer. Embrace the beauty of God's creation in the majesty of the mountains, the fellowship of family and friends while participating in neighboring attractions, and the refreshment of a spiritual retreat as you enjoy the musical ministry that is Southern Gospel.

Fall Tree Photo Courtesy of Wolfgang Staudt

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“YOU AIN’T READY FOR THIS...”

A CONVERSATION WITH HOPE’S JOURNEY

By Charlie Sexton

Several years ago, a young, energetic group from the foothills of Alabama came on the Gospel music scene who, in an unusually short amount of time, won the hearts of folks all across America. It’s been my distinct privilege to watch them grow – not only as consummate professionals - but also as God-fearing ministers of the Gospel.

Recently, I had the opportunity to sit down and spend some time with these fun-loving, down home folks. Today is your lucky day. You get to enjoy part of that conversation. Hang on. You ain’t ready for this!

CS: It’s an honor to get to spend a few minutes with you guys! Vonda, tell our SGN Scoops readers how you came to form Hope’s Journey.

Vonda Easley: About 12 years ago, my daughter Ashley and I were asked to sing at the Second Baptist Church in

Douglasville, Georgia for their Annual Homecoming Service. We really had no clue what to do - or even how to set up our system - but we were not alone. God truly helped us! That was our first and only singing as a duo. One week later, God blessed us in a big way when Mr. Chris Clay joined us, singing our third harmony part, and we haven’t looked back since that day!

CS: So, Chris, you’ve pretty much been here since Day One?

Chris Clay: Pretty much. Vonda and I had sung together in another group, but when Hope’s Journey was formed, I truly felt led to be a part of it. God has done some amazing things in my life through this ministry; especially in preparing me for the calling that He placed on me to preach the Gospel. Even though I did leave the road for a little while, I felt that God was certainly molding me into who I am now.

It has been quite a journey, but you know, Charlie, I'm just not ready for it to be done yet. There are still some souls that need to hear about Jesus in our songs, testimonies and sermons.

CS: That's awesome, Chris! Miss Vonda, introduce us to these two newer characters that help make up the rest of the group.



VE: I'd be glad to. Lauren Huckabee sings our soprano part, and she can forevermore sing the Glory down! I am so very thankful to God for sending her to us. Then, our bass singer is 19-year-old Jordan Wilson. Let me tell you, now, that boy loves him some Gospel Music. I am so proud to have both him and Lauren to be a part of our journey.

CS: Lauren and Jordan, tell us a little more about yourselves. Be sure to give us your height, weight, and the color of your eyes! OK, maybe not ALL of that... (Everyone laughs.) Seriously, guys, share with us about your families, and how you came to love Gospel Music!

Lauren Huckabee: Well, I was born in Atlanta, Georgia. When I was two years old we moved to Chickamauga, Georgia. I've been in that area my whole life. As a child, Sunday School and Vacation Bible School were always my favorites, and that's where my church roots took hold. I remember when our mom would take me and my brother to school. We always listened to The Bishops. I remember asking my mom to hit replay on "He's in the Midst," all the time. I was only four years old when I walked to the front and told our pastor's wife, that I wanted to sing that song. My mom and dad had no idea what I was doing. They said I just got up there and didn't miss a single word. That particular Sunday, while I was singing, a visitor came down to the altar and got saved. That is where my love for singing began. In 2004, I met the love of my life, Keith Huckabee. We mar-

ried in October of 2010. Our first child, Melanie Christine, was born in August 2011. While I was singing with my first group, Rhonda Frye and Riverside, I found out I was expecting again. In February of 2015, our little Madison Elizabeth entered this world. I now have a beautiful family of four, and sing with none other than Hope's Journey! (She says with a huge smile.) LOVING LIFE, LOVING JESUS!

Jordan Wilson: I live in Chatsworth, Georgia with my mom, Angie and stepdad, Ronnie. I also have a sister, Jennifer, and a stepbrother, Tommy. I grew up in church and was saved at the age of seven. We always loved going to Southern Gospel concerts, and some of my favorite groups were The Cathedrals, The Kingdom Heirs and, of course, The Perrys; you know, basically any group with a bass singer. Before my dad, Tim, passed away, he, Mom and Jennifer started a family trio. Eventually, I started singing bass with them. After my Dad died in 2011, I became the group's baritone singer. When my schedule with Hope's Journey allows, I still get the opportunity to sing some with my family. I'm very blessed to get to do that!

CS: Before we move on, I'd like to mention your family, Chris. I know your wife sometimes travels with the group. Introduce us to your family.

CC: My beautiful wife's name is Salina and we'll soon have been married for 11 years. Our beautiful daughter is Cadence and she'll be seven years old in June of this year... and I'm the beautiful husband and daddy! All joking aside, I couldn't do what I do without their love and support.

CS: Vonda, a mutual friend recently referred to you as Miss Energizer Bunny. You juggle so many different titles, that I find I have to agree with him. Not only do you sing and manage the group, you own one of Gospel Music's most successful promotion agencies. Give us a run down of a typical day in the life of Vonda Easley.





VE: (Vonda laughs.) Wow, that question made me tired! I typically get up at 6 o'clock every morning and hit the ground running. I don't really have an agenda each day other than to try to be a blessing to someone along the way. I work part-time as a dental hygienist, so that's what I do from eight through five, Tuesday through Thursday, but on Monday and Friday, I'm either making radio calls for Hey Y'all Media; managing Hope's Journey, or working for SGN Scoops! One of my favorite things lately, is to work Social Media for Scoops. I love to promote and help other people reach their goals in ministry. I also host a radio show on WPIL-FM Radio in my hometown of Heflin, Alabama. It's called *Strictly Southern with Vonda Easley*.



Lauren is featured on Hope's Journey's radio single, "On My Way Back", written by Ricky Atkinson. When the song was released to the radio stations, a bonus cut of Lauren sharing her testimony was included on the disc. As I asked Lauren to share the entire testimony, her typical bubbly countenance disappeared and she became very serious. I knew that she was about to share something very personal, in hope of helping someone else. Here is her story.

"I grew up in a very Christian home, and knew all about Jesus from a very early age. My mom and dad got a divorce when I was four years old, and at the time I really didn't think much about it. Everything seemed to be so normal at that age. As I grew older, I started to long for love and attention. Since I didn't have both parents in the home, the structure just seemed to be falling apart. I was tired of being the good girl.

I remember starting High School and hearing some of the kids talking about going to parties and all about how much fun they were having. One night, I got brave and took one of my step-mom's Lortab. I went to bed, but when I got up, I decided to take a couple more and go to school. Very soon, I started feeding off all the attention that I was getting from everyone. All of a sudden, I was cool and funny.

Some things happened in Chattanooga and I ended up moving in with my mom and step-dad in Johnson City, Tennessee for my senior year. I had the whole summer to think about what I was doing with my life. I decided in those two months that I was going to change my life back to the way it was before. The devil was having none of that, because it wasn't even two weeks after I started my new school that he started to throw temptations at me harder than ever.

I had gone with this one girl to get some supplies for a project and she offered me a joint. I hesitated at first but ultimately I gave in. The drug use rapidly escalated, and I began to drink heavily. When that no longer yielded the desired high, it was "Here, try this line of cocaine..." My life was headed for disaster. I grew more and more depressed. At 17 years old, I would lay in the bed and cry and even pray to die. I felt that I would never be looked at the same way by anyone and that my reputation was gone!

One night, I got a phone call in the middle of the night, with an invitation to come to a party. I snuck out that night and my parents had no idea. I don't remember too much about what happened when I first got to the party, but what I do remember is being dragged out into the front yard with a gun held to my head. This man was yelling at me and telling me he was going to kill me. He said that I would never see my family again. Many thoughts were going through my head, but the main one was, "Where has this lifestyle gotten me now?" I remember him yelling louder and louder. I could feel his wrist tightening up on the gun. I heard the click of the gun on my temple.

When the gun didn't fire, he ran back inside. I remember falling down to my knees and screaming, begging God to help me. In my spirit, I heard Him say "Run!" So, I took off down the mountain in the rain, and with no shoes. I had no idea where to go. I ran for what seemed like forever. I eventually saw a house off in the distance. I ran over and knocked on the door. To my surprise, a little elderly lady opened the door and invited me in. She listened intently to what had just happened to me. When I was finished, she said something that I will never forget. She said, "I woke up thirsty about five minutes ago and came to the kitchen to get some water. Had I not come in here, I wouldn't have heard you at my door." That moment, I fully realized that was God with me, and that He had indeed answered my prayer, while I was running down that mountain.

Shortly after that incident, I fully turned my life back over to Him. Now, make no mistake; it has not been an easy road. There are giant-sized trials that I face on a daily basis. But, I do know that with God, I can overcome any obstacle. I thank Him for never leaving me while I was on my way back to Him!"

CS: *You guys always look like you are having so much fun on stage! What are some of the funniest things that have happened to you?*

VE: I'd have to say the time Chris got bit on the ear by a wasp while we were singing. He slapped his ear, and said "Ouch!" He never missed a note! I was rolling on the floor. (Vonda laughs hysterically.)

CC: One time, while giving our product pitch, I was trying to express that even if they didn't buy anything, that the folks should at least stop at the table for a handshake and that I'd even hug their neck. I got a little tongue-tied, and what I really said was that I would give them a "nuckheg." I haven't lived it down yet, either.

LH: I have trouble remembering the verses to songs that I'm not featured on. One night, Vonda was singing her signature song; "Listen To My Heart," and people started coming forward to the altar. She put her microphone down and went to pray with them. I looked over at Chris as if to ask, "What are the words?" Chris and Jordan just looked at each other and smiled. They couldn't even remember them either! So, I just ended up singing the same thing twice. No one really seemed to notice, but it was good for a laugh afterwards. Looking back, I guess it didn't matter, because two precious folks were saved that night!

JW: One time, as I stepped toward the edge of the stage to sing my bass lead in the old quartet tune, "Happy Rhythm," Chris said, "Now you can't go any farther than this." Not to be outdone, I jumped down off the stage. Everyone lost it because I had never really done anything quite like that before.

CS: *Earlier, Lauren shared her testimony. Vonda, I know that your coming to salvation in Christ is something that you sometimes share from the stage. Would you just take a few minutes and relate it to the readers who may have never heard it?*

VE: I grew up in a small church. My parents made sure I went to church and for that I am eternally thankful. One Wednesday night revival service, a preacher was there preaching on hell. Several of my friends went to the altar and, Charlie, I remember wondering what people would think of me if I didn't go. So, I went! There was someone there praying with me and a week later, I was baptized in one of the member's swimming pool. I was a good person. I tried to do the right things.

Many years later, I found myself praying during altar service for someone to get saved. Can I just tell you that I heard the voice of God, Charlie? I know it was Him. He said, "It's you." I immediately saw my life flash before my eyes, and I understood at that very moment that *being good* is not what gets you to Heaven. You have to trust God! I realized that I didn't get saved before, so I took off to that altar again and that day I truly got it. I know that I know that I know. The best part was that my kids went down, too, and from that day on our family truly began to change.

CS: *Chris, if you and I were to have a conversation one year from today about the ministry of Hope's Journey, what do you think you'd be saying different?*

CC: I would hope (no pun intended) that the conversation would be about full time ministry. I know we all have our own lives and families, but full-time ministry has been a goal of mine for some time now. Other than that, I'd love to see more souls being saved - more lives being healed - more people getting help. What more could you ask for?

Editor's note: We are happy to welcome Charlie Sexton as a guest writer for SGNscoops, doing a terrific job of delving into the world of Hope's Journey. Be sure to catch more of his interview with this group on SGNscoops' website, entitled, "The Rest Of The Story."



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High Notes

By Kelly Nelon Clark



I was thinking tonight about the name of Jesus and all that comes with it. When we call on Him He gives us peace and strength. There is power and deliverance and protection.

Just recently we were in a snowstorm and we were trying to get up the hill and we were sliding everywhere. We couldn't go up and we couldn't go down. There were wrecks everywhere we looked.

I began to call out the name of Jesus to help us. You see He hears all of our cries and calls even in the most dire situations. You may be at a place right now where you think God hasn't answered and He doesn't hear you, but He's listening and He will answer the perfect answer in the perfect time.

I couldn't have asked for a better answer to my prayer and calling on His name that night. Out of nowhere the police came up behind us and called for help to the salt trucks. Not one but two trucks showed up and salted the road so we could get

back down. We got down the mountain and into the Walmart parking lot.

We realized that we had no water and only enough diesel for the next day and God even took care of that. The Auto Advance opened up their store so we could replenish our water and it just happened that there was a Wendy's in the parking lot and they opened up so we would have food to eat. Lastly a fuel truck showed up to provide us with needed fuel.

God provided everything we needed and more so. That's just how wonderful our God is.

Proverbs 18:10: The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

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Brian Free

Gospel Music's Most Awarded Tenor

By Charlie Griffin

Brian Free formed his own group in 1993 after performing with the award winning Gold City Quartet from 1982-1994. Assurance consisted of Kevin Price, Mike LeFevre and Free.

After being formed, the group has released multiple albums to the delight of gospel music fans across the country. They received several awards and nominations in a variety of organizations and associations. Brian began the group as a trio, but they expanded to a quartet in 1996 with the addition of Bob Caldwell singing bass. They remained as a quartet with a great fan response until 2016.

Of note, the quartet was on hold for a short time starting in 1998 while Brian Free pursued a solo career and studied for the ministry. After a couple of years and with two solo records under his belt, he realized he missed the classic quartet feel. Free reorganized the group with entirely new members in 2000.

The group then included Brian's son Ricky on drums. Later, Ricky exited the group in November 2007 to pursue a career in the studio and as a lyricist. Ricky is now a songwriter at Daywind, a producer, session musician, and a drummer for various Country and Christian artists. He resides in Nashville, Tennessee with his wife and two sons. The group adapted their staging without a live band with continued successes.

Today the group consists of Mike Rogers, Bill Shivers and Free. The group has become known for Brian Free's soaring tenor vocals, requiring the lead and baritone sings in a higher register than other singers typically

would. Brian is still to this day the most awarded tenor in the history of Gospel music. Thirty-four years of singing those high notes have endeared him to Gospel music fans.

This is Free's current status. But Brian Free is truly a remarkable talent vocally and with longevity in gospel music circles. His first stint with Gold City was from 1982 to 1983. After a short leave, he returned to the group in 1984 and remained there with great success.

No other tenor has received the recognition like Free. The Singing News Fan Awards quickly point to his popularity. Favorite Male Singer (1987); Favorite Tenor (1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1998, 2002) and Favorite Young Artist (1989, 1991).

Southern Gospel music has always been Brian's first love, and fans have responded to his music by honoring him and the group at the Dove Awards for Southern Gospel Performance of the Year, "Say Amen," in 2014 as well as "Long As I Got King Jesus" in 2006. Brian Free and Assurance has also made a number of notable television appearances, including TBN, Gospel Music Channel, Prime Time Country (TNN), Hee Haw (CBS), The Today Show (NBC), and 27 of the Gaither Video series. In the summer of 2014, BFA was chosen by BBC to represent Elvis Presley's love of Gospel Music on That's Alright Mama, a Tribute to Elvis Presley, with his arrangement of "Peace In The Valley." And the accolades are too numerous to mention.

During his time with Gold City, comments were made about Brian's distinctive hair style. Over many years he



developed his own style on and off stage. His life began to take on new meaning. He married his wife,

Pam and had two boys. He became iconic in that more people recognized his voice on CD or radio, while perhaps not remembering his name right away.

As the years swiftly passed, Brian's love for Gospel music never waned. If anything it became richer. As Assurance expanded their talents, songs and lyrics took on new meaning.

His boys, Ricky and Bryce, are adults now and have their own careers. So Brian and Pam are finding life



has changed. While on the road, Free is the boss, but a friend to those he travels with daily. His experience of full-time music for 34 years lends him to mentor and develop people. His desire to impact audiences and individuals can be seen and felt in the staging of songs old and new.

Several years ago, I scheduled Gold City at the Hallelujah Supper Club. The HSC was a small venue that offered great country cooking and the best gospel music in the Carolinas. That night, the group got to the building to set up. The smell of buttermilk biscuits, chicken fried country steak, chicken and desserts filled the

building and the streets. The group began setting up and one by one each filtered over to ask, "when can we eat?" Brian, Ivan Parker, Mike LeFevre and Tim Riley each lead the charge. As they began their meal, a basket of fresh out-of-the-oven biscuits and butter was delivered with some homemade jam. It wasn't long and the plates were empty. Dessert was on the way.

Charlie Burke, Singing Americans owner, looked down at Brian's slight frame, and with his belly laugh asked, "Where did you put all that food?"

That night the group took the stage to a song that was very popular in the Carolinas, "Ain't God Good." "Shouting Ground," "Little David," "Ezekiel Saw the Wheel," "Midnight Cry," "No Other Word For Grace But Amazing," and many more filled that old building. People stayed long after the concert was over. It was an amazing concert and a night to remember!

Brian was at the merchandise table and he spoke to everyone. He took time to laugh, share a story or two, talk about the cruise with the Singing Americans, Gold City and Heavenbound. He prayed a simple prayer with a young couple. He was just being Brian.

Those times are not forgotten. The impression he made on the patrons and HSC staff is not forgotten. If anything, today's growth is due to Brian taking time for people. Taking time to share his faith, and taking time to just be a real person that is available.

Today, his wife Pam, sons Bryce and Ricky, daughter-in-law Kelly, grandsons Jude and Graham are the joys of his life. As a matter of fact he admires his wife most in this world. Now that is saying something.

His music favorites are Steve Perry, Andy Chrisman and 4 Him. His favorite song is "For God So Loved" and his scripture reflects those lyrics, John 3:16. He loves The Andy Griffith Show and Walt Disney World. Something about just being Brian comes through when you meet and talk with him. He is real.

As you can see Brian Free is a tenor singer, a quartet man, a husband and father, but most of all, a man of God.

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Contact Michelle: 214-762-7380 / www.singinathepoint.com



This chart was compiled from a list of reporting stations. Each month we will be adding more stations.

1	Wilburn and Wilburn	You Asked Him To Leave
2	Whisnants	Worry Ends Where Faith Begins
3	Browders	Waiting For You To Get Home
4	11th Hour	Mountain Moving Faith
5	Ernie Haase and Signature Sound	Jesus Changed Everything
6	Hyssongs	There's Still Room, There's Still Hope, There's Still Time
7	Karen Peck and New River	I Am Blessed
8	Hope's Journey	On My Way Back
9	Williamsons	Monday
10	Legacy Five	That's A Hallelujah
11	Greater Vision	As We Speak
12	Higher Ground	Get Thee Behind Me
13	Gold City	Victory In Jesus
14	McKameys	What If
15	Mark Trammell Quartet	I'll Take It To The Grave
16	Perrys	Keep On
17	Chandlers	I'll Still Be Standing
18	Talleys	People In The Line
19	Zane and Donna King	Lovestruck
20	Guardians	Shoutin' Sounds
21	LeFevre Quartet	Something
22	Kingsmen	Cross Of Grace
23	Wards	My Father Is Near
24	Lore Family	I Lived To Tell About It
25	Collingsworth Family	What The Bible Says
26	Pruitt Family	Bring It All To Jesus
27	Bates Family	Jesus On The Mainline
28	Bowling Family	I Was There
29	Jonathan Bledsoe	Go And Tell Somebody
30	Cornerstone	Just Before Dawn
31	Debbie Seagraves	Where Was God
32	Shellem Cline	I'm The One
33	Dennis Cook	Where No One Stands Alone

34	Caleb's Crossing	Brand New Me
35	Jim Brady Trio	Good Lord Willin'
36	Heart's Song	Jesus Is The Answer
37	Kingsmen	I Know
38	Erwins	Ready To Sail
39	Bev McCann	24 Hours A Day
40	Riders	One Holy Morning
41	Sounds of Victory	Slingful Of Faith
42	Fowlers	I'm Nothing Without You
43	Kingdom Heirs	The Chain Gang
44	Jason Crabb	He Won't Leave You There
45	Steeles	Without A Sound
46	Jim Sheldon	Church Like We Knew Back Then
47	Second Half Quartet	Cheer The Weary Traveller
48	Furrows	I've Come Too Far
49	Reborn	Potter's Wheel
50	Burning Bridges	Take It To Jesus
51	Manaraze Family	About Him
52	Triumphant	Amazing God
53	Austin and Ethan Whisnant	1+2+3
54	Brian Free and Assurance	That's Just What Grace Does
55	Troy Burns Family	The Potter
56	Rochesters	As For Me And My House
57	Ivan Parker	Silent Prayer
58	Kelly Coberly	Midnight Cry
59	Keith Barkley and Family Tradition	It's Time
60	Mark Dubbeld Family	A Little Bit Better
61	Pine Ridge Boys	Blood Still Flows
62	Kate Harris	In The Savior's Hands
63	Adams Family	I'll Trust God Today
64	Greater Vision	Put Out The Fire
65	Mark Bishop and Forget The Sea	You Love Me Anyway
66	Inspirations	Pray For Me
67	Page Trio	Difference Is The Cross
68	Spoken For Trio	Return To God
69	Terry Collins	Out Of This World
70	Common Bond	Do You Know Him
71	Carolina Boys	We Shall Rise
72	Jimmy Fortune	I Believe
73	Nelons	Just Can't Make It By Myself
74	Shelby Ledford	What A Day
75	Master's Voice	I Can Hardly Wait To Fly
76	Lore Family	Trace The Grace
77	Barry Rowland and Deliverance	God Delivered Me
78	Watkins Family	Making Me Stronger

79	Campbell and Rowley	Only Jesus
80	Eighth Day	I'm Gonna Say It
81	Noah Hinshaw	No Turning Back
82	Drummond Family	I Stand
83	Joseph Habedank	Welcome Home
84	Primitive Quartet	He Did A Surgery In My Heart
85	Lori Jonathan Trio	Count Your Days To Glory
86	Linda Foster	One Prayer At A Time
87	Tina Wakefield	I'm Lost
88	Taylors	He's My Guide
89	Michael English	Hallelujah For The Cross
90	Isaacs	Leave It On The Altar
91	Wisecarvers	More Than A Good Man
92	Down East Boys	One Way One Name One Door
93	Blythe Family	Making Me Stronger
94	Ball Brothers	Someday
95	Judith Montgomery and Family	God Provided
96	Dixie Melody Boys	Praise The Lord, Hallelujah, Amen
97	Conners	Get Me To The Cross
98	Mylon Hayes Family	The Sweetest Words He Ever Said
99	11th Hour	Jesus Is In The House
100	2nd Generation	Soul Searching



SGN **SCOOPS** MAGAZINE

#getconnected

Hello to all our SGN Scoops readers. Lil' Jan and I are excited to have been asked to host the Diamond Awards in Pigeon Forge, TN on Tuesday, Nov. 3rd. It's going to be a great evening of musical excitement as the winners are announced. Make your plans to be at this event in the beautiful Great Smoky Mountains in Pigeon Forge. Don't miss out on seeing all the lovely 'Fall Colors' in The Smokies.

Also, we are thrilled with our new television show, *ENJOYING LIFE WITH DR. JERRY AND LIL' JAN*. Jeff Stice orchestrated our musical theme complete with trumpets, piccolos and tubas. It's absolutely great! Paul Heil of The Gospel Greats radio program is our announcer. The show airs in the 8th largest television market in America - Atlanta, Georgia. It's currently airing in 6 other cities and can be seen streaming nationwide every Saturday afternoon at 4pm Eastern on www.watc.tv. Tune in each week for a time of fun and conversation with our friends.

We are looking forward to our annual winter schedule and stay in The Sunshine State of Florida which includes a wonderful Christian Cruise, February. 15-19, 2016. Our friends at Templeton Tours lease the entire ship. The bars and casinos are all closed, and it is turned into *THE GOOD OLD GOSPEL SHIP* with singing and preaching by more than 20 nationally known groups and speakers. It is a great opportunity to enjoy some good Gospel Music, Christian Fellowship and make new friends. We'd love to send you a brochure. Contact us at drjerrygoff@aol.com.

God Bless You All,
Dr. Jerry & Lil' Jan



Dr. Jerry & Lil' Jan Goff

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- ★ Stars of an exciting television show,
"ENJOYING LIFE WITH DR. JERRY & LIL' JAN"
on Atlanta's TV57 during the popular
Saturday Afternoon Music Programming



Next week I will be on cruise ship sailing away into the sunset. Though I have traveled a lot and to many countries I am both a little nervous and really excited about this trip. I've never been on a cruise and probably would never have gone if Chuck were not asked to sing for the Sonshine Group.

I have visions of being trapped on board with over 2,000 other people and the atmosphere being similar to the mall around Christmas. With crowded people in lines with a fake smile plastered on their face while not trying to push or shove. AHHH!

I am extremely excited because my parents will be coming with us and they have never been outside of the USA. I believe that every American should take a journey to another country at least once in their life; they should get lost in a sea of people speaking a different language or go to a place where just being yourself makes you stand out and people know that you don't belong. It gives you a new perspective and a sense of gratitude that you didn't have before when you cannot verbally communicate with the locals and someone who may speak English steps in to rescue you.

I am 5'7 with fiery red hair so I usually stand out when we go to different countries. It never fails; when I am in Africa someone will ask me why I am so white. I don't think I am any fairer than the women with me, but for

some reason, I just look white.

It changes something in your heart when you go to bed in a home that is older than the country you belong to.

God asks all believers to take a pilgrimage with Him in life and there are some areas in our heart that God can never take you to until you step outside of yourself and expose yourself to another culture.

We do many different types of ministry, but our main ministry is Chuck's music and revolves inside of the American church. I have spent my adult life immersed in Christian culture; ministering and working in Christian circles. I am extremely blessed and very thankful for what God has allowed us to do and I wouldn't trade it for anything. But sometimes in Christian circles we tend to begin to speak one language and see life only one way while not opening ourselves up to anything new. We begin to see scripture or life through the filtered lens of our church circles instead of through the lens of Christ. Stepping outside of our norms and beginning a strange journey will put us off kilter; it puts us in a place of beginning to ask questions again of our Maker.

One year our daughter spent six months in Spain while attending school; when she came home she said the hardest part was being in public places and being able to understand other conversations. She constantly felt as if

she were eavesdropping. Her 'normal' had changed and coming back home to the States she had to find a new norm. She had to assimilate herself back into American culture.

That season was hard but very good for her. She began to re-evaluate all she had learned over the past 20 years of her life and during that time she began to take ownership of her relationship with God and herself.

She began to find her trust in her Creator, much like Peter when he got out of the boat and walked on water. When Peter stood in the boat life looked one way; it was solid and sturdy. When Jesus bade him to come, he stepped out and everything around him changed. Nothing made sense to him. He was living in a new paradigm; a world of Christ and himself only.

Where in your life is God asking you to step out and join Him in something risky? There is so much need in this world.

Years ago before road systems were in place, when travelers passed the same path repeatedly, there began a rut that became a deep groove. When cars passed over these

rutted places, you would have to stay in the rut while your tires became mired down in the deep grooves and while in these rutted places it became difficult to steer in another direction.

In life we can become mired down in our daily routines and feel trapped that we cannot turn to follow the dreams in our hearts. Many times we need to hear the Master's voice and step out of the boat and follow Jesus. It doesn't make sense to us or probably to those around us. I mean when Peter got out of the boat he wasn't just walking on the water, because we know that it is scientifically impossible to walk on water; he was walking on the very word of God. What is God calling you to today? What is He asking you to do to shift your paradigm?

Life is a journey and you can spend it in the rut just following where the last car went or you can turn the wheel and allow Jesus to take you to places you never dreamed you could go. Start a new path today; begin to blaze a new trail.



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Phil and Sharlenae Collingsworth

Redeemer of the Rain

By Dixie Phillips

When Phillip Collingsworth Jr. married Sharlenae Faith Dotson on June 10, 2014, social media was buzzing with a video clip of the couple singing at their wedding a heartfelt rendition of “When God Made You.” Gospel music fans around the globe immediately recognized The Collingsworth Family had been given a gift in Sharlenae.

And now, nearly two years later, the young couple continues to impress and bless audiences whenever they sing together. Currently in their concerts, they enjoy performing “Redeemer of the Rain,” a single from The Collingsworth’s newest project *That Day Is Coming*. From the first line of this ministry song, listeners realize Sharlenae is singing with deep conviction, almost as if this is her life-song. To discover the secret behind the passion with which she sings the lyrics we must go back to the beginning.

In the late ‘80’s, Timothy Dotson, a pastor’s son from the little borough of Barkley, Pennsylvania, and his family ministered at a church camp in their home state.

Also present was a beautiful and talented young woman named Esther Edwards. She and her family were the camp’s featured singing group. The two families had an instant *kingdom connection*. Timothy’s parents invited Esther’s family over for meal. It didn’t take long for Timothy and Esther to recognize they had a lot in common and that God had brought them together. After they married, the newlyweds traveled and ministered in churches and camps across the country. Audiences enjoyed the couple’s trumpet and saxophone duets, vocal numbers, and the anointed sermons of the young evangelist.

On July 16, 1992, the couple welcomed their first child, Sharlenae Faith. The family continued to travel full time after she was born. When Sharlenae was two, she sang her first solo in church. Another daughter, Brianna, arrived four years after her big sister. The little girls developed a love for music and ministry at an early age. After several years on the road, the parents sensed God calling them to a new ministry. The singing evangelist accepted a dual position as assistant pastor of Em-

manuel Wesleyan Church and principal of the church's Christian school in Gratz, Pennsylvania. As the years quickly passed, he became senior pastor and two more children, Luke and Jillaina, were added to their growing family.

The church thrived under the leadership of this dedicated couple. Before long the congregation voted to build a new sanctuary. Church members rejoiced when the new facility was finished. They had only worshipped in their new building for two weeks when the ministry family traveled to Indiana to attend a youth convention the young pastor had founded years previously.

Who doesn't wish for sunny days?

That the sky above us would never turn grey

But life isn't always sunshine

We have times that leave us asking why

And when the clouds roll in and tears begin to fall

There must be a reason for it all

After several hours on the road, the family stopped for lunch. Tragedy struck during this quick break. Pastor Timothy Dotson, just 37, suffered a massive heart attack. Esther, now a grieving widow, clung to her faith and the promises of God's Word during this turbulent time. She had many difficult decisions to make for the future of her young family.

After much prayer and counsel, she and her four children moved to Indiana, where she would have the love and support of her extended family. In the midst of her grief, she committed their future to the Lord and learned a deeper level of trust.

Every problem that we face

Is sifted by the Father

Through hands of grace

He uses sorrow to draw us

To call us closer to His side

It's in the middle of the storm

We learn to trust

That He is always watching over us



Word spread quickly among family and friends about the sudden death of the beloved pastor. Phil Sr. and Kim Collingsworth's hearts broke when they heard the news. A young Brooklyn and Courtney were so affected by the loss of their respected leader, they sent the following personal condolences on the funeral home's website: "Mr. Dotson had a big impact on my life. He always did everything so classy and he was a reasonable man. He was a great example to all us teens at Youth Challenge and AYC. I will never forget him. Love, Brooklyn Collingsworth." "We miss you, Mr. Dotson. -Courtney Collingsworth."

Phil Sr. and Kim had been college friends of the Dotsons and ministered in some of the same churches, fellowships, and camps. From time to time their paths would cross with Esther and the children. It was during this time Sharlenae and Phillip Jr. became good



friends. Years later when Sharlenae was in college their relationship deepened. They fell in love and eventually married.



Not only has Sharlenae been a tremendous gift to The Collingsworth Family, but they have been a great blessing to her. She is grateful to belong to such a loving family with hearts for ministry. She spent the first six years of life on the road with her parents' music ministry and nearly two decades later the Lord has called her once again to travel and minister through song all across the country.

At each concert before Phillip Jr. and Sharlenae sing "Redeemer of the Rain," Phil Sr. shares a little of Sharlenae's story and why the lyrics mean so much to her. As she sings, some people in the audience wipe away tears. She is sensitive to each need and immediately recognizes many of them are facing their own storms of life. She doesn't pretend to have all the answers, but does sing them a song of hope with great confidence, because she's known His mercy long enough to say, "He's the Redeemer of the Rain."

Redeemer of the rain

The Lord will never waste our pain

He brings beauty out of brokenness

And hope to our heartache

Healing out of every hurt

That invades our shattered world

We never walk through trials in vain

"Redeemer of the Rain" © 2014 Christian Taylor Music

Lee Black, Dixie Phillips, Sharon Phillips

FULL CIRCLE: Brooklyn Collingsworth Blair and Courtney Collingsworth Metz met their husbands at the youth convention Sharlenae's late father founded.



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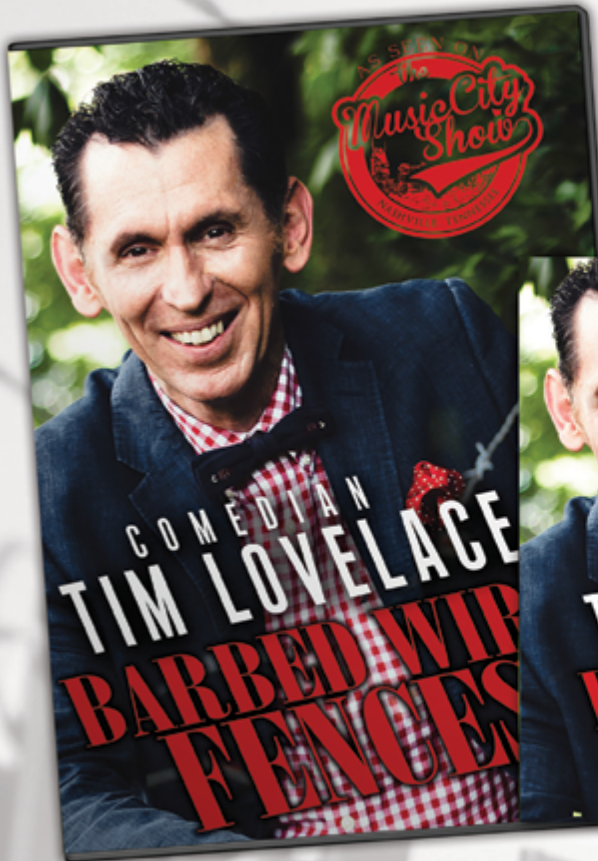
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Randall Reviews It - March 2016

by Randall Hamm

Dear Friends:

March is the month of Spring and the rebirth of all living things, plus the month of my birth! Today I review some great CD's that are just dandy and should be in your play list, on whatever device you listen to your music on.

Let the Reviews begin!



Master's Voice
Undivided
2016 Sonlite Records
Producer: Jeff Collins

Songs: I Can Hardly Wait To Fly (Regina Walden BMI); Goodbye To Goodbye (Dixie Phillips-Sharon Phillips BMI); How Long A Lifetime Is (Joseph Habedank-Rachel McCutcheon BMI); Lord Of Mercy (Daryl K Williams BMI); Here I Am Again (Daniel

Anderson-Welin Bohannan BMI); I Know What He Did For Me (Ben Scroggs); Somebody Is Me (Roger Duncan BMI); This Same Jesus (Stephen Phillips BMI); Things God Doesn't Know (Chris White BMI); Send Somebody (Steve Chapman-Joseph Habedank-Lindsey Williams BMI); Ain't It Good (Rachel McCutcheon BMI); Everything The Blood Touches Lives (Stephen Phillips BMI)

One of the must-have CD's of the year so far, and I don't say that lightly. Master's Voice has recorded what could be, in my opinion, the finest CD of the year so far. Master's Voice, based out of Bristow, Oklahoma, has had some big changes in the past year, with the addition of a bass singer, Jerry Pilgrim, the addition of Stan Watson as baritone, and they signed with Sonlite Records in September. As of this review they have added Chuck Howe, sound technician as part of the group.

Their latest CD released in January contains 12 great cuts from such songwriters as Daryl K Williams, Joseph Habedank and Dixie Phillips among others. Their latest single release to radio, "I Can Hardly Wait To Fly," is poised to be a Top 20 song for the group. From the pen of Regina Walden is a medium tempo, true Southern Gospel classic in the making, and that's just the first track.

One of the prettiest songs on the project is from the pen of Joseph Habedank and Rachel McCutcheon "How Long A Lifetime Is." "Never take today for granted, cherish every memory. No one ever knows for certain, what the next tomorrow brings. So hold your loved ones tightly, and treat each moment as a gift, you never

know how long a lifetime is.” What a lyric and sung so convincingly.

With 10 other cuts that are just as good as these two, it will certainly be hard for the group to figure what to single out to radio. Lead singer and manager Ricky Capps should be proud of this project and the group he has assembled. You will definitely hear more the Master’s Voice in the upcoming months. Make sure you get a copy of this CD for your listening pleasure. In fact, why not get two and give a friend a CD that just might change their life. Visit Master’s Voice at <http://mastersvoice.com>

Strongest Songs: “How Long A Lifetime,” “I Can Hardly Wait To Fly,” “Everything The Blood Touches Lives.”



Inspirations
Pray For Me

2015 Sonlite Records

Producer: Jeff Collins - Martin Cook – Scott Barnett
Studios: Crossroads Studios Asheville North Carolina

Songs: Daniel Prayed (G.T. Speer SESAC); God’s Already There (Joseph Habedank-Leah Sandin BMI); Pray For Me (Jimmie Davis-Dottie Rambo BMI); Child Of The King (Cindy Walker BMI); Surely I Come Quickly Dianne Wilkinson BMI); It’s Under The Blood (Leonard Fletcher); Onward To The Goal (Rebecca J. Peck-Dianne Wilkinson BMI); What All The Shoutin’s About (Rebecca J. Peck-Dianne Wilkinson BMI); Jesus Picked A Rose (Rebecca J. Peck BMI); Beulah Land (Squire E. Parsons Jr. BMI)

Fifty-two years ago out of the mountains of Bryson City, North Carolina, came four young teens and their teacher, and recorded their first LP as the Inspirations.

Fast forward 52 years and the style they forged then is still the style they sing today. The only thing that has changed is singers that have come and gone and rejoined over the years.

The latest lineup is Matt Dibler - Lead, Harold Reid - Tenor, Joe Brown - Bass and the newest addition Roland Kesterson – Baritone. Former Baritone Melton Campbell is heard on this project and has since left. Ten songs, three classics, six new songs and a recut of a Inspirations classic is what you’ll find on this project. The first single is a classic reborn and sung well: “Pray For Me,” written by Dottie Rambo and Jimmie Davis. The Inspirations sing this as if they’ve sung it for years and it’s true Inspirations through and through. The true stand out is a Joseph Habedank-written song, “God’s Already There.” Beautifully sung with conviction: “No need to worry about tomorrow, God’s already there.” What a comforting thought. If released as a single, it is another Inspiration classic in the making.

The Inspirations usually include a recut of a classic Inspirations song; this time they have redone “Beulah Land.” Have I said how well Joe Brown blends in with his smooth bass presence on this project? No matter who Martin has hired to be a part of the Inspirations, there has never been a bad lineup ever. If you like your Gospel on the traditional side, something the Inspirations have never strayed from, you’ll love this CD. This reviewer certainly does. Visit the Inspirations at <http://theinspirations.com/>

Strongest Songs: “God’s Already There,” “What All The Shoutin’s About,” “Pray For Me.”



The Wisecarvers
Armor

2015 Skylande Records

Producer: Jeff Collins
Studios: Crossroads Studios Asheville North Carolina

Songs: Plain and Simple (Jordan and Dustin Wisecarver BMI); Give A Little More (Kaila Wisecarver BMI); Just To Save Me (Jordan Wisecarver BMI); It Was Jesus (Kaila Wisecarver BMI); At Any Cost (Jordan Wisecarver BMI); Shine Me Up Some Armor (Jordan Wisecarver-Kaila Wisecarver BMI); Somebody Here (Kaila Wisecarver BMI); More Than A Good Man (Dustin Wisecarver BMI); Don't You Think You Ought To Worship Me (Dustin Wisecarver BMI); Hope, Faith and Love (Vincent Wisecarver BMI); It Would Be Alright (Dustin Wisecarver BMI); The Station (Dustin Wisecarver BMI)

The Wisecarvers are back and releasing their second album on Skylande Records, a division of Crossroads Music. The album titled *Armor* is the best album the Wisecarvers have released in their career. I've known their dad, Vince and sons Dustin and Chase since the early 2000's and have been a fan since their days at the Eddie Crook Company and Morningstar. The group has since expanded to include Mom Wisecarver, Tammy, and Dustin's wife, Kaila.

If you're a fan of early Crabb Family or the love the sound of the Browders, you'll love the Wisecarvers. The first release was "Just To Save Me," which topped out at number 34 in February on the SN charts. The follow up is a wonderful song, "More Than A Good Man" and just in time for the Easter season. "He is more than a good man, not just a prophet or saint. More than a carpenter - just look at what He's made. He is not some fairy tale, He's not crazy or a fraud. He is more than a good man, He's the Son of God." Powerful lyrics and some good soul singing make this a potential Top 20 song; call your local DJ and request it.

From a father-and-sons trio in their early years to a full fledged family group, the Wisecarvers are possibly the best family group you haven't heard yet. Visit the Wisecarvers at <http://www.thewisecarvers.com/>

Strongest Songs: "More Than A Good Man," "It Was Jesus," "Don't You Think You Ought To Worship Me."

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DJ SPOTLIGHT

Hunter Logan



In this month's DJ Spotlight, we'd like you to meet Hunter Logan of HLE Radio. Logan has had an interesting and varied background, from his service in the Air Force to entertaining on many stages to radio sales and production. On his website, Logan says, "I still produce specialty shows, do voices, and write commercials, as well as produce them for several radio stations that I am affiliated with. Here at HLE Radio it is my desire to put the word forth through song as well as spoken (word)."

Hunter Logan has a live show every weekday from 7:00am to 9:00am. He's a Saints fan, dedicated to being a 'non-professional professional.' From humble beginnings in a back room with a borrowed server and a broken computer, HLE Radio has grown into a large facility with several staff. Logan hopes to have facilities soon to host artists who stop over during their tours.

Without further ado, from Jennings, Louisiana, welcome Hunter Logan!

Vonda: What is your current radio position, station, and station website?

HL: We are a 24/7 internet Christian Country Radio station with free apps dedicated to reaching the lost through Christian Country Music. www.hleradio.com

Vonda: At what age did you know you wanted to work in radio? Why?

HL: I never had a desire to work in radio. I was 45 when God said, "I'm going to give you a radio station." I have been an entertainer most of my life. My last job was with Carnival Cruise Lines as an entertainer and when I got off the ship, I went to work at a local radio station as a DJ just on the weekends. It was fun enough, but I still didn't have a desire to do it. But little did I know that was God preparing

me for what I am doing now and I couldn't imagine doing anything else!

Vonda: If you could visit any place in the world, where would you go?

HL: I would love to go back to Bitburg, Germany. It was my first duty station in the Air Force and I really liked there.

Vonda: Tell us about your family. Wife? Kids?

HL: I have been married for 30 years to my best friend and wife, Roilyn, and have four children: My daughter Aleisha, a set of twin boys Darrell and Dustyn, and another boy named Hunter! Me and my wife are empty nesters now unless you count the boxer and chihuahua.

Vonda: What is your favorite restaurant?

HL: Texas Roadhouse. Love the ribeye!

Thanks so much to Hunter Logan for being with us on the DJ Spotlight. We hope that you will tune into his online station at www.hleradio.com. Browse through the website, listen to the videos and download the apps. We are sure you will find something you enjoy. And while you are there, drop a line to Hunter Logan, the man behind HLE Radio.



**Written By
Vonda Easley**

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More than a Million Miles:

Remembering the Golden Years of Operating a Motor Coach



By Ralph Moore

It was June of 1964, when I stepped aboard a famous Southern Gospel singing group's motor coach in Columbus, Georgia, at the city municipal auditorium. Our destination was Alexandria, Tennessee to "Uncle" Elmar Henton's all day singing. As we rode through the night, I was bubbling with excitement and disbelief. Having no ability to sing or play instruments, I had no idea what would lay ahead for me. As I look back, it could have only been the hand of God at work in my life.



The singing group was the LeFevres with Eva Mae. Their popularity spanned the United States and Canada through television, radio, and personal appearances.

I was given a closet to hang my clothes, a bunk bed to sleep in, and a front row seat on the coach. I was equal to all other band members. I thought to myself, "This is simply wonderful and unbelievable." However, with no talent to offer, how long could this gravy train really last? I was told I was there to help with the equipment, loading and unloading the coach at concert venues. That was simple enough, and I was delighted for the oppor-

tunity to do so. After all, the LeFevres were my favorite group of singers.



When it was time to leave town on the next concert trip, we were headed to Alexander, Louisiana. I was still sitting up front with the driver after all the others had gone to bed. I knew we would be passing through LaGrange, Georgia, on U.S. Highway 29 and passing the service station where I had my first job back in 1959. This was also the place I first became acquainted with the LeFevres through their live weekly television program from Columbus, Georgia. The driver was Paul Hughes and he handled that coach as though it were a baby carriage. I was somewhat surprised when Paul told me that night that one of the reasons I was there was to learn to drive the coach.

I thought, no problem; back home I had driven school buses and hauled pulpwood for my dad. The motor coach wasn't much bigger, so for now everything was okay. As I sat on that coach week after week, the

thought of driving was not far from my mind. I watched eagerly as Paul drove the coach through cities, across mountains and the Great Plains. I learned that Paul's driving was second to none, and he had the respect of the entire music industry. By now, I realized that coach driving was not a school bus nor was it a log truck. It was a totally different world of driving.

I had never given thought before to just how important smooth driving was to the passengers. While the coach is in motion, the passengers should not feel the lunge of the coach when the brakes are applied in a normal stop nor should they feel the acceleration power when building speed. A quick hit of the brakes, crossing railroad tracks, a rough place at a truck stop, or a quick pull on the steering wheel can cause passengers to lose their balance and become injured. The driver must always be looking ahead and be alert to changing conditions. Kelly Nelon says that you don't have to see the one driving to know when a trained driver is at the wheel; you can feel the difference.

Once, when talking to a friend about his bus driver, Urias LeFevre said, "It's much harder to find a good qualified bus driver than it is to find singers and musicians. That's why I train my own, I put my life in his hands every day."

After about six months working with Paul, I found myself on my own when Paul took a job driving for the Happy Goodman Family. I was grateful for the quality time I spent under Paul's guidance. Apparently, he taught me well, because I now had to please my boss Urias, who insisted on perfection. Over the next 20 years, I drove the LeFevres and Rex Nelon more than a million miles.



Lionel Richie and the Commodores was another group

I enjoyed driving for. I was proud to drive their Brick House Tour in the late '70's. I have often said that Lionel Richie was one of the best people I ever drove for.



I also drove for the Beach Boys from California. The day Elvis Presley died was a day the music world stood still. That day I was in Central Park in New York City with the Beach Boys. As they performed to a crowd of 250,000 there was a sense of grief that blanketed the crowd. Off stage, the musicians and stagehands would hardly speak to each other because every attempt to do so brought emotional tears.

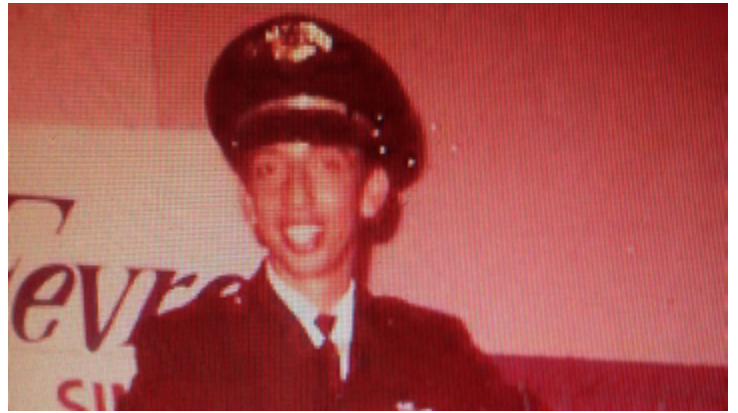


All in all, I had the opportunity to meet and drive for numerous great performers. Each one left a lasting memory on my heart that will be treasured forever. After many years of being a professional driver, I decided to retire. I ended my driving career counting more than five million miles driven accident-free.

Through the years, I also had the honor of teaching others the Paul Hughes smooth driving method. Some

of these were Robbie Willis and Sam Cates. Robbie was a son-in-law of the late George Younce. I taught Robbie while the two of us worked with Rex Nelon. Today, Robbie owns his own bus business, Willis Tours, located in the Atlanta area. Sam grew up watching me drive a motor coach. He cherished every mile we traveled as a family. In his later years, he remembered everything I said about smooth driving. Sam has driven for Mark Lowry, Mike LeFevre Quartet, Mark Trammell Quartet, Vince Gill, The Nelons, and other popular artists. A very young Mike LeFevre was also a recipient of my driving influence. Mike has passed that skill on to his son Jordan. Jordan performs this skill very well.

The demand for smooth driving is almost a thing of the past because of the super highway system; if one can keep it between the lines, that is all that matters. In fact, we even have a picture of Eva Mae driving the bus. This of course, was in the later years when she was working with Rex Nelon. Drivers no longer talk about operating a motor coach in a smooth manner; they just drive the bus. In the charter as well as the private coach



industry, it appears they are more interested in just getting there instead of the quality of the ride. On the other hand very few of today's drivers have had the opportunity to learn the smooth and graceful way of operating the motor coach. Some just load up, point, and accelerate. That's how I see it.

Southern Gospel Music Industry, thanks for the journey. Ralph Moore, Lineville, Alabama.
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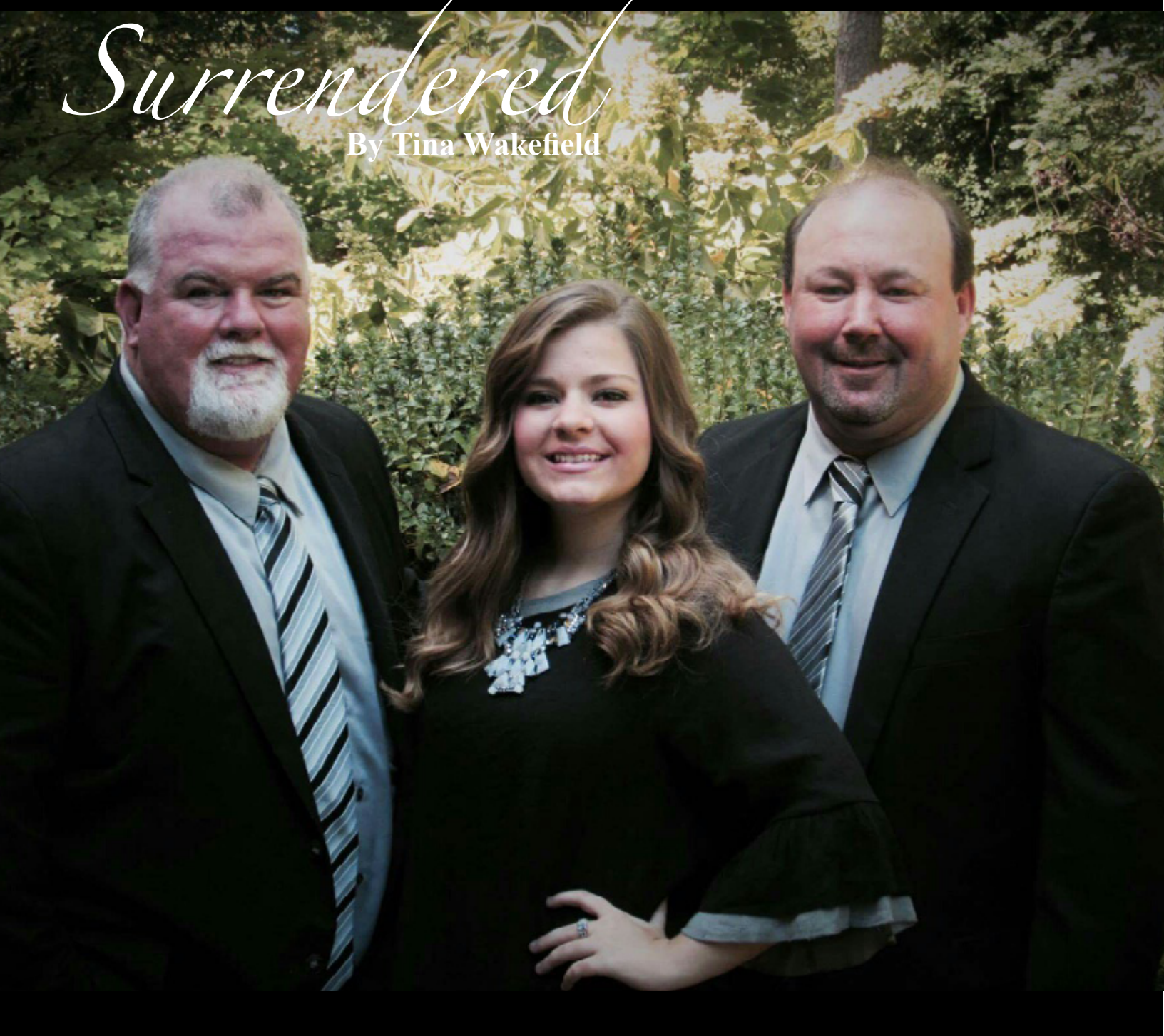
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Surrendered

By Tina Wakefield



Although I am the writer to submit this article, Lori Wise has proven herself to be the author of this story by answering my questions. I could ask all the questions I want, but who better to know the heart, soul, and history of a group than one who lives it day in and day out, and this is the case of *Surrendered*, as given to me by Russell's wife, Lori.

Surrendered consists of group leader Russell Wise, Sadie Renae, and John "Bit" Fugatt. This trio feels they were most definitely brought together through an orchestrated meeting arranged by God.

Russell had traveled and sung Gospel music most of his life but he felt that his singing ministry might be coming to an end, and certainly his traveling days. However Lori, a strong supporter of Russell and his calling, encouraged him to press on. They decided that this was only Satan's way to stop the Word from moving forward, so together they prayed for direction.

During the March 2015 Southern Gospel Weekend in Oxford, Alabama, Russell's niece Sadie attended her first Southern Gospel Convention and was captivated by Jay Parrack and Vocal Event as they performed "Sometimes He Whispers." Sadie was so taken by



the harmony, emotion and words of the song that she immediately obtained all their CDs and learned every song.

After this experience, Sadie began to listen and be drawn to Southern Gospel ultimately leading to her decision to sing Southern Gospel Music. Russell Wise and niece Sadie Renae teamed up to form a duo but needed a name. Their nightly discussions began to focus on finding a name for this new group, and after many late nights, *Surrendered* seemed to fit. Russell made the suggestion and everyone knew immediately that this was their name!

Russell and Sadie sang as a duo at the Annual Catfish Festival in Scottsboro, AL, in May 2015 along with several other groups. A long-time friend named John "Bitt" Fugatt who was also performing with his family group just happened to sing along with *Surrendered* and knew every song. John was asked to help *Surrendered* sing their second set, and it was if a missing piece had been found. John fit perfectly and the sound was amazing which led to John singing the next two Sunday services with Russell and Sadie. Blessings came and by the summer of 2015 John decided the Lord's plan would place him with *Surrendered* on a permanent basis and so the trio *Surrendered* was born.

Russell Wise, the leader of the group, sings lead and harmonies, and plays bass guitar. Many will remember Russell as a long time member of Wendy Bagwell and The Sunliters. Russell was born into a family of music with The Wise Family who traveled for many years and his dad pastored several churches. Russell prays that *Surrendered* is more than a group that sings music, but a group that is known for music ministry. Russell Wise is married to Lori and combined they have four children.

John "Bitt" Fugatt is also an experienced tenor and lead singer with time spent traveling with groups such as The Temple Echos, Chancellors Quartet, The Perkins Family, and his own family group, The Fugatt Family Ministries. An accomplished musician, John plays keyboard/piano, bass guitar, drums, and acoustic guitar.

The youngest member of *Surrendered* is 16-year-old Sadie Renae who Russell and John refer to "The rose between the thorns." Sadie sings both lead and harmonies while letting her love of God shine through each note. Sadie plays acoustic guitar and loves singing with her two little sisters Mia, who is 11, and



nine-year-old Jacy. Sadie has begun to write and co-write songs, of which one or two will be featured on *Surrendered*'s up-coming projects.

Surrendered members have committed themselves



to follow the calling of spreading the gospel through Southern Gospel music. For many groups, the biggest obstacle they face is how to get to the concerts with all their members and equipment. In the fall of 2015 Surrendered invested in an RV to help with their travels. “The Lord opened this door when we were not even looking. After the RV, we prayed for an enclosed trailer. God heard our needs and answered abundantly through the Harris family when they donated their perfect trailer filled with equipment to Surrendered and for this we are truly grateful.”

Traveling on the road with a group of individuals is bound to lead to humorous situations. Lori said that singing and practicing, while catching flying objects



in the RV, while tracking across back roads filled with potholes and the camaraderie make road trips hilarious and fun. She relates, “We have parked in the middle of city roads while someone makes the midnight run to Taco Bell, [and] spent the night in a Georgia Wal-Mart parking lot (that may not be for the weak). We have arrived (only by the grace of God) to churches at 2:00am after sitting on curvy, black, *have-no-idea-where-we-are* gravel roads only to see signs reading ‘Road Out Ahead.’ Let me tell you that turning a 34 ft. RV with a trailer can become quite the task in the middle of the night. Russell has done it though! And quite well we might add.”

I believe that Surrendered’s definition of a music ministry is one of the best I have heard. “The life of a Gospel singer is not glamorous and it certainly is not for anyone that has not chosen it with a servant’s heart. It’s an earthly mission to spread God’s word. We do not seek earthly praise; we seek eternal mercy and life, praying we leave no soul behind. Our first year has been overwhelming and joyous, a blessed and humbling journey. We have no idea what God has in store but we know His storehouse is plentiful. We pray for direction, open doors, and lost souls to receive the conviction to just simply *Surrender It All!*”

Russell, Sadie, and John have all been busy writing new songs getting ready for this new year. Surrendered has released their first radio single entitled,

“I See My Name” written by Kenna West and Daryl Williams, released by Jan Puryear Promotions on her January 2016 compilation CD. Surrendered is currently taking bookings for 2016 with dates in Texas, North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama and other surrounding areas. If you are interested in booking Surrendered you may contact Lori Wise at 205-937-1185. You may also ‘like’ Surrendered on Facebook.



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New project now available

GMO: You Are What You Eat?



By Laurette Willis, CHC

GMO = Genetically Modified Organisms

When I experienced food poisoning several years ago, the topic of food purity suddenly became even more important to me.

Genetic engineering of our food supply is being called “Cell Invasion Technology.” It is estimated that GMOs are found in 80% of the foods we find in our supermarkets, including GMO corn, canola, soybeans and sugar beets.

Whenever I think of Monsanto, I think of chemicals and carpeting, but food? Yet, Monsanto is one of the largest GMO engineering corporations in the world. Believe it or not, up to 90 percent of all major U.S. grown crops are grown with genetically engineered seed, and can be used in our food with little or no safety testing or labeling.

Since being introduced into the food supply, multiple chronic illnesses jumped from 7% to 13% of the population and food allergies doubled.

Abstaining from foods?

Scripturally speaking, 1 Timothy 4 speaks about the deception and “doctrines of demons” that will come in the last days. In part this includes, “commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth” (1 Timothy 4:3 NKJV).

Notice the italicized “which God created.” Genetically Modified Organisms invade the cellular integrity designed by God (much as bacteria or a virus would do). Injecting genes from cold water flounder into tomatoes so they can withstand colder temperatures (yes

that is really done) is not my idea of food which God created.

This next verse of Timothy’s many of us have used to bless the Triple-Decker Belly Bomber with fries we were about to eat: “For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.”

Doesn’t that cover us?

I believe if we are evangelizing in a foreign country, for example, and handed an unusual something to eat (such as a monkey meat sandwich), we are definitely covered when we sanctify/bless the food “by the word of God and prayer.”

However, I question whether organisms man has “Frankensteined” into something else can qualify under the “every creature of God is good” category. Wouldn’t it be wise to avoid such foods whenever possible?

What Can We Do?

Be proactive. Study about GMOs and support legislation to counter their being introduced into the food supply. You can shop at local farmers’ markets, thus supporting your local economy, too. You may need to educate your commercial grocers, asking them to direct you to non-GMO foods, and to order more foods without GMOs.

What do you think? Are Genetically Modified Organisms in the food supply a good thing, bad thing, or “no big deal”? Share your comments. I’d love to know what you think!

To help in your quest to live long, be healthy and strong, get a free copy of the "Ten Bad Foods List" plus a free Self-Health Evaluation you can take online, by contacting Laurette Willis at praisemoves@gmail.com.

Laurette is a Certified Health Coach, published author, and Founder of PraiseMoves Fitness Ministry. You may contact Laurette at the email address above, 918-458-1800 or www.PraiseMoves.com. Join Laurette at www.Facebook.com/LauretteWillisPage ©2016

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The Taylors:

A photograph of three men, members of The Taylors, performing on stage. They are dressed in suits and ties, holding microphones. The stage is lit with purple and blue lights, and there are bright spotlights creating lens flares. The background shows stage rigging and more lighting equipment.

Brothers and Sisters...and then there's Aaron

By Justin McLeod

The Taylors are quickly becoming one of gospel music's top mixed groups. A sibling quartet, with two brothers and two sisters making up the group, they are nearing the genre's top tier and their easy-listening sound makes them a crowd favorite.

If you've seen the Taylors in concert, chances are good that you saw a curly-headed young fellow step up to sing the bass part on a few songs. Adding classics like "Up Above My Head" to the group's repertoire thanks to his talent for the low notes, is Aaron Perkins; bass singer, husband to group soprano Leslie, and quartet historian extraordinaire.

To call Aaron a historian may just be scratching the surface. You can pull out some of the rarest-heard quartets in gospel music's history and chances are good that Aaron will be able to fill you in on their history and certainly their bass singer.

With his new solo recording due out within the next several weeks, Aaron was kind enough to join me for a

look at his career to this point,, his thoughts on some of the greatest basses on the road today, and an exclusive peek at his forthcoming CD.

SGN Scoops: *Let me start off with an easy one. When in life did you really first develop a love for singing and how did you develop that?*

Aaron Perkins: When I was a kid, I grew up singing in choir and stuff like that in church. When I really developed the love for it, though, the passion to want to do it, was when I was 10. I heard George Younce in concert for the first time and I went out and got their CD and I played that thing nonstop. I started praying then that God would allow me to sing bass like George. I was about 14 or 15 when my voice started changing and I started trying to sing bass and learning to do it. George encouraged me to follow the Lord and to keep at it, so that's what I did. At about 15, I started with my dad's praise team at the church where he was the pastor. I started singing there and I guess that's when I first started learning and from there I went on to quartet

music.

SGN Scoops: *What really interested you in bass singing? Was it the low notes? What part of it really drew in your interest and made you fixate on it?*

Aaron Perkins: Definitely the low notes. When I heard them from George and from Big Chief on a Statesman cassette my dad had, those were my first two experiences with quartet music that I remember. I mean my dad had it, it had been in and out of my entire life, I had heard it, but that's when I really started paying attention to it. Then of course, I heard Tim Riley and J.D. Sumner and others like that. The low notes are just unbelievable because you just don't hear that in any other genre of music much. George and Chief, they had rhythmic bass style singing. They could hit the low notes, but they could sing. It just sounded fun to me as a kid and that's what drew me to it, I guess. It sounded fun. Of course, watching George, he had fun on stage. So I guess all of that, kind of combined, drew me to it. That's all I ever wanted to do.

SGN Scoops: *Did you receive any kind of training, other than just kind of talking to bass singers, any kind of instruction on singing bass or was it something that God gifted you with from when your voice started changing and you started to sing?*

Aaron Perkins: I had instruction from my dad early on in singing and learning the actual bass part. He played piano and was able to teach me the part. Then in high school, I actually was in choir and had lessons. Tim Riley shared a lot of techniques with me. Jeff Chapman



is another one that has helped me. I practiced a lot. I would stand next to my stereo and just play the Cathedrals and the Statesman and try to sing along. I loved to try and get the feel for it, I guess you could say.

SGN Scoops: *Right. I'm asking you to play favorites just a little bit. Your all-time favorite bass singer is very evidently George. Who is your favorite 'active' bass singer or one of your favorites that you really enjoy*

Aaron Perkins: Jeff Chapman would definitely be at the top. Jeff Chapman. Burman Porter, I like him. Tim Duncan, Chris West, Gene McDonald and a very underrated one in my opinion, who is still incredible, is Jeff Pearles. He is one of my favorites. He's up there next to Jeff, to me. Two different styles, but they are both incredible.

SGN Scoops: *Moving from the singers to the songs, there is a lot of songs that are created and written with a bass singer in mind. What are some of your favorite "bass singer songs"?*

Aaron Perkins: My number one would probably be "Roll Away Troubled River." I'm actually doing that one on my new album that's going to be released in the spring. I'm doing a bunch of them. "I Want to Know," I have to say that one. That's almost a cliché when you talk about bass singer songs. I love the rhythm style on that. Let's see, one I usually go around the house singing all the time is "Jubilee is Coming." It's been one of my favorites. Let's see, how many more do you want? "God Made a Way." There are so many of them. I like "Let's Go to That Land" or "All Aboard," whichever one you want to call it. So, a lot of bass-lead type of





songs I like. Not necessarily hitting the low notes all the time, but good upbeat ones I like. I have a recording of Big Chief doing “On the Jericho Road” in 1960 with JD introducing them. I think it’s 1960, somewhere around there. Chief came out and did it. And London Parris, of course, he did it as a solo. Let’s see, going back all the way to the Rangers Quartet, Arnold Hyles actually did it as a solo.

SGN Scoops: *Why do you love this music history so much?*

Aaron Perkins: That’s a good question. If I find out, I would like to know myself. It’s just something that has always fascinated me. I love learning about the different memories of the different quartets and what they did that was different from the rest of them. Like The Statesman, they were doing stuff that was different. The whole symphony-type, using modern technology and all that. I just like learning about it. You know some people like history, like American History and that stuff. I love Quartet History. Not so much the trios and all that; I can’t tell you much about that.

SGN Scoops: *Let me ask you about your better-half here. Tell me how the two of you met. When she, so to speak, caught your eye and when you really knew she was “the one”.*



Aaron Perkins: I actually saw her on Facebook. I saw she was a Gospel singer and I was a Gospel singer, so I thought I would add her as a friend. We started chatting and we would talk for hours on the phone. My family vacationed at the beach every year, so one time on the way down, we met her in North Carolina at a mall. I met the entire family that night. Her brothers, Jonathan and Chris, were across the table, sharpening knives, trying to intimidate me. I wasn’t intimidated. We dated for three and a half years, and she was everything I prayed for. I prayed for a Godly woman that was beautiful, was dutiful about her faith, likes Southern Gospel and that could cook. She is all that and even more. We got married in October 2012. We now have a kid and another one on the way. May 16th is the due date.

SGN Scoops: *What role do you fill with The Taylors? I know you have been traveling with them a lot of the time. What role do you fill and what are your duties when you travel with them to a concert?*

Aaron Perkins: I load in and load out. We set up the sound and then I run the sound while I hold Isaiah. Then I go up and sing about three or four songs with them. Then I go back and run sound and that’s pretty much it.

SGN Scoops: *Talk to me about the difference between a bass singer and a person who sings bass. It’s a big distinction. Tell me why you think that distinction is so*



important.

Aaron Perkins: Well, Eric Bennett (another one of my favorites) told me, “Do you want people leaving the service saying, ‘Wow, he can really hit a low note,’ or do you want people saying, ‘He really blessed my heart tonight.’” What he said there stuck with me and George was the same way. He was able to be a singer early on with a low voice. I believe that allows you to be versatile and it allows you to communicate a song to the audience instead of just making their seats shake. That’s the answer I would have: to communicate to the audience.



SGN Scoops: *Ok, now, I’m going to put you on the spot again. I’m just warning you in advance. I want you to give me your dream quartet, but I want you to give it in two different ways. I want you to give me your all-time dream quartet then I want you to give me your “active only” quartet.*

Aaron Perkins: Alright. I’ll start with all-time. George Younce on bass. Jake Hess on lead. Glen Payne on baritone and I’d probably pick Bobby Clark on tenor. Which is pretty much the original Cathedrals minus Danny Koker. Current lineup, let’s see. I would pick Jeff Pearles for bass. I would pick Mark Lowry for baritone. For lead, I would pick Joseph Habedank. And on tenor, I would pick Wes Hampton.

SGN Scoops: *You are going to have to help me out with your career trajectory to this point. I know you sang with a group part-time with your dad before you got married, correct?*

Aaron Perkins: Yeah, as far as gospel quartet stuff, I started when I was 16 with The Landmark Quartet. The name Landmark Quartet goes all the way back to the 1960’s. The group, historically here, was Buddy Liles, Mac Evans, Carroll Rawlings and Don Norman. They sang with the Imperials and the Cathedrals. The Landmark Quartet 2006 to... let’s see; I had been with them really until I moved to North Carolina off and on. There was a time between here and there when my dad and I had a group called the Sonmen and we changed our name to The Perkins. I then filled in with the Dixie Echoes, The Rebels and a couple of others, I can’t remember all of them. Several different quartets have asked me about singing bass with them but I’ve turned them down.

I feel like, at this point in my life, my biggest ministry is being a dad and being a husband. I really love gospel quartets, but I feel that, at this day and time, my family needs their dad and husband here. Leslie needs a husband and the children need their dad. I’ve never wanted to sing with just anybody either. You have to be told by God and hear Him say, “Hey, this is exactly where I want you to go.” God has allowed me to sing a lot all over the country with my wife. I’m not doing it necessarily on stage every song, but that’s ok with me. I still get to be with my wife and my son. And I still get together with my dad every once in awhile and sing with the quartet. I’ve gotten to go to Europe. I’ve gotten to sing twice at the quartet convention. Things I have always dreamed about, God has still allowed me to do that, just in a different way.

SGN Scoops: *I think every gospel singer loves the hymns, but there is usually one or two each one loves more than the rest. What hymns do you really love the most?*

Aaron Perkins: I would say “Jesus Paid It All.” That one first comes to mind. I’ve always loved “Grace, Greater Than Our Sin... Grace, Grace, God’s Grace,” that one. Those two are probably my top two.

SGN Scoops: *What is your favorite scripture verse and why is that your number one?*

Aaron Perkins: Proverbs 3:5-6. It means a lot to me because it is so important to do just what it says: To

trust in the Lord with all your heart; not just part of your heart, all of it. If we can do that, God can see our faith and He can bless us a whole lot more when we do that. It's just so important because you never know what you are going to go through in life. I've had mountain tops and I've had valleys. If it wasn't for the valleys, I wouldn't appreciate the mountain tops. I've had to trust God through those things and that verse has meant a lot to me. You have to make different choices, but if you acknowledge Him, He will direct your path. That's been my goal in life. I haven't always done it, but I try to cling to that verse.

SGN Scoops: *Fill in the blank. If I weren't a gospel singer I.....*

Aaron Perkins: Would sell Krispy Kreme Donuts. That was the first thing that came to my mind.

and 1960's. I don't have a release day yet.

The Ball Brothers have background vocals on several songs. I also have The Dixie Echoes on a couple songs with me. I have two male quartets, which is just the way I want it. It's actually going to have 14 songs, believe it or not. It was hard to dwindle down the list. As far as the song list, there's "Roll Away Troubled River," "Yesterday," which is one of my favorite meaningful songs that George Younce wrote. Let's see, "Thanks to Calvary," is on there. A song that Big Chief wrote... actually, I'm doing a couple of songs that Big Chief wrote: "Tenderly" and "If You Drink This Water" is on there. Also, "All Aboard," which is also known as "Let's Go to That Land." Then there are a few other surprises on there. The feel that I'm going for is the classic gospel/jazz. I hope that people like it.



SGN Scoops: *Tell me all of the details about your upcoming CD. The release date, some of the songs on it, what you are going to call it and why you decided to record it.*

Aaron Perkins: I've wanted to make a great quality album with songs that I love. That's what led me to do it. This has actually been about two years in the making as far as planning and selecting the music for it. A buddy of mine, Ben Hart, who used to play for The Echoes, he has produced all of the music for this. When I talked to him, I told him I wanted a classic sound that would take you back to the 1950's, 1960's of Gospel music and to make it kind of jazzy. I love Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett and Michael Buble and that style of music. The jazz stuff. I try to incorporate that into Gospel music and try to make it sound like it was back in the 1950's



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SOUTHERN GOSPEL WEEKEND

UPDATE



By LORRAINE WALKER

Southern Gospel Weekend is finally here! We have been planning, waiting and praying for this event for a year, and by the time some of you are reading this, it will be over. March 10th through 12th are the dates this year for all of the artists and fans to gather in Oxford, Alabama. The Oxford Civic Center is a lovely facility and we know that everyone attending the event will have a good time. Oxford has some great restaurants to visit and beautiful walking areas and green space. Best of all, SGW admission is free! What a delightful way to retreat from the hassles of life and be with God's people, listening to His music and His word. Start planning to be with us next year.

This year, Southern Gospel Weekend are inviting active and veteran members of the military to attend the Thursday night concert, for an official Veterans Night. These special guests and their escorts receive VIP



passes for the evening. Opening the evening on Thursday, March 10th, will be Scott Roberts and the Five O'clock Band. The National Anthem will be performed by Exodus. Ken Rollins, Alabama Dept of Veterans Affairs and host of Veteran's Issues on Channel 24 will be the keynote speaker, following which will be the Introduction of Veterans and a patriotic song by the Sharps Quartet. The concert lineup includes Jason Runnells, Kristen Stanton, The Jonathans, Tina Wakefield, Brad



Mount, the Pine Ridge Boys, Brothers 4, Kelly Coberly, Revived Quartet, Ava Kasich, The Chandlers, Chronicle and The Williamsons.

The Thursday night lineup is just a taste of what fans will experience at this year's SGW in Oxford. A great Exhibit Hall, Daytime Showcases with Ava Kasich and Vonda Easley of Hope's Journey, Midnight Prayer time and a Saturday Breakfast fill the days and nights with music. Many solo and group artists will be performing





during the three-day festival. Some artists attending include The Riders, Higher Hope, McKay Project, Schofields, Surrendered, Amy Richardson, From The Ashes, Justified, Surrendered, Jordan's River and many more. A new addition to the SGW is a VIP seating section. For \$25, true Southern Gospel fans can purchase a pass that will assure them the best view of all the concerts for the entire event. Not only will they have the preferred

seating, but also VIP pass holders will receive a special surprise at the event. Anyone interested in purchasing a VIP pass should contact Vonda Easley at 256-310-7892. Contact Salina Clay for hotel reservations at hotels@sgnscoops.com or call her at 256-239-7716.



Remember, the tickets are free for SGW! Call Rob Patz at 360-933-0741 or Vonda Easley at 256-310-7892 for tickets.

Coastal Media's Rob Patz, one of the Board Members of SGW, states, "Seeing people's lives touched and changed through the music that I believe so strongly in, is the most fulfilling aspect of what I do. That happens at Southern Gospel Weekend." For more information visit: www.SouthernGospelWeekend.com or <https://www.facebook.com/southerngospelweekend>.



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Technology with a Twist

Artists Apps!

By Lynn Mills

Technology has given us the ability to access any type of information at any time. At home on your computer or on the go with a smartphone or tablet; it only takes an internet connection or data plan to pull up what you're looking for. Yet, even with such amazing abilities, little inconveniences like small keyboards on phones can make it a hassle to pull up your favorite artist's website on the small screen or maybe the browser refuses to load due to a weak connection. Maybe when you scroll through Facebook, the post that has the information about a concert coming to your hometown whizzes past you, and of course, you don't see it until *after* the concert...

Well, mobile apps have changed all that.

Now, with one click, you can bring up a tour schedule, news column or store from your favorite Gospel Music artists if they have an app. App usage in Gospel Music began a few years ago and now, groups are using this technology to directly connect with their fans through push notifications announcing new product, concert schedules for each weekend and updates on events and cruises.

The best part? The majority of these apps are FREE – giving you the best option to connect with each artist at no cost, saving you time and giving you the information you want at the touch of a button. Who are the groups offering these free apps? Let's take a look...

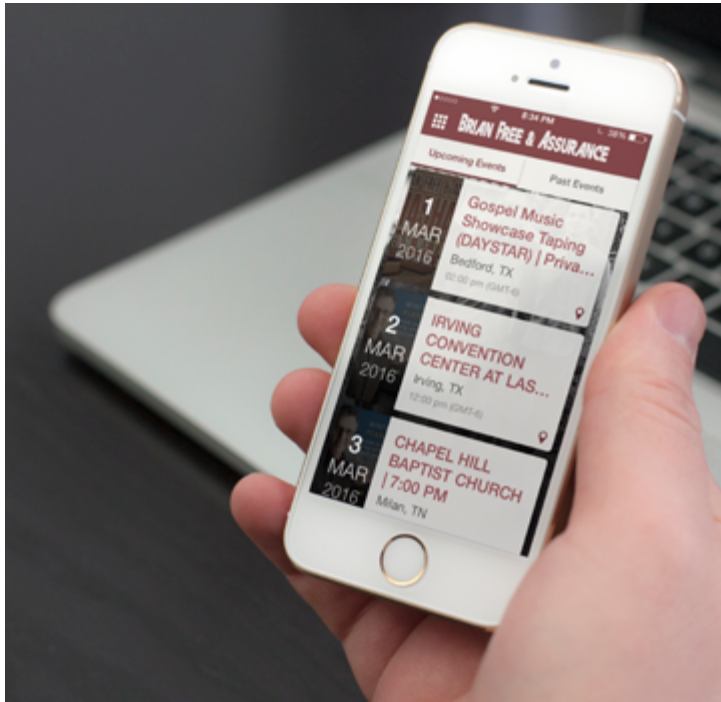
The Mark Trammell Quartet (MTQ) launched their mobile app in the summer of 2015. Everything found on the group's website can be accessed on their app in just one click. Better yet, when you download the application and "allow push notifications," you will receive a notification each weekend letting you know where the group is singing.

Do you know how it feels to miss a concert in your area because the one week you didn't check the group's schedule they came to town? With this technology, you never have to worry about that again – the schedule comes right to your phone. You can find the quartet's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages on the app – which is handy if you want to save time from typing



their name in the search box when you want to look at their page.

Just open the MTQ App, click *Facebook* or *Twitter* and you're there! The Mark Trammell Quartet also features



a unique *Latest Happenings* page with updates ranging from when a new photo album has been posted on Facebook to inside sneak peeks on events they've been to and information on their latest and upcoming recordings.

Brian Free and Assurance also released their app last summer which includes the same functions from MTQ's app, e.g. tour schedule, easy access to their social media, store, video, etc. Both apps also have the use of a *Loyalty Card* – a way to collect points to receive product. This feature is much like the rewards programs you join at department stores, grocery stores and maybe even fast food restaurants. Each group we feature here – Mark Trammell Quartet, Brian Free and Assurance and Legacy Five – are using these 'loyalty cards' to reward those who come out to see them at concerts/events.

When you attend a concert with one of these artists, you can take your device (with the app open) to them at their product table and have a punch registered on your loyalty card. Each time you attend a concert you can collect a punch. Accumulate 10 punches and get some-



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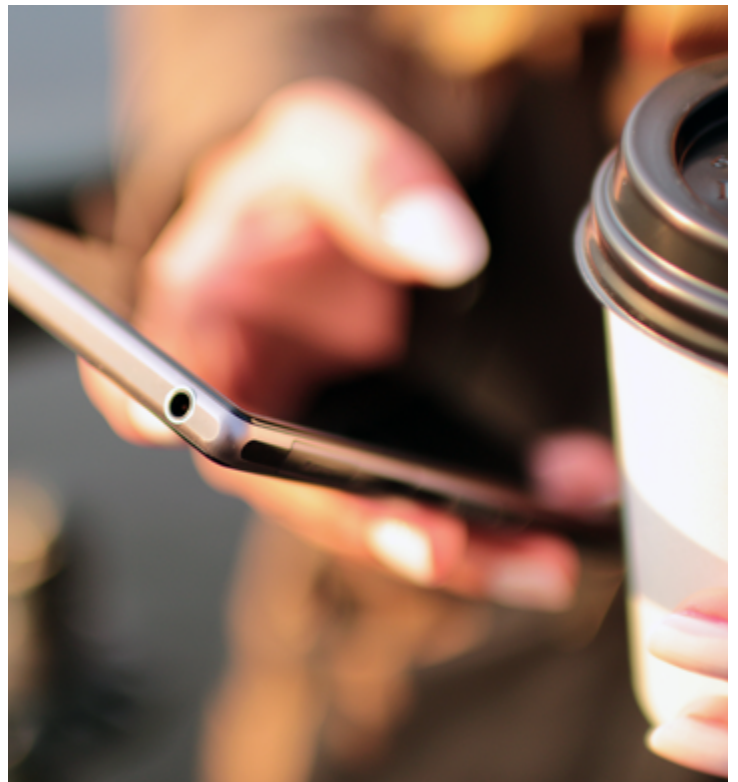
thing free! Free product is due to change over time depending on the artist.

Legacy Five released their app this year during their Celebration New Year's Eve event in Nashville, Tennessee. As a group, they were the first to use push notifications to notify attendees when the doors opened for concerts, what time the concert would begin, and had their schedule for the weekend always accessible on the app's *News* page. This function is a great asset to fans who attend Homecomings and events hosted by artists. As long as you have your phone with you, you know what's going on, what time you need to be there and the location of the event. No doubt fans who attend Celebration NYE with Legacy Five, The Mark Trammell Quartet Homecoming or Brian Free and Assurance's Unashamed Fan Retreat will see these apps used this way in 2016.



The question is simply this: why not download these apps? If you follow any of these groups, you can keep updated with their ministries at the touch of a button, quickly and efficiently. Be sure to *allow push notifications* to have tour dates and other important information sent directly to your device and enjoy the technology that Gospel Music offers with their own twist!

All three apps mentioned above (Mark Trammell Quartet, Brian Free and Assurance and Legacy Five) are available on both Google Play (Android phones and tablets) and Apple Products (iPhone, iPad, iPod). To find the app you're interested in, simply open the app store, type in the group's name, select and download!



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The Editor's Last Word

By Lorraine Walker

Happy Easter! It's not often that Easter is in March, and although it seems too early to be celebrating our risen Savior with snow on the ground, in reality we celebrate Him every day of our lives. Did you know that the way you live shows whether you believe in a God who is alive and walking with you every moment? I'm so glad that Jesus is with me. A Savior who suffered a horrific death just so I could be free of the power of sin. A powerful Redeemer who rose again to give me new life. A reigning King who is the ultimate Authority. You may not believe it to see what is happening right now in our world of terror and violence, but He is in control. And one day He will say, "Stop!" What a day that will be!

Here at SGNscoops we also celebrate the life-changing power of Jesus in every issue as we talk to artists about their music that lifts up His Name. Our cover artists, Brian Free and Assurance, are no different. Brian, Bill and Mike are a trio now and continue to present a straight-forward message with a truly progressive sound. I remember when Brian was with Gold City and when he first started his trio, Assurance. You never have to wonder what Brian or his bandmates believe. Just listen to their music. It is all in there. I suppose I should remain impartial regarding groups, but I am a huge, huge fan of BFA.

We are proud of the fact that our writers and all of the people they feature are also followers of the Risen Christ. Just read the articles on Jaquita Lindsey, The Griffiths, Josh Allen, Aaron Perkins, Phil and Sharlenae

Collingsworth, Surrendered, and our friends, Hope's Journey. You will hear the sound of their faith echoing through their words as much as through their music. Our writers are the same. You might enjoy the variety in styles of writing as much as what they say, but you will know they believe every word they write. Thank you so much to this month's writers: Craig, Erin, Jaquita, Justin and Justin, Ralph, Lynn, Dixie, Tina, Vonda, Charlie, David, Rob, Laurette, Selena, Kelly, Randall and Dusty. You are appreciated!

Just a note as I end this that I have read the prayer requests from so many of you that are going through rough times. I am praying for you. That isn't a cliché or trite saying; it is from my heart. Prayer is powerful. Jesus prayed for us and then prayed for Himself before He faced the cross. So many times it is recorded in the scriptures that He prayed. Shouldn't that encourage us to pray more? I am not as regular as I should be about approaching the throne, but I know it is a privilege we are granted by our Living God. Go there. You will not leave the same.

Happy Resurrection Sunday. "We serve a living Savior, He's in the world today"... "Christ the Lord is Risen Today"... "Up From the Grave He Arose!" Let the words of the Easter songs flow through your mind and heart this month and praise His Name!

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Rob Patz is the President and CEO of Coastal Media Group. Rob has an 18 year history in radio hosting the nationally syndicated radio show, "The Southern Styles Show" since its beginning in 1993. Rob is also the owner of the internet's #1 Southern Gospel station, SGMRadio.com. In 2009, Rob Patz acquired SGNScoops.com, including the all- digital Scoops Magazine and the Diamond Awards. Rob has taken part in several Christian television projects working in front of the camera and also has helped create several syndicated television programs as well. Rob does voice work for various outlets including fortune 500 companies as well as emceeing concerts and special events. Email Rob at rob@sgnscoops.com.



Christian Health & Fitness Expert Laurette Willis is an author with Harvest House Publishers, and the Director of PraiseMoves Fitness Ministry with DVDs, a training program and PraiseMoves Instructors on four continents (<http://PraiseMoves.com>), on Facebook <http://on.fb.me/PraiseMoves>. Laurette invites readers to get started on the road to better health and fitness for spirit, soul and body. For a free, easy- to- follow 21 day program visit: <http://ChristianFitnessKit.com>



Stephanie Kelley is a public speaker and owner of Queen-O-Q, a blog featuring coupon match-ups, freebies, samples and information on frugal living. She is married, has three children and lives in Washington State. Queenoq.blogspot.com

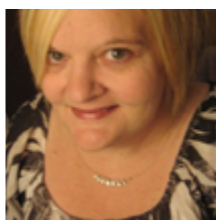


Canadian-born Lorraine Walker has a love for Jesus Christ, music and writing. The combination of these passions has produced artist features and monthly columns for Southern

Gospel publications including SGM Radio website and SGN Scoops Digital magazine. Lorraine desires that the power of the written word will glorify her Lord and bring readers closer to the love, peace and majesty of the Almighty. Email Lorraine at lorraine@sgnscoops.com



Jennifer Campbell is a singer, songwriter, musician, and middle school English teacher from McAlpin, Florida. Along with her passion for teaching, she has an even greater passion for ministering to others, sharing her testimony of how she was born lifeless and how Jesus raised her up to live for Him. Jennifer is a member of the Florida Worship Choir and Orchestra and has performed with them at Brooklyn Tabernacle, Carnegie Hall, Central Park, and Times Square. She serves as a group leader for Women of Faith, designs websites, and writes an inspirational blog at <http://jennifer-campbell.net/blog.htm> and a food and travel blog at <http://jennifersjourneys.net> Learn more about Jennifer at <http://jennifercampbell.net> and www.christwillreturn.org.



Joan Walker grew up with music in the house and first heard Southern Gospel in her early teens. With almost a quirky (some may say 'weird') need to make sure words are spelled correctly and the apostrophes are in the right place, she enjoys proofreading the articles for the SGN Scoops magazine each month...and looks beyond the letters and commas to the wonderful words each writer has written. Joan counts it as a blessing in her life to be part of SGN Scoops!

Contributors

SGN SCOOPS



Dusty Wells is a man of many talents and multiple skills, from his speaking engagements across the country, to traveling and encouraging various artists in the Christian music genres. Dusty has a passion that is evident from the moment you meet him.

Dusty is a man who remains passionate and secure in the calling and destiny upon his life. He has come to realize the importance of finding purpose and clear direction for not only his life, but also the lives of those he comes in contact with, no matter what stage of life they may be in. Growing up in a very dysfunctional home, surrounded by all types of abuse, Dusty had every excuse to be a failure in life. He grew up on welfare, having to steal his daily necessities of life at times, being surrounded by drugs, alcohol and pornography. He was raised by a mother who was married multiple times, living in a housing project on the wrong side of town. But in the midst of what seemed to be complete devastation, God had different plans of success for Dusty. At the age of 14, a precious couple took time out of their own lives to invest in Dusty...thus leading Him to the Lord. His life is a testimony of God's relentless love and deliverance, and is one of the most triumphant stories told in modern Christianity. Dusty is confident in the fact that if God can do it for him, He can do it for anyone, no matter the situation.

Dusty and his wife of 33 years have four children, and two grandbabies with one more on the way. They make their home in Nashville, Tn.



Justin McLeod is the founder of the Justin's World of Softball website, a site that he has built into one of the premier news outlets in the sport. Justin is a longtime Gospel music fan and enjoys researching the history of the genre, attending concerts, and review-

ing recordings whenever possible. The son of a Southern Baptist pastor, he also works for a law firm as a legal secretary and is active in his local church. Justin is a native of Memphis and now resides in Northeast Louisiana.



Pete Schwager is a web developer and graphic designer with a passion for Christ. He was born in Santa Rosa, California and moved to Oregon where he spent most of his life. He now lives in the quiet town of Ringgold, Georgia and enjoys living in the country with his family.

You can find him online at <http://peteschwager.com>



Staci Schwager helps with marketing and communication with her husband's web design company, Cre8able Media. Together they make a great team! Staci being the "talkative" one, loves being able to communicate one on one with clients and organizing

ideas. While Pete on the other hand is diving into the design and coding aspects to make the real masterpiece! Most of Staci's days are filled with preparing homeschool lessons for her kids, couponing, gardening, tending to her chicken flock and spending as much time on the beautiful, country land God has blessed them with.



My name is Tina Wakefield and I am currently Music Minister for Amazing Grace Worship Center in Alabaster, Al. I have led worship for over 18 years as well as teach adults how to live everyday life in Victory as a Christian. I enjoy playing and singing Gospel Music whenever and

wherever I am invited. I currently have three Cd s available on my website at www.tinawakefield.com and just released my first music video with Godsey & Associates called, "The Choice" available on YouTube. I write a lot of the music we sing at church and also record my original songs. My family is very ministry oriented with Pastors, Teachers, Musicians, and Singers. My heart's desire is to spread the gospel of Christ through any and all open doors that I receive.

Contributors

SGN SCOOPS



During my childhood days my parents took me to the Atlanta City Auditorium for concerts hosted by Warren Roberts. That was the beginning of my love for Southern Gospel music. After 35 years I retired from USPS, during which time I got married. My wife and I often went

to The Joyful Noise for dinner and concerts. Every known name in Gospel Music sang there at one time or another. After I retired, we decided to start promoting concerts. Our goal was not only to promote our concerts, but also to promote any Gospel concerts in our area and attend as many as we possibly could. I came to a crossroads in December 2013 when my wife graduated to heaven, not knowing what to do. After much prayer God led me to continue promoting concerts. Have promoted around 100 concerts and can't tell you how many I attended. I still enjoy going to concerts and writing a little about the groups.



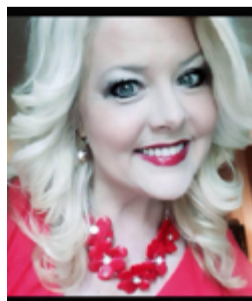
Erin Stevens is a uniquely talented shutterbug, singer, guitar player, writer, blogger, and social networker. She is the owner/operator of Photos For Keeps By Erin. Along with running her own business, she is the official photographer for Abraham Productions (API). You will find her behind the lens at all API events, along with working behind the scenes on their

social media. She also travels full-time on the road with her family's gospel group, The Stevens Family. Photography is her passion and singing for Jesus is her calling. For several years, you have known her as our very own "Younger Perspective" writer. Check out her photography website www.photosforkeepsbyerin.com and her ministry website www.stevensfamilymusic.com.



Sherry Anne Lints, a Doctor of Chiropractic, singer, speaker, actress, writer and fitness trainer, was born with a bilateral hearing and speech impairment. She appeared in the films, Clancy and The Perfect Gift and was a special guest on 100 Huntley Street, in Ontario, Canada. She is a contributing author for the book, Modern-Day Miracles and

released her second CD, Keep on Prayin', July 2012 and has opened for many of the Gaither Homecoming Artists. Additionally, Sherry Anne helps lead worship and drama at her church. For more information, visit: www.SherryAnne.com.



Vonda Easley is the owner of Hope's Journey Christian Ministries and the voice of "The Strictly Southern Show" at WPIL 91.7 in Heflin, Alabama on Fridays



Vivian is the marketing manager at KKGM in Dallas/Fort Worth Texas, as well as hosting a program on Sundays where she features national, regional as well as local artists. She also brings news of upcoming concert events in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex and surrounding area. Vivian has promoted various artists in this area for over 10

years beginning with Phil Cross and Poet Voices and later Sharron Kay King and Jerry Bennett to name a few. She has spent the past several years promoting Southern Gospel, Inspirational Country Gospel and Bluegrass in this area in order to preserve this part of our heritage.



Hello, I'm Randall Hamm, Gospel Program Director of WFLQ French Lick Indiana, host of the Sunday Morning Gospel Show for the past 20 years on WFLQ French Lick Indiana and Singing News Top 10 Small Market DJ for the past three years. I now add something new to my resume! Record Reviewer, ok... CD Reviewer. I'm Old School, having

started in the days of LP's, 45's and Reel to Reel along with cassettes as the main form of music played. If you'd like to listen to my program, you can visit <https://www.facebook.com/TheSundayMorningGospelShow> and listen to archived programs, plus I post various Southern Gospel news updates, uplifting music and Gospel-related items. If you're in the six-county area around French Lick Indiana, in the heart of Southern Indiana, tune in every Sunday 6:00am-12:00pm and listen to the Gospel Greats with Paul Heil, 6:00am to 8:00am and the Sunday Morning Gospel Show with Randall Hamm 8:00am to 12:00pm.

Contributors

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After graduating from Middle Tennessee State University with a Mass Communication degree, Craig Harris has been in the journalism field for more than 15 years, working daily as both a photographer and writer at one of the largest non-daily publications in the state of Tennessee. He has experience in feature writing, news writing, action photography, portrait photography, web-site maintenance and layout. Craig has been a part of numerous awards, both collective and individual honors in the journalism field. He has had articles published in numerous newspapers and magazines on a variety of subjects, most notably in the world of sports.

Craig's Southern Gospel interest dates back for approximately the same time span, having closely followed the industry since the later portion of the 1990s. He also performed for seven years with a local trio prior to joining the SGN Scoops staff.

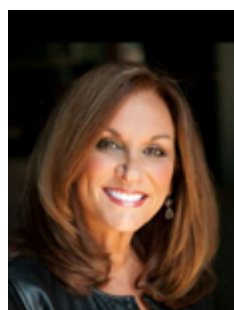


David's distinctive sound and his ability to blend perfectly with a variety of vocalists has made him a valuable commodity on live events as well as in the studio. His compassionate and gentle spirit makes him more than an artist, it makes him a great friend!

David began singing at age 6 with family. In 1990, he filled in for the Speer Family and later that year he became the lead vocalist for The Trailblazers. In 2002, Staton filled the lead position with Priority. While with Priority, the group was the resident gospel group at the Silver Dollar City theme park in Branson, MO and they performed for over one million people in one year. After the group disbanded in 1995, David continued to write for artists in many different genres of music while occasionally performing solo. It was during this time that his song, "Every Knee Shall Bow", recorded by Dottie Peoples, was nominated for a Grammy Award. His song, "Together We Can" was adopted as the national theme song to bring awareness to violence in schools. The music video (Together We Can) that featured many Atlanta based artists was shown at the 1999 Grammy Awards show, which helped launch the careers of artists like R&B's Jagged Edge, India Arie, and 4.0. In 2004, David partnered with Mike LeFevre to form The LeFevre Quartet. During the seven years that he was the lead vocalist, the group had many hit songs and won many awards. After leaving the LeFevre

Quartet in 2011, Staton began working on a solo project and also began singing with Palmetto State Quartet. The group appeared on television and toured with country music superstar, Wynonna Judd while Staton was there.

Through the years, artists like Gold City, Jeff & Sheri Easter, Kingsmen, Singing Americans, Dixie Melody Boys, Imperials, Dottie Peoples, Ball Brothers, LeFevre Quartet, Palmetto State Quartet, Priority, Trailblazers, The Greenes, Ivan Parker, Brian Free and many more have recorded David's music. From 2005 to 2013, Staton was the Executive Vice President for Song Garden Music Group in Nashville, TN. In recent years, the National Quartet Convention has asked David to be a part of an industry advisory panel to help artists who need assistance and training. Not only has David made a mark as an artist, he is passing on his talent and knowledge to new artists, influencing and shaping the future of Gospel music.



Kelly Nelon Clark is the daughter of Gospel Music icon, the late Rex Nelon. As part of her father's group, The Nelons, she blazed a musical trail bringing a fresh new sound to the traditional Gospel quartet style. That sound and style influenced a generation of Gospel music performers and can be heard today in the styling of

groups like the Martins, Point of Grace, The Crabb Family and more.

As The Nelons broke new ground, the Gospel Music industry repeatedly recognized their excellence. The group won four GMA Dove awards as well as multiple awards from readers of Singing News Magazine. Kelly was named female vocalist of the year on four occasions and received favorite alto vocalist award 3 times. At one time, Kelly was the most awarded artists in the history of the Singing News Fan Awards. The music industry at large also recognized The Nelons with 3 Grammy nominations.

Today, Kelly currently performs throughout the United States, Canada and Europe with her husband and two daughters as The Nelons. The group is featured in hundreds of churches and concerts each year. The Nelons have been part of Gaither Homecoming concerts sharing their music with thousands of Gospel Music fans in sold-out arenas across the country. For more information, visit <http://www.kellynelon.com/>.

Contributors

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Marcie Gray was born and raised in sunny California, yet always dreamed of moving to Tennessee. She had planned to move to the south as a young adult and sing with a gospel group, after being inspired to do so by her Great Uncle, Alphus LeFevre. Though it took longer than she had expected, in 2011, her dream of moving

east finally came true when her husband, Don, retired from the CHP. They packed up their two youngest daughters, three dogs and two horses and headed east. What a blessing to finally be where the tea is sweet, the Southern Gospel music is plentiful and there's a Cracker Barrel on every corner!

Spend ten minutes with Marcie and you'll learn that she is rarely lacking for something to say. Her passion for Southern Gospel music, combined with her instinct to be behind the camera, makes journalism a very enjoyable outlet for that "Type A" personality she has been affectionately labeled with by her family and friends.

Marcie is a worship leader, vocalist and songwriter. She has directed choirs of all ages and given voice lessons for many years. Her solo CD, "Carry Me Home" was released in September of 2014.

Having family in ministry has given Marcie a desire to support those who are on the road sharing the gospel through song. Visit her website at www.graydoveministries.com to learn more!



Lynn Mills is a talented writer who has a passion for music, specifically Gospel music. Lynn authors the site Lynn's Chronicles where she shares her experiences attending various concert events and what people can expect should they want to attend. Also featured are CD & DVD Reviews, Devotionals,

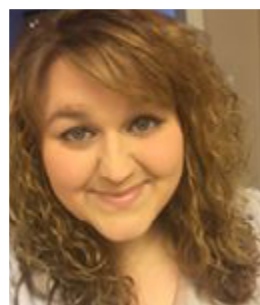
Photos, Video and News tidbits. Keep up with Lynn online at <http://lynnschronicles.com> or on facebook @ <http://facebook.com/lynns.chronicles>



Hi, my name is Dean Adkins and I am honored to be a part of the SGN Scoops family. Perhaps some background information would be beneficial. I am sometimes called "Professor" because I was a Biology professor at Marshall University for 31 years and I retired in 2004. I grew up listening to gospel music (or as it is now termed Southern Gospel Music) and many of my relatives (Adkins, Toney, Booth families) are gospel singers/musicians. I collect records, primarily LPs, and SGM related items. Over the years I have studied the history of this genre. I would like to use these articles to describe events and the mind-set of the 1950s and 60s – sometimes called the Golden Age of Gospel Music.



Alpha Source Media Group is lead by Candi Combs and was born out of a strong desire to support the ministers who share the gospel on the highways and byways of life. Combs says, "These artists and their families spend their days selflessly bringing the life-changing message of Jesus to crowds large and small. We want to do all we can to support them!" In 2015, Candi will have a law degree from Liberty University and will provide a full range of legal counsel. This component will bring the highest level of support to those who also desire legal representation.



Bethany Cook is a 26-year-old from the great state of North Carolina. In her early years, Bethany grew up on the road as the daughter of an evangelist. In her teen years, the family came off the road and made their home in Burlington, NC where her father is now a pastor. Being an avid Southern Gospel fan from an early age has enabled Bethany to meet many different artists and make many friends along the way. With a history of devotional writing for family and friends, she looks forward to sharing her writing and allowing her readers to see a little more into the lives of Southern Gospel Music artists. Bethany is a Medical Assistant for a large Cardiology Practice in North Carolina.

Contributors

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Sheri began singing while traveling with her abundantly talented family, led by her father John LaFontaine, a minister for over 48 years. In 1994 with Grammy nominated singer Jeff Easter producing, she recorded her first solo project, *Takin' My Place*.

Shortly thereafter, Sheri received a call from the top promoter in south-

ern gospel, Frank Arnold and was asked to join his group, The Arnolds on the road. After several years of traveling Sheri felt the Lord leading her to focus on her solo career and songwriting. In 2004 she signed a songwriting contract with one of the industry's top recording labels, Daywind Music. Her songs have been recorded by Kim Hopper, Karen Peck, Sue Dodge, Brian Free & Assurance, Misty Freeman, Three Bridges, The Whisnants, The Browns and many more.



Paige Givens is a Christ follower, wife, mother of two boys and kindergarten teacher to 18 five-year-olds. She is a writer, reader, singer, studier, and teacher of words. Paige lives in Hayden, Alabama with her husband of 10 years, Chris Givens, and their sons Parker and Peyton.

Paige loves to blog about faith,

writing, music, and teaching. Her goal is to serve the Lord by inspiring others to be who He has called them to be. You can listen to her music and read her devotionals at www.paigegivens.com.

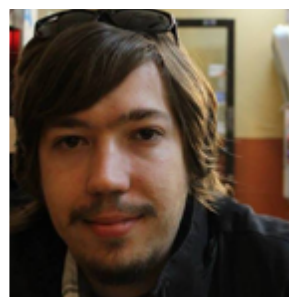


Jaquita Lindsey holds the alto position for the Southern Gospel group 11th Hour. The group was originally based out of Monroe, LA but recently relocated to Hendersonville, TN. She comes from the small town of Camden, AR. She is also a licensed cosmetologist. In her spare time, she enjoys being

crafty and spending time with family and friends. She's been singing since the age of eight, but realizes that it's much more than just singing. "Anyone can show off their talent. I'd rather hear someone that shows that they are anointed!" For more information on Jaquita, visit 11thhourgospelgroup.com



Matt Baker resides in Lenoir, NC with his wife, Ashley, and children, Bella and Bennett. A gospel music lover, Matt spent time on the road full-time with Promise of Murfreesboro, TN, before moving into church ministry as the music minister at Ambassador Baptist Church in Hudson, NC.



Justin Gilmore, 22, a resident of San Diego, California, graduated from Point Loma Nazarene University with a B.A. in History in June of 2014. Passionate about Southern Gospel music and its history, he decided to venture into the blog world in January starting Southern Gospel Spotlight in order to share his

love of this great style of music.



Roger Barkley Jr. is an award-winning Christian artist and musical evangelist. With multiple charting songs reaching to the top 10, his goals remain the same: to win souls for Christ, use Gospel Music of any kind to reach the world with the Good News, seeing lives changed and being an encouragement to the

saints. When asked about his ministry, Roger said, "I can remember the first time singing with my dad playing the guitar and standing beside my mom when I was four years old. I have always loved all types of music." His vision is to lead as many people to Christ through preaching, singing, sharing testimony, comedy, drama and technology as possible. Having been labeled a Christian Entertainer, he believes it is possible to minister in an entertaining way, and in over 35 years of ministry has found that he can utilize all different types of music to let people know the love of Jesus Christ. Currently he is Artist-In-Residence with his wife, Dianna, and daughter, Chelsea, at Leestown Gospel Church in Frankfort, KY, and Redemption Road Community Church in Stamping Ground, KY where he leads worship when not spreading the Gospel across America.

Contributors

SGN SCOOPS



Brian Fuson is from the great state of Michigan, and although he is a Northerner, he certainly knows his Gospel music. He's been promoting concerts since he was 15-years-old and has worked with a diverse group of artists. He has been blogging about Southern Gospel music for the last few years on his site called Fuson's Findings. And

most recently, Brian has started singing with his wife Crysta and her parents, The Sammons Family. All of this information and more can be found on his website, brianfusonmusic.com.



Selena Day is from Atlanta GA. During her twenties she worked in the field of fashion, as both a make-up artist and model.

Selena became a Christian in her early 20's and then quickly met her husband, Chuck Day, who is a songwriter and recording artist. Selena and Chuck have

been in the ministry for 26 years raising three daughters and homeschooling them while they traveled together as a family. During this time God taught her how crucial inter-generational ministry is for the furthering of God's kingdom. Selena travels the world speaking at conferences with the emphasis on empowering a multi-generation of women to rise up and become everything that God has called them to. Encouraging the next generation of the church to break the walls of limitations in their mind and rise to their full potential. Selena and her husband are life coaches for The World Race, which is an extreme missions trip for adults 21 through 35. They travel every two months somewhere around the world to mentor these missionaries.

She and Chuck have been pastoring a home-church for 14 years where they have experienced God moving in community and seeing the body of Christ in action through each other.



Timmy Williamson is a 24-year-old singer and actor from Virginia Beach, Virginia. He graduated from Liberty University in 2014 with degrees in Worship and Theatre. Over the past several years, he has been given the privilege of singing in many churches and events as well as performing in professional theatre productions. He has been enjoyed

by audiences at NQC's Artist Showcases, Gospel Explosion at First Baptist Church of Dallas, and in the Virginia Beach Gospel Music Festival. Timmy currently lives in Lynchburg, Virginia where he is pursuing a full time career traveling and singing. He would love to come and share his music with your church or special event! For more information, please visit his website, www.timmywilliamson.com.