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Scoops

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digital



Triumphant Quartet

Also In This Issue:



Tracy Stuffle Benefit Concert, Olivia Collingsworth, John Lanier & Ann Downing

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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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2013 DIAMOND Awards



Diamond Awards Round One Nominations

We are excited to kick off the 2013 Diamond Awards nomination process! On Monday, February 18 voting opened. Fans may now cast their nomination for their favorite artists and groups in many categories covering Southern Gospel and Christian Country. Remember, the Diamond Awards are fan based, so every artist is on equal ground as far as being nominated. Please vote, then encourage your friends, family and fans to vote by sharing the link on your website and all social media outlets. We will close round one on April 22. Look for the top candidates to be announced on our website as well as in the May edition of SGN Scoops Magazine. Round 2 of the voting process begins May 1, and then the final round opens the first of July.

Winners will be announced at the 2013 Creekside Gospel Music

Vote by clicking [here](#) to cast your vote now!

PUBLISHER'S POINT

by Rob Patz



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Letter From The Editor

By Rhonda Frye



Spring is here! Every time the seasons change, I'm reminded of God's faithfulness. Faithfulness is a topic the Lord and I have been discussing for a while now. Just when it seems I become faithful in one area of my life, we move on to the next area of chaos. I think it's going to take the rest of my life to get this "faithfulness in ALL things at ALL times" down pat. God is being faithful to cultivate faithfulness in me.

During the Easter season, the Holy Spirit directed my attention to how Jesus demonstrated faithfulness as He hung on the cross. It would have been perfectly understandable if Jesus would have said, "Sorry- I'm a little pre-occupied with the weight of the whole world on me right now," to the thief beside Him. He could have said, "I'd love to help you, but I'm in too much pain," or "I'm too tired." Jesus could have given many reasons to turn a deaf ear to this guilty man, but He didn't.

Not only did Jesus minister to the dying thief, but He also cared for His mother, and prayed for the soldiers that crucified Him. Jesus stayed faithful to His call of ministry right on up until He breathed His last. Well- come to think of it- He was faithful to serve and love others even past the resurrection on up until His feet left planet earth!

The week of Easter, my sweet grandmother was admitted to the hospital. At this point, we're not really sure exactly what the problem is. One thing we do know for sure is that Grandmother, in sickness and in health will be faithful until she breathes her last breath.

During this time of illness, at 90 years of age, Grandmother has become confused about some things. One thing she hasn't become confused about is ministry. At one point over the weekend she began to cry. Taking her by the hand, I asked, "What's wrong?" Through tears

she said, "I have to get out of here! I have work to do. There are still people that need to hear about Jesus- and I need to tell them!"

As I admire the faithfulness exemplified by our Savior on the cross and also God's work of faithfulness in Grandmother, I desire this fruit of the Spirit to develop fully in me! God is teaching me that faithfulness isn't developed overnight; it takes time to perfect!

I'm so thankful that God doesn't dish out a mandate to be faithful and then leave us scrambling to man up to His expectations. Instead, our faithfulness is a work in progress and His Word teaches us how to be faithful:

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up." Hebrews 12:1-3

So...How about it, my Southern Gospel Family?! Will you allow the Lord to cultivate faithfulness in you? Remember, God called us to be faithful, not popular or successful. Just as sure as the seasons come and go, God will be faithful to His Word. He is coming back soon! My greatest desire is to hear Him say... "Well Done, Thy Good and Faithful Servant!"

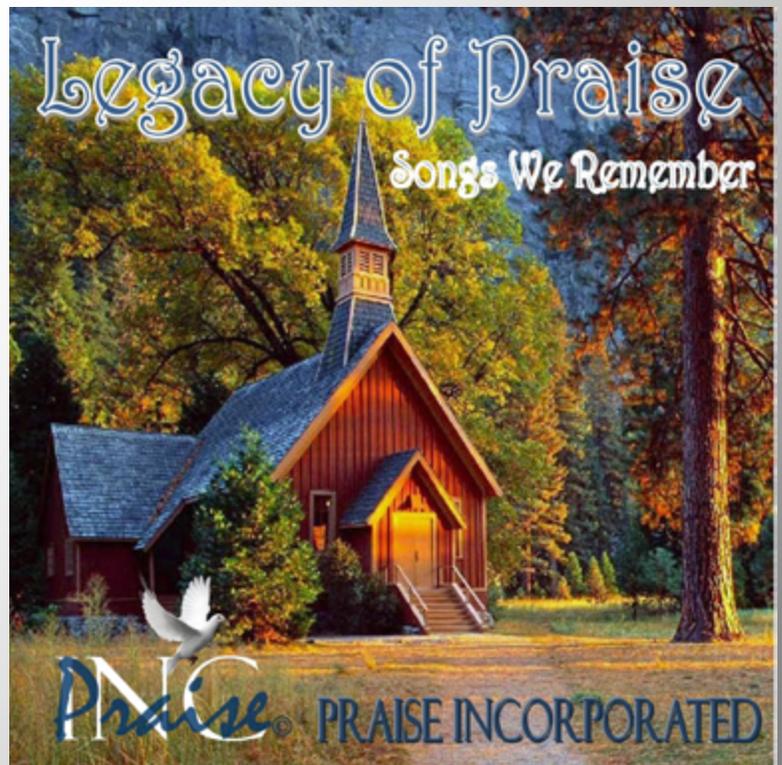
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LIFE LOVE & LEGENDS

“Love & Respect for Mark Lowry”

BY LOU WILLS HILDRETH



Watching Mark Lowry’s solo performance at the Tracy Stuffle Benefit in Nashville reminded me of how talented and gracious this LEGENDARY artist is. Laying aside his crutches, and seated on the steps of the Christ Church platform, Mark sang “Mary Did You Know” to an audience that recognized his incredible talent and the effort he had made to be part of this outpouring of love for a member of the gospel music family. Our Scoops editor, Rhonda Frye, was there and can testify to the emotional high of this event, and the appreciation shown Mark, as he revealed his tender heart.

In a recent conversation with my friend Judy Nelon, she commented “Mark Lowry has a gift for speaking, like no other.” Many know him as a comedian. As a member of the Gaither Vocal Band, Mark has kept audiences laughing for years with his humor. Bill Gaither will tell you that Mark is also a superb vocalist, an awesome writer, and a deep thinker. I am thankful that I had the privilege of signing Mark Lowry to his first booking contract many years ago. His mother had brought him to Nashville to finalize his recording contract with the prestigious Heartwarming label. I wrote the backliner for that first record, confident that Mark would become a huge success in Christian music. My LIFE has been blessed by his friendship, and he is truly LOVED and respected by the industry and fans.

Recently, the Gaither Vocal Band came to Houston for a highly anticipated concert. Just a few weeks prior, on January 3rd, Mark had fallen at home and broken the femur of the same leg that had sustained damage in a motorcycle accident a few years ago. He was not expected to be able to perform at the concert, and a sweet surprise awaited us. I was backstage being interviewed by Gaither Homecoming scriptwriter Emily Southerland when Mark came through the back entrance in a wheelchair. Our brief visit was good, and we talked about the severity of his injury. The concert was underway as I joined my family down front at the huge

Houston Arena. Guitarist Kevin Williams and drummer Greg Ritchie, with Matthew Holt at keyboards, were entertaining the crowd as David Phelps, Michael English, Wes Hampton, and Bill Gaither came onstage. Marshall Hall joined them, filling in for Mark. The audience was enthralled as these awesome vocalists presented the incomparable Vocal Band blend, with each man receiving huge response on featured solos. Then came the surprise! Midway in the concert, the crowd screamed and applauded as Mark Lowry, in a wheelchair, came rolling in and circled the stage a couple of times! Bill Gaither welcomed Mark, and Houston fans were treated to a “never to be forgotten” Gaither Vocal Band concert as Mark added his songs and humor to this memorable event. We thank God that Mark is recovering and able to be back on tour with the Gaither Vocal Band. Howard and I are looking forward to being in Fort Worth, Texas, for GaitherFest, May 3rd & 4th, with the fabulous Gaither Vocal Band and our dear friends Bill and Gloria Gaither.

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



A. Gaither Vocal Band—David Phelps, Michael English, Mark Lowry (in wheelchair) Wes Hampton, and Bill Gaither—Kevin Williams (on guitar)



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By Rhonda Frye & Lorraine Walker

It's really hard to believe we are just six months away from this year's Creekside Gospel Music Convention! Many of you have let us know that you are planning to gather with us and we are really looking forward to a great time with you! If you haven't made plans yet - do so now! The dates are: October 28, 29 and 30. The location is the Smoky Mountain Convention Center in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.

Since all events are free to the public, this is a perfect opportunity to invite your friends, family members and church groups! We are working on a great line-up including Monday night's activities to honor gospel music legend, Ed O'Neal. Also, on Tuesday, October 29, we will present the 2013 Diamond Awards. All throughout the three day event, many artists will participate in afternoon, pre-show and after-show showcases.

Pigeon Forge is a great location for the Creekside Gospel Music Convention for several reasons. It is simply beautiful during October and there are many restaurants, tourist attractions and shopping the Smoky Mountain Convention Center.

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 mar-

kets, 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.

Among the many attractions Sevier County has to offer, visitors can experience:

Pigeon Forge Restaurants: With many varieties to suit every taste, you'll want to stay longer to try them all. A few of the restaurants include: Alamo Steakhouse, All American Pancake House, Dixie Stampede and Show, Genos Restaurant, Great American Steak Buffet, Log Cabin Pancake House, Mandarin House, Bellacinos, Sagebrush Steakhouse, Smokies Breakfast House, and many more.

Sevier County Attractions: When you aren't listening to the award-winning artists at the Creekside Gospel Music Convention concerts, Pigeon Forge and Gatlinburg have a myriad of attractions to keep you and your family entertained. From zip lines and helicopter rides to comedy and musical theatre, attendees will need to plan ahead to fit everything into a fun-filled schedule. Museums, adventure parks, Dollywood and miniature golf are a few of the vacation destinations in this County that promises good times for the entire family.

The Great Smoky Mountains: Nature lovers and city slickers alike will find their minds refreshed by spend-

ing time in the beauty of the Mountains. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park (GSMNP), established in 1934, is home to the world's greatest variety of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians. According to the National Park Service website, over 1500 bears live in the GSMNP, or approximately two bears per square mile. It is also the "Salamander Capital of the World," providing a home for over 24 species of salamanders. The park's streams host 60 types of fish. Nature trails and scenic overlooks provide visitors with a chance to park their cars, step outside and inhale the complete Mountain experience.

History and Education: For those who want to know more about the history of Sevier County, there are many original farm buildings, mills and churches that still stand in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Discover how the original land-owners were asked to leave their homesteads as the Park was established. Go further back into history and explore the land of the Cherokee nation, natives removed from the area in the 1830s. To learn more about the past dwellers of this lovely land, visit the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont, an environmental education centre celebrating ecological and cultural diversity.

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.

▶ For more information on The Creekside Gospel Music Convention, visit: <http://www.creeksidegospelmusicconvention.com/>

▶ For more information on the GSMNP, visit <http://www.nps.gov/grsm/index.htm>.

▶ For more information on black bears in the GSMNP, visit http://www.nps.gov/grsm/nature-science/black-bears.htm#CP_JUMP_95932 ,

▶ Also visit the website for the Great Smoky Mountains Association, which is a nonprofit organization authorized by Congress to support the Park's educational, scientific, and historical programs. <http://www.smokiesinformation.org/>

▶ For more information on the Great Smoky Mountains Institute at Tremont, a non-profit residential environmental education center, visit www.gsmit.org

▶ You can get there from here! Easily accessible from major cities, find the distance from your city to Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg:

- ▶▶ Atlanta, GA — 197 miles
- ▶▶ Charleston, SC — 344 miles
- ▶▶ Charlotte, NC — 215 miles
- ▶▶ Memphis, TN — 433 miles
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- ▶▶ Raleigh, NC — 335 miles
- ▶▶ Washington, DC - 489 miles

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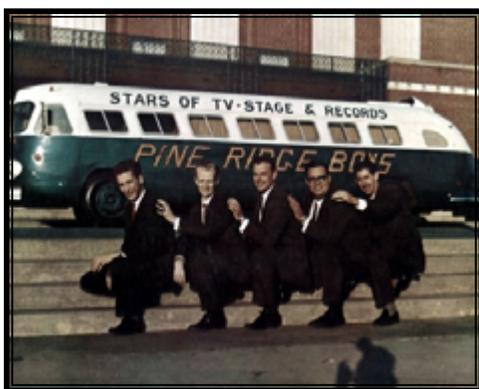
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‘TIS SO SWEET”

The Southern Gospel Community Turns Out To Honor Tracy Stuffle



By Charlie Sexton

“Jesus, Jesus, Precious Jesus! Oh, for grace to trust Him more...” Those were the plaintive cries from the hearts and souls of nearly 2000 folks who gathered on Tuesday, March 19, 2013 in Nashville, Tennessee’s legendary Christ Church to pay tribute to Tracy Stuffle of The Perrys.

Stuffle suffered a brain-hemorrhaging stroke, and subsequently was involved in a minor one-car accident while headed from Nashville to his home in Gallatin, Tennessee on Monday, January 21 2013. He had just dropped his wife, Libbi off at the hospital, where she had planned to stay the night with a close friend who had undergone a breast cancer surgery earlier in the day.

To help initiate healing, the doctors have kept Tracy in a chemically induced coma for much of the last two months. In that time, Libbi has seldom left his side. As of this writing, the sedation has been lifted, and the medical team is evaluating their next step in helping him regain his good health.

As medical expenses have mounted higher and higher, so has the faith of Libbi Perry Stuffle, and

the host of family and friends who have rallied behind her and have lovingly been dubbed *“Team Tracy”*. To offset a part of those expenses, Joseph Habedank, the lead singer for The Perrys, felt led by God to coordinate an all-star benefit concert, and quickly assembled a line-up of their peers to participate in this stellar event. The building was chock full of family, friends, fans, and industry personnel, including folks like singer/songwriter, Reba Rambo-McGuire; Jeff O’Neal of Heritage Communications; record label executives, Dusty Wells and Norman Holland; publicist Judy Spencer-Nelon; songwriters, Joel Lindsey, Adina Bowman and Dianne Wilkinson and SGNScoops editor, Rhonda Frye.

The evening opened with an invocation by The Stuffle’s pastor, Mark Grubb of College Heights Baptist Church in Gallatin, Tennessee. Then the entire cast took the stage singing *We Need Each Other*, an anthem written by Joel Lindsey, Benjy Gaither and Ernie Haase. Habedank’s co-host was none other than Grammy-award winning vocalist, Jason Crabb. The twosome kept the five hour event rolling along smoothly as they brought on singers like Don Scott, the pastor of Christ Church; The Bowlings; Gold City

Quartet; Karen Peck & New River; The Hoppers; The Booth Brothers; and of course, The Perrys.... And that was just the line up for the first half of the program!!!



As Crabb introduced The Perrys, he also revealed that 'Sister Libbi was in the house,' and presented her with a stunning floral bouquet. She, along with Joseph Habedank and Bryan Walker, tearfully sang what will surely be considered her next signature song, *Through The Night*. After a few words of greeting, she gave a brief update about "Sweet T", as she calls him. The Perrys then went into a moving



rendition of *Plan Of Salvation*, accompanied by group alumni, Matthew Holt featuring the pre-recorded bass voice of Tracy Stuffle. Of course, there was not a dry eye in the building, as the beloved tones of this sweet man

were once again heard. Leah Page, who has been handpicked by Libbi to fill in until she can return to the road, joined the group to sing, *If You Knew Him*.

Dr. Phil Hoskins, pastor of Higher Ground Baptist Church in Kingsport, Tennessee was brought to the stage. He asked Libbi to kneel at the altar, and instructed all the guest singers to gather around her as he anointed her with oil as an act of faith and agreement for Tracy's complete healing. As the prayers diminished, the distinctive voice of Libbi Perry Stuffle could be heard above the rest, as she began singing these words:

"Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus. Just to take Him at His word..."



One by one, as each artist and congregant reverently joined in the song, the presence of the sweet Holy Ghost permeated the Sanctuary. What a hallowed moment, indeed. Before leaving the altar, Dr. Hoskins gave an opportunity for folks to make a decision for Christ. There were over 25 rededications and 10 salvations. This was by far the highlight of the entire program.

After a few more minutes of basking in His divine Presence, the second half of the program began. It featured The Isaacs; The Collingsworth Family; Dailley & Vincent (with special guest, Ricky Skaggs); Mark Lowry; Signature Sound and The Oak Ridge Boys. The service closed out with co-host Jason Crabb singing *Through The Fire*. He was joined on stage by many of



the artists, including Libbi, who stated that, *"This too shall pass. We're just going THROUGH the fire. It didn't come to stay."*

After the final note rang out, and the final

prayer was prayed, the folks simply didn't want to leave. The platform and altars areas were flooded in fellowship as everyone came together to shake hands, slap backs, kiss cheeks and hug necks. It was truly a glimpse of Heaven, and proof, yet again, that we do 'need each other'....

Rhonda Frye

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Morning Is Coming!

By Dr. Jeff R. Steele

The poet has said "The sunset is the vestibule of the night time." We don't like the night. If you have a colicky baby, that baby cries more and louder at night. If there is fever in your house especially in one of your children, the fever always seems to spike at night. Worry seems to invade our minds at night. Bills we just 'forgot' to pay in the daylight hours now won't let us rest...at night. Sounds we would not have even heard this afternoon now resemble that of an earthquake and keep us restlessly alert...at night. Dogs, cats and squirrels all kinds of varmints plunder through our garbage at night. Criminals do their most vile deeds in the night.

Contrast that with the morning. Hope comes with the morning. New life is symbolized with the morning. Joy appears and despair is destroyed with the dawning of a new day. Doctors tell us that our body is at its strongest and our mind is at its sharpest in the morning. The scripture tells us in Psalm 30:5 that *weeping endures for the night but JOY comes in the morning*. Our bodies receive strength and rest while we sleep and we generally sleep...at night. Having received the recuperative powers provided

through sleep we awake rejuvenated with new strength when the sun comes up....in the morning.

In Genesis 1:5 God said *the evening and the morning were the first day*. God repeated this phrase five more times in the first chapter of Genesis. In verses 8, 13, 19, 23 and 31 He reiterated the point that the evening and the morning were the first day. In Psalm 55:17 the psalmist said **evening and morning and at noon will I pray**. In Daniel 8:26 scripture says *and the vision of the evening and the morning were true*. It seems like to me that somebody is trying to get it into our heads that there is something to this evening and morning business! The problem is that if you or I had written it, it would read differently. If WE had written it wouldn't it say "the morning and the evening were the first day?" Our day starts in the morning. We wake up and get going in the morning. Nothing really starts for US until morning and everything ends with the evening. So it just stands to reason that it should be written that the *morning* and the *evening* were the first day. And yet we cannot get away from the fact that God said it was the evening and

the morning that constituted the first through the sixth day. It's obvious to me that God thinks differently about this than we do. With God it's always sunset THEN it's sunrise. It's dark, then it's light. With God FIRST you toil, then you rest, first you work, then you pay. First there's the cross, THEN there's the resurrection! With God first there's labor, then there's buying, first tears, then joy, first sowing, then reaping, first is the race then is the reward. In the mind of God first there is repentance AND THEN comes revival, first weeping then rejoicing, first travail then birth. With God FIRST there is Earth THEN there's Heaven, first the wilderness then Canaan. We would say the morning and then the evening but the ways of God are NOT the ways of man; His thoughts are not our thoughts and *the evening and the morning were the first day!*

And so there are two irrevocable, immutable, undeniable truths of life. The first one is this: Darkness...or night is going to come. We don't like that very much. We don't like weeping; we want to go to rejoicing right away. We don't want to labor; we want to put down our credit card and get what we want to purchase right now. It doesn't matter what we want or how we try to ignore the truth darkness is going to come. Your spouse will be taken in death, the biopsy will confirm the worst, the one you trusted will betray you. Night comes. Your paralysis is not temporary as we had first believed; you will never walk again. Night comes. The sonogram shows that the baby inside your womb has abnormalities; night comes. Your two year old is discovered to be deaf, your own sight is fading; night comes. Your parents have divorced, your mate has been unfaithful, your mother now lies in state, your child has broken your heart; night comes. You have drifted away from God, given into temptation and now carry in your womb a baby outside the bonds of matrimony. NIGHT COMES!

However that brings us to irrevocable, immutable, undeniable truth number two and it is this. As sure as God is God and time is time after the night comes the morning is SURE to follow. It is not morning MAY come. It isn't we pray that

morning comes. No...morning HAS to come because the evening AND the morning together are the day! If you are in darkness morning comes. Bereaved one; morning comes. Lonely, broken hearted one...morning comes. Paralyzed one; morning comes. Cancer patient; morning comes. Widowed one; morning comes. Orphaned, abandoned one; morning comes. Confined one; morning comes. You...the one who has been looking for a job for over a year now; the darkness has had you hemmed in and you have just about given up but morning comes. You childless couple that has prayed in the midnight hour begging God for a child to fill your home with joy; don't give up... morning is coming! Are you that single saint that has laid awake at night and stared at the ceiling asking "where is my mate and what is wrong with me?" It's dark tonight but morning is coming! I love to talk to young couples who after five or 10 years of marriage tell me their family is not going to make it. I point them to our 30 years as a family and tell them "do you have any idea how many times we have nearly given in to the darkness? Do you know how many times in 30 years we have said we weren't going to make it?" It has been dark a lot of times but I'm not a kid preacher anymore. I have discovered and I tell you today; MORNING COMES. God made it that way. The evening and the morning were the first day and one doesn't come without the other!

My friend Amy Keffer Shellem and I penned these words: *"Morning does come...the sun breaks the sky. Hope springs eternal with the breath of new life...and the joy of the dawn is just in sight... so hold onto Jesus waiting one; morning does come.* The evening and the morning were the first day and God said so. Morning IS coming in your life and situation. If it's dark right now then shout the victory. If it's dark today that means morning is next and oh what a morning it will be.

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Triumphant Quartet: STILL TELLING THE GREATEST STORY

By Lorraine Walker



“Joyful and triumphant”. Yes, it’s a phrase from a common church hymn, but the five men that compose Triumphant have spent the last 11 years leaving audiences joyful. For a gospel quartet that spent its formative years playing at the Louise Mandrell Theatre in Pigeon Forge before hitting the road, this group has seen its fair share of awards, nominations, specialty venues like Carnegie Hall, and has satisfied hundreds of thousands of listeners with quality, traditional Southern Gospel. Triumphant sings the style of music it does best and gives each fan what they want to hear: the joyful music of the Gospel.

The Greatest Story, Triumphant’s newest recording, is hot off the press and was available for download on April 2, 2013. Scott Inman, baritone, is thrilled with the project. “I know this may sound cliché but I’m more excited about this CD than any prior. I truly mean that! We have chosen 15 great songs that work well together and we really enjoy singing. There are a few remakes like; “He Was There All The Time,” “I’ve Got Confidence,” “Because He Loved Me” and “The Greatest Love Story,” but the CD is filled mostly with new material. The writers include: Rodney Griffin, Dianne

Wilkinson, Phil Cross with Mark Lanier and Wayne Haun, who also produced the project, just to name a few. They even allowed a few of my songs on there!” laughs Scott. “The first single, written by Rodney Griffin is “Take it from me, Meshach;” it’s fun, biblical, and is getting great reviews, so far in every way.” This single has been nominated in the top ten Song of Year in the Singing News Fan Awards.

In 2012, the Singing News voted Triumphant’s recording *Songs From The Heart* as their Album Of The Year. The second single released from that project was “Let’s All Stand For America,” written by tenor David Sutton. Sutton has been in Gospel music for over 20 years, his tenor vocals soaring above such groups as The Anchormen and The Singing Americans. The patriotic song he penned is an encouraging anthem, which has been welcomed by audiences across the country.

Both David and Scott, or “Scotty” to his friends and fans, are enjoying the infusion of new music that the group’s latest recording brings to the groups’ repertoire. “To pick a favorite from the new project is very tough,” says Scott. “I’ll name a few though: “There’s No Such Thing,” which is a really fun song, “I Go

To Calvary,” “Heaven Will Be Mine Someday,” and “Thomas Never Doubted Again,” just to name a few!” The new release also features a piano and harmonica instrumental, to the delight of Triumphant fans.

With a new recording and nominations flooding in from several awards programs, it appears that Triumphant is in for a terrific year. At the time of this

NQC in Pigeon Forge will be great, yet different. Those who try to compare the two might be disappointed because they are two totally different places, in just about every way. I look forward to creating new memories in a fresh venue for years to come. I’m excited about 2014 in Pigeon Forge!”

Jeff Stice, multi-award winning pianist with



interview, the group had just returned from a cruise to the Eastern Carribean with fellow artists Greater Vision, Legacy Five, The Booth Brothers and the Collingsworth Family. In the next few months they will be hosting two extra special events, The Triumphant Anniversary Celebration from September 30th to October 1st at Pigeon Forge and A Triumphant Christmas on December 5th and 6th at Townsend, Tennessee. Both events will sell out quickly, so fans are encouraged to visit the group’s website below for more details.

The National Quartet Convention (NQC) is another special event that Triumphant always looks forward to attending. In 2014, the NQC moves to Pigeon Forge, the quartet’s hometown. Scott talks about this annual gospel music extravaganza. “I actually remember NQC in Nashville. I have very fond memories of those years, but mostly remember the Louisville years. Honestly I’m sad to see it leave such a great city with lots of history. When we drive up to Freedom Hall, each year, I always begin to reminisce about years prior. Great memories! Change is inevitable though. I think

Triumphant, is looking forward to the change in venue for the NQC. “I’m not sure. I think it was probably necessary. There are so many multi-day events across the nation that I think it has hurt the Convention. It will always be *The Event* to me and I think that the smaller venue will be good for the atmosphere. It will be packed every night and because of that, there will be an excitement in the room.” Stice continues, “My favorite part, believe it or not was the facility. There was awesome parking, great exhibition area and a great place to run, which I like because I’m a runner. Just everything about Louisville was so handy. I think I’m looking forward to seeing a full auditorium again. I think that was always the magic of The National Quartet Convention. Back when every night was big, it was just special.”

Clayton Inman, star lead singer of the group and everyone’s favorite ‘Superman’, has enjoyed the years that NQC has been in Louisville, Kentucky. “It’s memorable in that, the first year of NQC in Louisville was the first year for a group that I had helped to start, Won By One. It’s a great city and the facilities were

exemplary. I loved the well-lit parking lot.” However, for Triumphant, the move to their hometown is great for family men. “For obvious reasons I am ecstatic about the move to Pigeon Forge! I’m sure time will tell regarding the length of stay. The funny thing is there have been music fans that ask us all the time if we had something to do with the move. They seem perplexed when I express that I found out when everyone else did. It feels good that folks think I have clout...but I don’t,” he smiles.

Clayton is in his 30th year of professional Gospel

a higher accountability standard. How you conduct yourself throughout your life I feel builds trust more than words ever could. How you live day to day is the most important. If someone sees you on a regular basis and sees Christian consistency, they will respect you and that builds a stronger trust.” Scott says that as far as the rumor-mill goes, “I stay away from all of that. I use email, Facebook and Twitter just to keep in touch with people I’ve met though the years!”

“You know, I don’t go there!” says Jeff Stice. “When someone wants to know the dirt on someone it



music and has seen much more than just the transition of the National Quartet Convention. From the Singing Americans, to Won By One, to a solo ministry and now a decade with Triumphant, this quiet, congenial artist has seen many other artists come and go, stars rise and fall, stories and rumors hit the street and fade away. Unfortunately, Gospel music is always rife with gossip but Clayton has never been one to join in to the melee. “If I’m going to talk about someone it really needs to be while I’m on my knees,” says Inman. “We can’t condone the sin but we have to love the sinner. As a group, we have to be careful about not even putting ourselves in situations that would cause compromise. It’s continual. Sadly, there are some who cannot wait to see someone fall and then be the first one to share the misstep.”

Scott agrees with his Dad and says, “People who stand on stage and sing or preach sermons and label themselves as Christians are going to be held to

tends to annoy me. I usually just say, ‘Whether its true or not we just need to keep them in our prayers.’ As an artist we have no business ever *blasting* anyone. We’re artists, we’re not perfect, so we shouldn’t be casting stones. Prayer is the greatest thing a Christian can offer to anyone, not a judgmental attitude,” says Stice, adding, “I’m just sayin’!”

Eric Bennett is the bass singer with the pastor’s heart, a man who has been awarded often for his low vocals that smoothly blend with every song. On the subject of gossip in Gospel music, Bennett speaks straight to the heart of the issue. “I think scripture tells us that when we fall, those that are spiritual should try to restore our brothers and sisters in a spirit of meekness, considering ourselves lest we also be tempted.” After quoting from Galatians 6:1, Bennett continues, “You won’t see any of us casting stones. I think if any-

thing, we should try to encourage each other to try to live the way Christ would have us live.”

The Triumphant Quartet members in general try to keep out of the stream of rumors. “I am really only

sic.” Jean adds, “No matter where we have gone to see or film the group, they have always been very cooperative. They have been a delight to interview and fun to be with either at NQC, concerts or gospel cruises.”



concerned about what Christ thinks of me,” says Bennett. “If I worried about what everybody thought of me, it would make me crazy - even more than normal,” he laughs. “However, as long as I please Him, and if I go after Him with all my heart, then He will be pleased. The Apostle Paul said, ‘That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection.’ If our goal is to try to please people we will fail. But, if our goal is to please Him in everything we do, then others should be able to see that in our lives. Pastors, teachers, gospel singers and ministers of the gospel all give and give of themselves. We *must* refuel. We must refuel with prayer time, Bible study, Christian fellowship and things that affect us and refuel us spiritually. We do it individually and together on the bus. We have to if we want to do our best for Him.”

As Triumphant continues to do their best for the Lord, both in their personal lives and in their musical performance, they have gained many friends around the country. A couple who loves this quartet is Ken and Jean Grady of Gospel Music Today, a radio and online show featuring interviews and Gospel performances from today’s top artists. Ken Grady says, “We have enjoyed all our contact with Triumphant Quartet. We love the songs and the singing, but we also appreciate their professionalism on and off the stage. We think that is the key to their success in presenting the gospel in mu-

Presenting their message with professionalism, excellence and a dash of humor has always been a trademark of Triumphant. Originally, the group was known as Integrity, and any conversation about Christian living invariably goes back to that word, ‘integrity’. Stice says, “The word itself to me means to treat people and conduct yourself in a way that displays honesty and respect. I think a Christian should strive to be the epitome of integrity. As an artist, integrity shouldn’t mean anymore to me than someone who doesn’t perform. However, I think with what I do there is an extra responsibility to be aware that people tend to watch you more. But if I’m living the life of integrity that I should be living as a Christian it takes care of itself!”

“Being a man of integrity is something that every man in the ministry wants,” Bennett states. “Having moral codes and being a man of character is what we all strive for I believe. I do think however, sometimes people make bad decisions and get caught up in things that when it’s all said and done they wished they’d never done. Look, I feel like God has our group and me in this place at this time for a season. I don’t know how long it will last but He has allowed us to touch and influence a lot of lives, as He has other groups. I don’t want to do anything that will hurt, disappoint or let down anybody. We want our lives to reflect what we say on stage.”

Living with integrity whether on or off the stage

is an ongoing challenge for everyone. Clayton says it comes down to personal relationships. “I know that I treat people with respect because that’s how I would like to be treated. Rarely, you will run across someone who will give you little respect. I express to them that I will give them as much respect as they give me, something I learned from my dad, Roy Inman. I think integrity is like character, in that, it’s not how you act when you’re around people but how you act when no one is around!”

People normally take a closer look at things like integrity, character building and self-improvement at the beginning of a new year. Setting goals and resolutions are things many of us do and the men of Triumphant are no different. “I look forward every year to see what God has in store,” says Clayton. “I really want each year to be better than the year before. There is nothing wrong with that. I wish and pray that for everyone. 2013 finds our church going through the Bible in 365 days. It has been enlightening to follow along with my church and keep up with our Pastor’s blogs regarding the daily reads. This has really gotten my family and me off to an incredible start.”

Jeff Stice is a little more reticent on the subject of resolutions. “Each year I try to set goals for myself and its fun to see if by the end of the year I got there,” says Stice. “Spiritually I just want to keep trying! I want to have a stronger desire to get to know God better.”

New father Scott says, “I’m not a major resolution guy but each year there’s always a weight-loss goal. I usually reach it and then fall off the wagon!” he laughs. “This will be my first full year as a dad and honestly my goal is to be a great Christian father. My wife Kasey is an amazing Godly wife and I’m so thankful for her. I’m personally doing a daily devotional study right now.” Scott is working toward strengthening his family through prayer, reading the Word, and setting time out for just the three of them. “My goal is to have more family Bible studies. I feel when it’s done as a couple it’s more effective than apart. We enjoy going to Wednesday night church together when possible and a few Sundays a month when our schedule allows us to be at our home church. I spend the days I’m home completely with Kasey and Embry. Also Kasey and I have one date night a week when my parents keep Embry for us. They love it!”

When asked what last message each member would like to leave their audience with, the responses

were as varied as the men of Triumphant. Scott Inman replied, “I love you all!” Jeff Stice, a huge sports fan, responded, “Go Big Blue!” And as we just have celebrated the Easter season, Eric Bennett exhorts: “What do you think God expects from you having give His Son for you? He expects and demands absolutely everything!”

“My prayer is that God will continue to allow me to sing to the multitudes and encourage people through Gospel music,” says David Sutton, as quoted from his personal website. “I hope to see many people come to know Christ through our music whether it is when Triumphant is performing or when I’m doing a solo date somewhere.”¹



Triumphant is a group that operates with integrity while personally working toward becoming more Christ-like. The popularity of their new music is evidence of the fact that their listeners appreciate their message and their longevity proves that the blessing of God is on their lives. Clayton Inman’s words summarize Triumphant’s encouragement to all of their listeners: “Love, laugh and live for Him.”

Triumphant Information and Tour Schedule: <http://www.triumphantquartet.com/>

Triumphant on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/TriumphantQuartet?fref=ts>

1. Quoted from <http://yardsalesyearround.com/wsb4313689212/AboutDavid.html>, Copyright 2010 David Sutton. [David Sutton was not available for comment at time of interview.]



Small Churches are a Big Deal

By Dixie Phillips

A seasoned saint once said, "God never looks at the size of the work, but at the love the leader pours into the work."

Karl Vaters would agree with that statement. In fact, he's written a book about his more than 30 years' experience in small church pastoral ministry. Vaters searched for a book dealing with the unique challenges and joys of pastoring a small church, especially a book celebrating the value of small churches, without making the leaders feel they were inadequate and settling for less, but he never found one. He read the usual pastoral help books and went to the numerous leadership seminars and conferences, almost all of which informed him how to grow his church. Afterwards, he returned home hyped-up and attempted to implement the new church growth ideas he had learned, but always plummeted into severe discouragement when the "formulas" for church growth didn't work at his small church. After years of not being able to duplicate the success of mega-pastors, Vaters grew cynical. His bitterness and anger was so toxic, he decided he needed to get some help through this "dark night of his soul." It was during those difficult years, he jotted down some of his experiences, never once thinking he would ever share or write about them in a book.

One day he told his church board and staff at their annual leadership retreat what the Lord was teaching him. Afterwards his wife, Shelley, and his associate pastor hurried up to him and said, "That's a book. And you're the one who needs to write it." Something clicked in his own heart and he penned *The Grasshopper Myth*. The secrets Vaters shares

in this must-read book are for every Christian leader.

Since writing the book and starting the ministry of New Small Church, Vaters has discovered small churches are a big deal. Ninety percent of the churches in the world have fewer than 200 in attendance. Eighty percent have fewer than 100. He's convinced the small church is not a problem, but a divine strategy God wants to use for the edification and building up of the Body of Christ. Vaters states, "Over one billion believers choose to worship God in a small church every week. Yet 99% of the books, seminars, classes, and conventions about how to do church work are written by megachurch pastors or from a megachurch standpoint. So 90% of pastors don't know where to turn for help."

Vaters insists he loves churches of all sizes, but feels the small church lacks cheerleaders and someone to speak out for the value they bring to the Body of Christ. "If everyone was writing about how great small churches are, but neglecting or demeaning megachurches, I'd probably start writing about how great megachurches are – and I'd mean every word of it."

One of the reasons Vaters loves small churches is they are where he's spent almost his entire ministry life. He has seen the long-term, deep relationships that develop among people of varying age groups, cultural backgrounds, races, and levels of spiritual maturity because, in a small church they aren't separated from each other. Most church members love a smaller, more intimate church set-

ting, but it is the pastor and church leaders who struggle with a church being small.

Small churches are also a great place for people to be loved as they grow and mature in their walk with the Lord. Vaters believes there are numerous people in ministry today who can point back to a small church that gave them an opportunity to experience “hands on” ministerial training, learning through their mistakes as they served.

Vater’s insight into the overall condition of the local church is enlightening. He feels the single biggest factor for the long-term health and effectiveness of a church is the longevity of the leadership. He is convinced a church that changes pastors every few years is like a family that changes parents every few years. It’s not healthy for anyone. He believes the church and the relationships that fuel it don’t run on a short-term calendar.

When asked what he would say to a discouraged pastor of a small church, Vaters said, “I would tell them that their church is big enough—right now at its current size. With the people God has given them already.”

He warns pastors of the small church, “Stop trying to be a big church and start asking God how you can be a healthy church, an innovative church, a compassionate church, and a great church with what and who you have right now. You don’t need more people, “better” people, or a bigger building. Jesus changed the world forever with twelve uneducated, blue-collar guys who fought over everything including seating arrangements, and with no building at all.”

The Grasshopper Myth was released two months ago and sales have been brisk. The responses from small church pastors have been overwhelmingly positive. Most of them say the same thing,

“I wish I’d had a book like this when I started in ministry. It would have saved me so much heartache.”

“The weight is off to perform. I can be who God called me to be.”

“Thank, God, someone is finally saying how I feel!”

Vaters has also received a couple of wonderfully surprising responses from a segment of people he never realized would be moved by his book—

the retired small church pastors. They expressed to Vaters how the book has helped them realize they served well, even though their churches were never large. They were able to look at themselves in the mirror for the first time and realize they were not failures, but have finished their race well. Vaters is determined to dispel the myth that bigger is always better. “What a sad commentary on what our size obsession has done to so many of God’s finest servants!”

God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things for His Kingdom. Vaters feels blessed that God has chosen to use his book and ministry the way He has. “All I did was write my story down. As it turns out, my story is a lot of other small church pastors’ stories.”

The message of *The Grasshopper Myth* isn’t just for small church pastors. Vaters believes this message needs to be heard by pastors of large churches, denominational officials, Bible college teachers and Christian leaders. “We all have to get past our obsession with size. We unintentionally insult small churches and their leaders when butts in the seats and bucks in the offering are our primary measure of success. I want small church pastors to be filled with hope. This is the best time in history to be the pastor of a small church. We have the technology that can connect us to each other for support and teaching. Plus, it can help us reach people who will never set foot in our churches, both across the street and around the world. If big churches and small churches can get past our territorialism, petty jealousies, and obsession with size, we can reach this generation for Jesus together.”

Karl and his wife, Shelley, will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary in July. The couple has been honored to serve the congregation of Cornerstone Christian Fellowship in Fountain Valley, California for 20 years. They have three children, Veronica (Mrs. Sam Beaver), Matt, and Phil.

The Grasshopper Myth is available at Vaters’ website at www.NewSmallChurch.com, both in print and on Kindle. It can also be bought at Amazon.com. If people want to buy it in bulk, they can email Karl at KarlVaters@NewSmallChurch.com to work out a deal.

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John Lanier

God Is His Refuge- Part Two

By Lorraine Walker

John Lanier has a name and face that is recognizable to Gospel music fans across the nation. He has been singing and preaching the Word of God for almost 25 years and even through the midst of challenging circumstances, he still proclaims, “God Is My Refuge”. This CD title and single release is the testimony of an artist who has been through many trials and can verify the faithfulness of God. In Part One, Lanier talked about his ministry with Riversong and Tony Gore and Majesty as well as his solo career. In this concluding feature, Lanier shares about his family, his influences, and how he keeps standing on the Rock of Ages.

Lanier’s first musical influences were his family, as Gospel songs were the soundtracks for his earliest memories. “I was raised in a Christian home where gospel music was the norm,” Lanier explains. “When I was a little boy, my parents sang in a gospel quartet together. From the late 1960’s through the late 1970’s, my mother wrote a lot of Country and Gospel songs. She sang background vocals on several Country artists’ recordings and later toured with a Southern Gospel trio formed by Herbert Sanders, the father of Steve Sanders, of Oak Ridge Boys fame. By the early 1980’s she had left the road and began a career in the medical profession, confining her musical interests mostly inside our home church, while continuing to write songs.”

“My childhood is filled with fond memories of singing with my family, going to gospel concerts, and meeting some of the musical heroes of the day.” Lanier says these artists included The Happy Goodmans, The Hinsons, The Downings, The Gaithers, The Segos

Brothers & Naomi and others. “It was through my mom’s involvement in the music business that I personally met some of these artists,” Lanier shares. “In fact, many of them stayed in our home over the years when I was a child. The Segos were one of those groups, and it was that group, especially Naomi, that made a profound imprint on an eight-year-old boy’s heart.”

“To me, there was no group better than The Segos Brothers & Naomi,” admits Lanier. “I loved their campmeeting-style and, back then, they had the best kickin’ band in the business. But more than anything, I remember being drawn to the anointing that rested on Naomi, both on stage and off. As a young child, I didn’t recognize at the time that’s what it was (the anointing), but there were so many times when watching them on stage that I just wanted to raise my hands and shout in praise. And I do remember many times how the tears would flood down my cheeks as the Spirit of God flowed through Naomi. What a joy and privilege it was for me to join her group and travel with her later in my life.”

Naomi Segos remains one of John Lanier’s favorite people. “That’s where I got my start in full-time gospel music ministry in 1989. That lady is the real deal. And I know first-hand what kind of prayer warrior she is. She has won numerous awards and accolades in her 55-year career; she has sung on some of the most prestigious stages in the nation and abroad; she has appeared on television, had hit songs on the radio, and has sold millions of recordings. Yet, she is the most down to earth, humble lady you’ll ever meet. I learned the virtues of humility and gratitude by her example. That is prob-

ably the best *advice* I could ever receive.” Lanier was influenced by other Gospel greats including the Rambos, The Goodmans, LuLu Roman and John Starnes.

tion and sanctification.”

As Lanier mentions the effect of his parents on his musical and spiritual development, it is easy to see the strong ties within his family. Within the last few years, Lanier’s family has grown to embrace another member, John’s son Jordan. “Of course, by now most people know the story of how I became an adoptive, single parent of a five-year-old little boy,” says Lanier. “He is truly one of the greatest joys of my life. When he was little, he used to love to travel with me and would even sing a song or two with me on stage. He is now a 13-year-old in the eighth grade, and has lost interest in traveling. His interest has turned from singing to playing music.”



Lanier laughs, “Jordan’s bedroom resembles a recording studio! He has a keyboard, saxophone, mandolin, violin, and almost every type of guitar available - bass, acoustic, and a couple of different kinds of electric guitars. He is learning to play them all, but excels in acoustic

After departing from Naomi and the Segos, John was a member of Tony Gore and Majesty for several years before entering a solo ministry. Now as he works occasionally with Majesty as well as performing solo dates, he says he enjoys both types of ministry. “My favorite thing about working with a group is the interaction on stage, the harmony, and the fellowship we enjoy while traveling together,” says Lanier. “My favorite thing about traveling as a soloist is simply being my own boss. Seriously, I do have more control over my schedule, but the responsibilities are greater in many aspects. There are obviously advantages and disadvantages to traveling with a group and traveling solo. But I enjoy both and I am blessed to have the best of both worlds.”

Through the years, many artists have influenced Lanier musically, but he says there are others, as well as Naomi Sego, that have had a profound impact specifically upon his spiritual life. “Of course, my dad is a devout, conservative Christian man who has always been consistent.” Lanier shares, “I am so thankful for his guidance and influence, and he is mostly responsible for the development of Christian character in me. I would have to say he has been the best model of Christ in my life. I also have a Godly grandmother who taught me so much by word and example. Other spiritual mentors include Jimmy Swaggart, the late B.H. Clendenen, and my pastor, Rev. B.R. Hicks. Each of these three have remained true to the Biblical gospel. Their message has never changed or compromised to follow doctrinal trends of the day, nor have they ever watered the message down with new age, prosperity, social gospel, or user-friendly philosophy. They’ve kept the main thing the main thing, pointing only to the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross as the only means of salvation, justifica-

guitar and mandolin. He plays the saxophone with his school band, now in his third year. He is very actively involved with the youth group at church, and he plays guitar with the church band during worship services. While I enjoy having him on the road with me, I am extremely grateful for his commitment to church and being actively involved in the music and youth. It makes me proud.”

Lanier talks about the joys of parenthood and his pride in his son is evident. “I’ve always heard that the teen years are generally the most challenging for parents as their little children slowly make the transition to young men and women and want to be more independent, and I’m sure I may face some challenges ahead as Jordan grows. But, so far it’s been an awesome experience. I couldn’t have asked for a better child. He seems to be well focused with a good sense of judgment in making right choices; he’s well mannered and well behaved, and he’s a bright, handsome young fellow who easily makes friends and does very well in school. I am so thankful for the positive direction that Jordan seems to be headed, and for the Godly character he is developing.”

“As I do my best to raise Jordan with Biblical morals, values and principles, and teach him to keep Christ in the center of all his endeavors, I want him to be a young man of conviction, standing faithful and strong on the Biblical foundation and never compromising the absolute truth; to maintain a high standard of righteousness and holiness, and never be ashamed of the Gospel; to learn the meaning of sacrifice, honor and integrity,” Lanier explains. “Yet, while not being shaken from this foundation, I pray he becomes a man of deep compassion and charity,

extending grace and mercy to others, loving everyone and treating them with respect, not standing in judgment or condemnation of others who may not share his own convictions and values. Although I am human and often fail, I have tried to live this kind of life before him and that's the way I hope he remembers his dad when I'm gone."



Lanier continues, "The reality that a parent's example can and does impact his child struck me during a recent conversation with Jordan. He told me of a discussion he had with a friend at school about a sensitive situation and how he responded to his friend about the matter. Jordan's response was thoughtful and appropriate, which made me proud. But I asked him, 'Why did you say such a thing? What caused you to respond that way?' Without a second thought, he looked at me and replied, 'Because I knew that's what *you'd* say.' That was an eye-opening moment for me and I thought, 'Wow...he *has* been paying attention!'"

For John Lanier to positively affect his family and his world with the love of Christ, he continuously turns to the Word for power and wisdom. "I like learning new things," says Lanier. "God is infinite, therefore His Word is infinite and there is always something new to learn as we draw closer to Him. The more I learn about Him, His Name and His Nature, the more I want to know. As we learn of God's precious truths, 'line upon line, precept upon precept' (Isaiah 28:9,10), we 'grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ' (2nd Peter 3:18), thereby ultimately coming into the full measure of Christ's stature (Ephesians 4:13). That said, I'm always seeking a closer walk with God through prayer and study of scripture to gain new understanding and fresh revelation. There are always higher heights and deeper depths to discover and that is what is exciting to me and motivates me to never stop seeking. It's almost like enjoying a thrilling mystery novel that never ends; there is always another layer of truth God wants to reveal, and it's exciting."

John Lanier's study of the Word at the time of this interview had brought him to 1st Samuel chapter 30. That specific scripture contains some powerful truths that spoke to Lanier. He explains, "An Israelite city had been destroyed and when David and his army arrived on the scene, they 'lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more

power to weep,' for their wives and children had been taken captive by the enemy (vs. 2-5)."

"As every man grieved his loss they began to speak of stoning their leader. They blamed David for the tragedy. How often have we blamed God for the 'bad' things that happen in our lives? It has been said (and I believe it) that trials can make you bitter or they can make you better. While the scripture tells us that their wives and children were taken captive, David and his army had no way of knowing whether or not their families were dead or alive at this point. It appears they feared that their loved ones had died in the fiery invasion. Already grieving his own loss, David now feared for his life. The Bible says he was 'greatly distressed.' Lonely, fearful and heartbroken, David could have continued down the destructive path of hopelessness and despair. Instead, however, the Bible says, 'David encouraged himself in the Lord his God (vs. 6).'"

"Sometimes, you've just got to encourage *yourself* in the Lord," Lanier says. "Even when it seems you've *lost everything you love*; when it seems like *everything God gave you has been stolen or destroyed*, and like David and his army, you've cried until you don't even have enough

strength to shed one more tear. God knows I've been there.

When circumstances appear hopeless and everyone else around you is saying, 'I told you so,' remember what God said; remember His promises and claim them, 'being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.' (Philippians 1:6)"



Lanier continues, "In other words, it ain't over 'til God says it's over. God doesn't start something He can't finish! If He begins a good work in your life, He IS faithful to perfect it and bring it to full completion. God will perfect (mature, complete) what He began! *THIS is my expectation. THIS is the promise God made to me (and to you).* And the end shall be like the beginning... "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." (Jeremiah 29:11)"

"God's will...His plans for your life...may seem to be interrupted or on hold," shares Lanier. "But what the enemy meant for your harm, God is using for His purpose and working all things for your good. God is head over all things and nothing happens in your life without His approval. Even that which has been stolen and seemingly gone forever, God can restore."

"As David encouraged himself in the Lord, he also inquired of the Lord's will in such hopeless circumstances (vs. 7-8). He had nothing left but God and that was more than enough to start again," Lanier states. "Sometimes, when we pray, the answer may be 'yes,' 'no,' or 'wait.' In this case, God told David yes, to pur-

sue the enemy and recover all that had been stolen (vs. 8)!"

"David recovered ALL! Everything that he lost, everything he loved, everything that God had blessed him with was fully restored!" Lanier concludes, "Don't give up...don't lose hope.... encourage yourself in the Lord, inquire of Him. God's perfect will shall be accomplished in your life according to HIS plan. I will recover «ALL»...in Jesus' name!"

The powerful scripture that speaks through John Lanier, whether on stage or in print, is one of the main influences in the life of a man surrounded by music and family. He holds fast to his trust in God as His shelter and the One who will complete the plans He has for his life. As a man who has experienced both the joys and sorrows of life, John Lanier can truly say, "God Is My Refuge."

For more information on John Lanier visit <http://www.johnlanier.com/>

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A close-up photograph of several colorful, glittery Easter eggs in a basket. The eggs are decorated with various colors like pink, blue, yellow, and green, and some have ribbons tied around them. The background is filled with more colorful ribbons and paper shreds.

365 Days of Easter

By Jennifer Campbell

Can you believe that Easter has already come and gone? The first day of Spring came and now we are racing toward summer at what seems to be a very rapid pace. People are busily planning or already enjoying Spring Break vacations and they are counting the days until Memorial Day weekend when they can enjoy picnics and quality time with family and friends. But I want to ask you a question. What if we slowed down and enjoyed each moment as they came? What if we celebrated each and every day as if it was the most important day of the year? And what if there were 365 days of Easter?

Easter. The time of year when flowers begin to blossom, bunnies emerge as the number one pet, and ordinary white eggs are transformed into meticulous works of art. Men, women, boys, and girls dress in their very best, often posing for Easter photographs before Sunday dinner, knowing that everyone may become a little disheveled after eating a bountiful holiday meal. Children enjoy hunting for eggs that hold a multitude of treasures, secretly hidden by the Easter bunny himself. Parents' eyes fill with delight as children sort through the goodies carefully chosen and displayed in a colorful basket filled with plastic "grass" in a rainbow of colors. Many people will steal away for a quiet afternoon nap, having risen before daybreak to attend a sunrise service in their community. Easter is a day for family, a day for

rest, a day to remember what Christ did for you and me. But I want to ask you, should Easter come just once a year?

On Easter, we remember what Christ did for us. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that we may have everlasting life." God gave the most precious gift that He could give to the world. God did not wrap up His Son in a neat little package with a bow on top, expecting to receive a thank you card from the recipients. The package was two pieces of wood nailed together to form a cross. The bow was a crown of thorns pressed into His Son's skull. Instead of gratefulness for this most priceless gift, the only acknowledgement He received was the voices of the crowd who cried, "Crucify Him!"

Just imagine. God sends His 33-year-old Son to die for a world that despises Him. He watches intently as His little boy is nailed to a tree, enduring more pain and agony than any one person has ever felt at one time. God looks down from Heaven as His Son's side is pierced, blood profusely pouring out of the wound. All the while, both Father and Son could have called ten thousand angels to stop the evildoers in their tracks. But Jesus trusted His Father. He knew that His Father would work all things together for His good. And God knew that putting an end to His Son's suffering would change

nothing. He knew His Son had to die. He knew that this selfless gift would change everything.

Soon, Jesus proclaimed, "It is finished" (John 19:30 ESV). For Jesus' mother Mary, Mary Magdalene, and his disciples, I am sure this seemed like the end. Jesus was dead. He was laid in a tomb. The grave was the final stop along life's journey. For two days, Jesus' family and friends visited His grave site. For two days, nothing changed. But on the third day, everything changed.

For on the third day, the stone had been rolled away. Two angels spoke to Mary Magdalene when she came to see the place where Jesus' body lay: "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' Having said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?'" (John 20:13-15 ESV).

Just imagine! Jesus is speaking to Mary, yet she does not recognize Him. Certainly, she does not even consider the possibility, seeing as He is supposed to be lying in the tomb. She did not expect to see Jesus. Like Mary Magdalene, we do not always expect extraordinary miracles to occur. It's almost as if we set our expectations too low. We pray, yet do we really believe that God can heal someone who is battling cancer, provide deliverance for a hard core drug addict, or even raise someone from the dead? When we pray, we need to remember that God is the one true and living God. There is no problem that He cannot handle because He holds every solution. God can do anything but fail.

God knew all along that Jesus would miraculously rise again on the third day. He knew that His only Son must endure pain and suffering for a season and then emerge victorious. Why? So that you and I could receive the gift of eternal life. This is what Easter is all about. Why then, should Easter only be celebrated one day a year? Jesus died for us and wants to live in our hearts forever, not just one Sunday each spring. He wants you to have a personal relationship with Him, trusting Him, leaning on Him, and loving Him. Jesus loves you 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. He has never stopped loving you and He will never stop loving you.

Have you asked Jesus Christ to be the Lord of your life? Do you have the assurance that you will live eternally? If you have not done so, I want to encourage you to make this the moment when you put your trust in the

God who created you. Have faith in the God who gave His only Son just to give you the gift of eternal life. Cling to the God who holds you in His heart and loves you more than you could ever imagine. Begin a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus loves you with a fervent love that has no end. He wants you to live a joyous life filled with His enduring love, mercy, and grace.

Easter is a celebration of life, the Resurrected life of Christ and the Resurrected life of all who believe. Life is something that should be celebrated every day, not just once a year. This year, celebrate life. Celebrate the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. God does not want you to live a life overshadowed by sorrow, pain, or fear. He wants you to live a life that is full of abundant joy, absolute love, and steadfast hope for a bright future in Heaven with Him. This year, as you enjoy the leftover chocolate bunnies, put away the colorful decorations, and reminisce over the awesome services and delicious dinners, remember to focus on the reason for the Easter season: Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Photo Courtesy of ButterflySha



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Ann Downing Makes a Statement of Faith

By Sue Duffield

She travels and sings. I travel and sing. She's from Mississippi. I'm from New Jersey. She lives in Hendersonville. I live in Hendersonville. I've known about her since I was 12 years old. She's only known me for the last four years. But the fast friendship simply began by meeting Ann at a local Hendersonville restaurant with friends. It went like this:

"Hi Ann. You don't know me, really. But I could have been a Downing years ago..." She throws her head back and laughs. I laugh. It's true.

That simple first encounter has led to an unusual and rewarding relationship with Ann Downing. She comes equipped with solid friendships, both inner circle and casual, plus an arsenal of fans. So it wasn't in my frame to even try to invade any of those areas, like a groupie or something. This was different right from the start. And yes, we are SO different. But in the things that truly matter- we are crazily alike. Ann has a renewed passion to take it to the next level, both spiritually and musically, to a new generation. So do I. That's what friends do. They find the commonalities, the drive, the treasures, and they run with an "iron sharpening iron" cadence.

Later, a casual conversation over a Starbucks coffee (and many meetings since), creates this inspiring chit chat into a surprising mentorship. And probably not what you're thinking either. We're both experiencing the amazing and unpredictable transformation of ministry on the road. I'm the perpetual student of reformation, studying new paradigms and doing my homework on relevancy in music and ministry. And sometimes that relevancy pushes me to look back. Ann, the singer/songwriter, allows herself to be the student this time. And somehow, I've been blessed to be the teacher.

"Ann, have you thought about recording a hymns project?" I ask, fumbling over my words while eating a chocolate strawberry.

"I know that Jeff and I could do this for you."

Bold. Spicy. Out there. That's what has transpired after a four-year relationship. She knew this wasn't a hard-sell, "trying to get a record deal" kind of discussion from me. This was straight from the heart. Timing and trust is everything.



Later, as we prepare to record at Oak Tree Studios in Hendersonville, TN, I ask Ann why she picked the hymns she's selected for this project. She answers:

"I had a few songs in mind from the beginning of the plan, then picked up my hymnal and started thumbing through, stopping to read each lyric. The words of the hymns just jumped out of me... the songs I feel I've lived with Him."

Ann's earliest recollection of standards like "Footsteps of Jesus" and "Blessed Assurance" comes from being that vivacious little six year old from Oldtown Baptist Church in Mississippi.

She tells me, "I think one major thing I'd like audiences to hear from these classics is a journey back through their lives. To remember the points along the way. Beautiful songs with more than just a melody, but music that reflects a real encounter with God."

"The hymns have stood the test of time... not just because of familiarity, but because of deep truth and about one's walk with God. Trusting Him for the future," Ann adds.

Ann, in her own right, is an exceptional songwriter. But this time around, she's allowing the pen of these former inspired writers to minister to her as a listener first. Then, the "Statements Of My Faith" (the album title) simply translates as it declares: "All That Thrills My Soul Is Jesus." That just about sums it up.

Jeff Duffield is producer, arranger and orchestrator of this project. Jeff is no newcomer to gospel music, with over 500 albums to his credit. As his wife, I walk a delicate balance here, not to be obnoxious with kudos and promos, but just wait til you hear this! We all sat in the studio and cried, sensing God's presence in the room! This is what matters. I'm honored too, to sing with Ann on a few songs as well.

For more information on Ann's new STATEMENTS OF FAITH Hymns project, check her website: www.anndowning.com. For more information on Jeff Duffield Productions check his website: www.jeffduffield.com. And if you have any time left and you'd like to add a few comments to my banter and "Sue-biquitous" way of writing, speaking and blogging, I welcome you at www.sueduffield.com or by following me on: [www.twitter.com/sueduffield](https://twitter.com/sueduffield).





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Jeff & Sheri Easter Concert Review

By Sheri Whitt



Well folks, I was wrong again. Last year, when Union Street appeared at the Missouri Theater as part of the 2012 NWMO Concert series, I thought, "This is it. No other concert at this theater will be as fantastic. We have already reached the pinnacle." Then along came a barrage of other artists that blew my theory apart. This proves something I have known all along: NEVER doubt what God is doing. EVER.

On a snowy March 1st evening, the Missouri Theater welcomed Jeff and Sheri Easter for the first time. Although the weather did not do a great job of cooperating earlier in the week, the attendance was at its biggest yet, which came as an unplanned and wonderful surprise for promoter Scott Peek. The concert opened with Mercy's Bridge Band, a local group of talented singers and players. They did a great job of getting the crowd warmed up as Jeff,

Sheri, Madison, Morgan, and 14-year-old drummer Landan Smith, took the stage.

The Easters started the evening singing "Anything But Happy," and that theme resonated throughout the concert. Jeff sang an oldie but goodie, "I Won't Have to Worry Anymore." Their 19-year-old daughter, Morgan, sang "That's What Love Is," and if I closed my eyes, I could hear twinges of Carrie Underwood. The Easters brought out their daughter-in-law, Shannon, who did a beautiful song called "Would You Hold Me While I Cry." They featured their son, Madison, on the upbeat bluegrass song, "I'm Working On A Road."

Throughout the evening, Jeff and Sheri gave witness to God's goodness, His grace, His love, and His mercy. Jeff spoke about the bus wreck they were involved in, and how

God had His hand of protection on them that night. Sheri read an excerpt from her book, "Hear My Heart," and shared a few words of her battle with breast cancer. Her beautiful voice told story after story in song, especially when she sang "I Know How It Feels to Survive," "She Loved," and my all-time Sheri Easter favorite, "Praise His Name." There were so many touching moments about that night, but there was one in particular that turned on my tears. Jeff, Sheri, and Morgan sang the precious song, "I Get To," and I caught Sheri giving Jeff a wink as they held hands while he sang directly to her on the second verse. It was one of those split-second, fleeting moments, and had I not been sitting on the front row, I would have missed it. We sometimes wonder if what goes on onstage is genuine. I can tell you first hand, with Jeff and Sheri Easter, it is.

At one point, Jeff asked the very talented steel guitar player from Mercy's Bridge Band to come up onstage and play along as he sang a Don Williams classic, "Lord, I Hope This Day Is Good." Then Jeff broke out the harmonica for one of the best renditions of "Amazing Grace" I've ever heard. But the thing that brought down the house was that sweet, powerful voice of Sheri belting out "Well I looked over Jordan and what did I see..." as the rest of the family joined her in stirring, bluegrass harmony on "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." They had the crowd yelling, clapping, stomping...you name it. There was so much energy and love flowing in that old beautiful Missouri Theater, I don't know how anyone could not have been blessed that night!

Thank you, Jeff, Sheri, Madison, Shannon, Morgan, and Landan, for an absolutely wonderful night of music and fellowship.

As I said before, this was the biggest crowd to date for the NWMO Gospel Concert Series. If you haven't made it to a concert at the Missouri Theater in St. Joseph, you can probably guess what my question is to you...WHY? Why should you take a night off and come spend it with some of the best musicians in Southern Gospel today? Because you WILL be blessed! There aren't many things in life that are guaranteed, but this place, this concert series my friends, is something that I can guarantee you will love and enjoy. You will walk away realizing you are more blessed than you ever believed. Good...no, GREAT things are continuing to happen in Northwest Missouri. And Northwest Missouri, by the way, is a lot closer to the Kansas City area than you might think (ahem, Kansas City folks!). In all seriousness, please come join us in this wonderful venue and celebrate Jesus with us.

Furthermore, I am SO EXCITED to start advertising for this next concert in the series! Drumroll please.....MR. RYAN SEATON is bringing his group, UNION STREET, back to St. Joseph on Friday, May 17, 2013! Folks, this night is going to be one you DO NOT want to miss! Ryan was the former lead singer for Ernie Haase and Signature Sound, and has put together a fabulous quartet that is just about the best you will ever hear in Southern Gospel music.



These guys are simply amazing. It will be a night of four-part harmony at its best. Take it from someone who is pretty picky about her music! Look up Union Street on Facebook, Twitter, and their website, www.unionstreetqt.com. Tickets are available through promoter Scott Peek and Speek Ministries at www.nwmogospel.com, and they are very reasonable at \$15-\$20 a seat. And while you're on Facebook and Twitter, please seek out the NWMO Gospel page and give it a "like" and a "follow!" If you want to hear great Southern Gospel but do not have a radio station in your area, you're in luck! Scott has worked diligently to set up an online Southern Gospel radio station! A link to the station, KNMG, can be found while you're visiting the NWMO Gospel website, or you can use the following link: <http://player.liquidcompass.net/KNMGIR#>. If you like what you hear, please consider signing up to be a sponsor of the radio station. It's only \$10 per month (of course, you can donate more if you wish!) but it's a great feeling to support something that gives people hope and encouragement. And best of all, it brings Southern Gospel back to the Northwest Missouri area, and to all parts of the world!

Ok folks...I'm going to say it again! Bring your vehicle, and load it up with your buddies! Talk to your churches and bring a van! Bring a BUS! Walk, run, crawl, flap those wings and fly...you don't want to miss out on the rest of the 2013 NWMO Gospel Concert Series! Let's make Scott work non-stop to process those ticket orders! Have a blessed day, everyone! And as Jeff Easter would say, "Be whut you is, don't be whut you ain't. Cause if you ain't whut you is, you is whut you ain't!"



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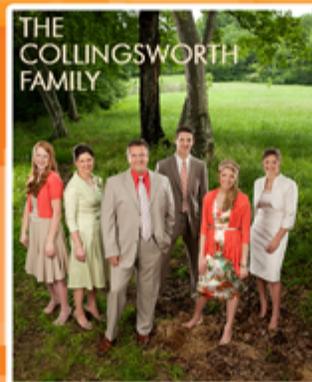
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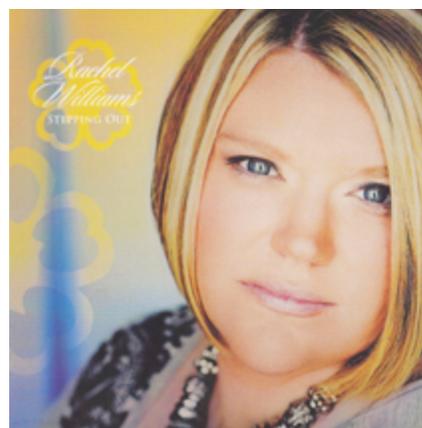
Music Reviews for April

by Sandi Duncan Clark

Sunshine, roses, azaleas, yellow bells and willow trees all flowing in the billowy spring wind... our hearts open to a wonderful time of awakening. Although the strange weather patterns are a puzzle, God puts it in perspective when we trust Him in all things. This means even the small things and to God everything is a small thing. Whether its drought, heavy rain with flooding, a cold May morning or a very warm January afternoon which doesn't fit the four-season balance God speaks and everything comes right back into focus and all is well with the world!

I truly look forward to the longer summer days, no matter how disturbing the time change has been. I love the outdoors, and there is nothing better than a relaxing morning on the back deck; a big cup of coffee, a good book and my MP3 player with some great Gospel music. It won't be long until vacation, and maybe Cliff and I will have a few days for this.

The music we share this month is exciting, inspiring and well-worth a listen. I recommend giving these artists an opportunity to bless you with their talent, and who knows...you might, in turn, bless someone else's day! God bless you all, and I hope you find something here to share with others.



STEPPING OUT

Rachel Williams

Independent

Producer: Dave Wilcox

Rachel Williams sings Gospel music with a Country flavor, and has ten inspiring songs on her new CD. Looking at the song titles here while and thinking of the words in each song, I didn't quite understand the project title. However, Rachel explained her chosen title in a testimony on the insert of the recording. "As I branch out into new areas of ministry, I must admit God is pulling me out of my comfort zone," she stated. "When God calls us to step out it can be overwhelming, especially if it's new or unfamiliar territory."

Understanding the artist's heart and desire to serve the Lord with gladness, contributes greatly to the blessing we receive from their music. Every song here has a message to live by, and Rachel Williams' powerful vocals deliver each message with fervor.

Rachel begins the recording with Gerald Crabb's 'Special Love,' then follows with a song that speaks to my heart; 'Faith, Hope and Love.' She wrote another of my favorites, 'God Is Faithful,' and she does a wonderful job singing this song. Rachel recorded a great song written

by Annie McRae and does a fantastic job on 'He Knows My Name.'

Some other good songs on the playlist are 'A Picture Of Me Without You,' 'Joy In The Journey' and another Gerald Crabb song, 'Patience.'

With a Godly dedication to the ministry of Jesus Christ, and a strong will to do her best for Him, I'm sure we'll be hearing much more from Rachel Williams. If you enjoy Gospel music with good country style, you may contact Rachel at www.rachelwilliamsministries.com, or by phone at 434-249-2341.



TIMELESS

Southern Sound Quartet
Golden Street Records

Producers: Ben Harris, Paul Ross

From Gospel music with a Country style, we pick up a new recording with Southern Gospel music done in the traditional quartet style! When it comes to smooth, established quartet music, it just doesn't get any better than Southern Sound Quartet. Close tight harmony, modern melodies and solid vocals are what you get with this group. I've been a fan of this all-male quartet for a few years. I appreciate their excellent choice of songs and their desire to work on arrangements until they have created a masterpiece.

There is a bonus of fourteen songs here, some being older songs that we've heard in the past; others are newer songs or newer arrangements that cause our hearts to sing right along with the group. Either way, its four part harmony on exciting songs, done exceptionally well.

'Wonderful Change,' from the pen of the great Lari Goss, kicks off forty five minutes of some of the best music you'll ever hear. From there the music just gets better! I love the studio band. Jason Webb leads some of the industry's top musicians and you can't beat the orchestration on some of the songs. I met Milton Smith when he was with the Singing Americans, and have kept up with his work down through the years. He really gives these guys the best foundation for their vocals with great orchestration.

Diane Wilkinson wrote another of my favorite songs on the project. 'My Resting Place' is a beautiful song, and Southern Sound treats this one royally. 'Roll Back River Jordan' and 'When I Cross' are two rock solid songs which feature bass singer, Michael J. Arnott. Each man in the quartet is given a place to shine vocally on this recording, which is what fans enjoy.

I highly recommend this CD to any fan of quartet music. You may contact Ben Harris at www.southernsoundquartet.com, or by phoning 615-883-7375.



LET'S HAVE SOME CHURCH
Weston and Christy Hinson
Legacy Music

In the world of Country Gospel music, the Hinson name is a legacy for the children and grandchildren of the Original Hinsons. The Original Hinsons; Kenny, Ronnie, Larry and Yvonne set the bench mark in Gospel music with their country arrangements. The Original Hinsons introduced Country Gospel music to the world of Southern Gospel and merged the two, around 1966. They created a category of Gospel that has grown tremendously and kept the Hinson name alive. Although other groups sing Country Gospel, all Hinson fans will be happy to hear the exciting new album by Weston and Christy Hinson titled LET'S HAVE SOME CHURCH.

Weston Hinson is the son of the late, great Kenny Hinson and Weston and his wife, Christy, brings back so many memories of the original group. On this recording, Weston is joined by Larry Hinson who was the original singer when they took 'The Lighthouse' to the top of the national charts. Weston does a solo on 'I'd Rather Have Jesus,' and if you close your eyes, you can visualize the original Hinsons singing these.

Weston's wife, Christy is not only a commanding vocalist; she is also an impressive song writer. Christy wrote: 'That's What My Shout's About' and 'He fixed It For Me,' and she is featured on both songs. She and Weston sing 'I Hold On,' and the title song, 'Let's Have Some

Church,' while Weston sings another of Christy's songs titled 'I Get To Go.'

Having so many strong songs written by a group member, is unusual, but Christy writes in the style and character of the songs the Original Hinsons are known for, and hers are a great influence on Weston and Christy's performances.

Weston sings 'On The Other Side Of This,' and 'Let Me Tell You Again,' two of my favorite songs on the project. Christy does a wonderful job on 'God Walks The Dark Hills,' and Weston rounds out the song list with 'The Answer,' and 'Finally Home.'

If you are a fan of the Original Hinsons' sound, you will want to add this recording to your collection. Contact Weston and Christy Hinson at www.westonhinsongroup.com for your copy.



BROKEN AND BLESSED

Shannon Knight
Skyland Music

Producer: Jeff Collins

My day devoted to Southern Gospel music was brought to a wonderful end by the latest recording from Shannon Knight. Once a part of the Daryl Williams Trio, in recent years, Shannon has dedicated his talent to a solo ministry. He also appears on the Trinity Broadcasting Network on a weekly basis.

Shannon begins his new recording with a couple of rousing songs that will bless your heart and give you joy for your day. These songs remind you of good times, good friends, and the joy and comfort you felt while going through trials and burdens. These songs share God's encouragement and strength for your journey. He chose several songs written by Daryl Williams. The first cut on the album 'Good News Is Coming Down The Road,' begins a great half hour or more of praising our Lord.

Daryl also contributed 'I've Been Broken,' which is the title song, and the first single shipped to Gospel radio. This song really got me awake and moving on this cold March morning!

One of my favorite songs is "My Soul Is Lifted Up,"

another song written by Daryl Williams and Marty Funderburk. These three songs one after the other will bless your day, and even if it's cold and rainy outside, your spirit will be lifted.

Other songs on the play list are 'Too Late For Lazarus,' 'Forgive Me,' 'Sing and Shout' and 'Between Two Thieves.' Phil Cross wrote two other songs that you will enjoy: 'Gotta Go Back' and 'The Key.'

You will enjoy all ten songs on this recording. Contact Shannon at 205-495-1376 to get your copy of this recording. Shannon also visits churches for concerts and special services. Having worked as minister of music, Shannon knows exactly how to contribute to your churches' musical services and may be contacted at the same number to book a visit to your church.

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YOUNGER PERSPECTIVE

OLIVIA COLLINGSWORTH

BY ERIN STEVENS

When you think of tight, family harmony in the Southern Gospel world, I'm sure there are a few key groups who stand out in your mind; but there is only one family of six I can think of whose anointing, class, spiritual depth and lush vocals can stand in a league all their own. That powerhouse family is none other than The Collingsworths. Typically when you think of this group, all the attention usually is directed towards Kim's flying fingers across the piano keys, Courtney and Brooklyn's violin duets, Phil's stellar MC work, or Philip's Michael Bublé-esque solos. But there is a certain young red head, who, while cheering on her family, single handedly makes The Collingsworth Family who they are. Sit back and relax as the lovely Olivia Collingsworth takes center stage in this month's "Younger Perspective."

Erin: How many years have you been performing on stage now?

Olivia: I started singing when I was about two years old, so I've been on stage for 12 years now. I enjoy it more and more every weekend!

Erin: What is your favorite song to sing in concert and why?

Olivia: My absolute favorite song to sing is "Since Jesus Came Into My Heart." It always makes me smile to see almost every face in the crowd light up as they begin to sing along with us. It will never get old to me!

Erin: Can you describe in detail what your most memorable concert was, and why it holds such meaning for you personally?

Olivia: We sang in Charlotte, NC a few weeks ago and we went into the concert needing God's help more than

anything. We were in a different situation where we only had about 40 minutes to sing. In those situations, it seems hard for God to move when the time is regulated. We got on stage kind of jittery, not knowing what to expect. That night had to have been the most incredible service I can remember after almost 13 years of singing. My sister, Courtney, got up and sang a song called "I Can Trust Jesus." God began to move, and it was almost as if He was talking to every single person in the building telling them,



"You can trust Me." I haven't heard people shout like that since I was a tiny little girl.

Erin: Besides singing, what is your job(s) while on the road?

Olivia: For jobs, it just depends on who is needing me at the time. I can go from helping setting up the product table, to ironing everyone's stage clothes for the evening.

Erin: In your own words, describe what traveling on the road is like with your family? And yes, you can add both pros and cons.

Olivia: Well, I'll start with the cons. Probably the most difficult thing about traveling together as a family is the close quarters on the bus. Yes, sometimes we get on each other's nerves! We try to act grown up most of the time, but I'll have to be honest, I've had to apologize before for being impatient with one of my siblings! So goes life on a bus!

Now for the pros. I love getting to be with my family each weekend and sharing a lot of awesome experiences together. In 2011, we went to Sweden and it was a blast! This coming August, we're going back to Sweden and also doing five concerts in Norway. I'm privileged to get to see a lot of the places that I study about in my history books. Not many kids get that opportunity, so I feel very blessed.

Erin: Do you play any instruments?

Olivia: I play some piano, but more by ear than by the books. I would prefer to sing!

Erin: While rolling down the highway in Big Red, what are your favorite pastimes to well...pass the time?

Olivia: One of my favorite pastimes on the road is to watch old Disney classics with my sister, Brooklyn! We are known as the movie queens on the bus.

Erin: Would you consider yourself: A (the prankster) B (the comedian) or C (the one who NEVER gets into trouble)?

Olivia: Well, I admit I took a poll in the bus on this one. Everyone unanimously voted for C (the one who NEVER gets in trouble.) What can I say? I'm the baby of the family.

Erin: Who is your all-time favorite artist (Christian & secular)?

Olivia: There are so many great Christian artists out there, but one that has always been one of my very favorites is the Booth Brothers. I love the harmonies and the rich blend that they have. In secular music I'm a big fan of old, big band/jazz music. Frank Sinatra had a classic voice that I just love!

Erin: For those of us who follow you on Facebook & Twitter, it is apparent how much you love videography. How did you get into that, and can you see yourself starting your own business someday?

Olivia: I first started doing some videoing while we were

on the bus, just doing some silly videos for the website, and I actually was editing them on my iPhone for awhile. I realized that I had kind of found my niche. A couple months later, I bought my camera and did my very first wedding video in July of 2012. I definitely think that this could be a side job that I could see myself doing in the future.

Erin: Who do you get along with best - your sisters or brother? Be honest!

Olivia: Ever since I was little, Brooklyn and I have always gotten along the best! She was always like my second mother.

Erin: When you're home, what would you be found doing, besides home schooling.

Olivia: When I'm home, you will probably find me texting, out with my friends somewhere, or doing absolutely nothing. That is my relaxation.

Erin: If you could describe yourself in 5 words, what would they be?

Olivia: Traveler, joyful, crazy, active, techie.

Erin: How about sharing something about yourself that no one would ever guess?

Olivia: I love selling things on eBay to make a little extra money. It's a hobby of mine.

Erin: It's been noticed that you all are in the process of getting a new bus. Any "roadie mishaps" while in ole' Big Red you would like to share?

Olivia: We have been on some pretty interesting adventures with Big Red. She had a water leak in the back bedroom a couple weeks ago, so we had to send 7 of us home in a rental mini van. Needless to say, it was a very long ride with three girls stuffed in a back seat. I will admit, we sure will miss Big Red though.

Erin: Who is your biggest role model in life?

Olivia: Well, I have two role models in my life - my parents! They have taught me so much, and I couldn't thank them enough! I love them with all my heart!

Well there you have it, folks! A glimpse into this remarkable young lady's life of travels. Olivia is a bright, talented girl with an exciting future ahead of her! I'm looking forward to seeing where the Lord continues to lead this unique family with their diverse, God-given talents. Until next month, Scoops fans.

And that's my take on it.

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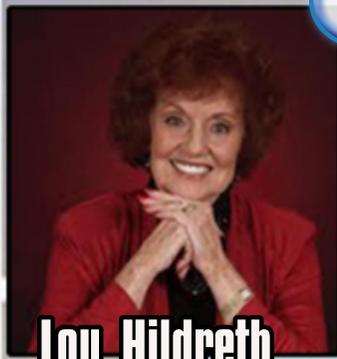
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A MATHIS MOMENT

“HE WENT OUT OF HIS WAY”

BY JOHN MATHIS JR.

(In the book of) John, the fourth chapter, it says that Jesus, when he was leaving Judea and traveling back to Galilee (V4) that “he must needs go through Samaria” or another translation says “but he had to go through Samaria”. That has always stood out to me and intrigued me in this familiar story about the woman at the well.

This is quite interesting that Jesus “must needs go through Samaria” because the Jews and the Samaritans did not get along. That’s probably understating it; actually, this was a time period when both Jewish and Samaritan religious leaders taught that it was wrong to even have contact with the other group. So they were beyond not getting along. There were deeply dividing issues involving race and religion and there were great tensions between the two.

What makes this “need” to go through Samaria more interesting is that the main route most used during that time in history, because of the high tension between Jews and Samaritans, would have been along the Jordan River, AVOIDING traveling through Samaria. But Jesus said “I need to go through Samaria”. Basically, “I need to go through the place where we’re not even supposed to have contact with those people.”

You see, he wasn’t talking about going through Samaria because it was a regular part of the journey, or a short cut, etc. A Jew would have normally avoided Samaria. He was talking about a need to go

through Samaria because he had an “appointment”... at Jacob’s Well....with a woman. A “sinful” Samaritan woman.

Remember the day and time we’re talking about here, and Jesus was going out of His way to see someone who had many, many cultural, societal and religious strikes against her. She was a Samaritan, so that made her despised and hated for her racial and religious differences. She was a woman, and teachers or religious leaders didn’t even talk to women in public, much less a Samaritan woman. And she had been married at least four times and was with a man who was not her husband, so her reputation regarding her lifestyle and morality may not have been the most favorable.

Now, let me take a quick detour right here to remind ourselves who Jesus Christ is. Prior to this moment we’re reading about, Jesus lived in the splendor of Heaven, (He is) the Son of God, He knew glory beyond what we ever see or know in this lifetime and beyond what human tongues can describe but “He went out of his way” to be born of a virgin, in a little manger in Bethlehem, to come fulfill His Father’s will that we might receive salvation through grace and mercy and His shed blood. To receive the promise of God.

It was already a pretty big detour, leaving Heaven to come to earth, He was fulfilling his Father’s will by coming here, fulfilling what the prophets had foretold, on a mission from the cradle to the cross, to be resurrected and usher in a new covenant. Even

though He was already going out of His way by cosmic distances, even though He was already here for ALL mankind this one moment in John chapter four is almost like Jesus is saying to all of the millions and millions who have read this account over time or will read it"I went out of my way for YOU, not just for EVERYONE. but for YOU specifically."

This story sometimes seems random to me. Think about it, there was no prophecy to fulfill from the Old Testament prophets by going through Samaria and meeting this woman. It was out of sight from the Jews to whom He had been sent. Yet, Jesus "needed" to do this.

I'm glad He did, yes it is true, Jesus came so that we ALL might have life and have it more abundantly. And even though the word "all" means "all".... this story of how He went out of His way for this Samaritan woman makes the "all" transition to "me". He went out of His way for "me"....no matter where I've been, what I've done, what color or gender or nationality... He went out of His way for "me"!

He went out to His way for you!

John Mathis

Photo Courtesy of Json



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A promotional graphic for 'The Gibsons' featuring a woman in a red dress sitting on a white sofa, flanked by two men in suits. The background shows a landscape with an American flag. The text 'The Gibsons' is at the top in a stylized font. Below the image, it says 'Request our current radio release', followed by '"Heal Our Land"' in a large, decorative font, and the website 'www.TheGibsonss.com' at the bottom.



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A promotional graphic for a 2013 tour. It features two portraits: a woman with dark hair wearing a red jacket and a young boy with glasses wearing a blue plaid shirt. The background is a sunset over a field. The text '2013' is in large yellow letters, followed by 'VICTORIA SHIREY & LOGAN SMITH' in white, and 'COMING TO A CITY NEAR YOU!' in yellow. At the bottom, 'JOY IN THE MORNING TOUR' is written in white on a dark red banner.

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“QUESTION EVERYTHING” A BOOK REVIEW

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Review written by: Sandi Duncan Clark for
SGNSCOOPS.com Magazine

Reading and studying the Bible is sometimes difficult. Even discussing and consulting with our ministers and teachers who are trained to “rightly divide the word,” needs something my pastor advises; anoint your study with much prayer and repeated study.

Each of us reads and understands the Bible at a different pace. From the assorted versions of the Bible, Tyler Ellis chose “The New International Version,” and “The English Standard Version,” and according to Tyler, these are the two most popular versions people enjoy and use today.

My personal preferences are the New King James version from Thomas Nelson Company, and The New Scofield Reference Bible. I read and participated in Tyler Ellis’ book, his Bible choices, and my own Bible and found these translations to be very close, with the King James Version at the basis of all three Bibles.

I use the word “participated” since this book is much like a workbook. Mr. Ellis poses a question for every verse in the New Testament and provides a space for our answers. At the end of each book of the New Testament, there is a page having the same two questions for every book and allowing us to summarize our thoughts. This is an example of that review page:

What Does This Chapter Reveal About...God:

Myself:

Others:

What Difference Does It Make:

This page made a great difference for me, as a born again Christian and having worked in the church continually. I have read every part of the New Testament, yet I learned something new for all 27 chapters, answer-

ing Mr. Ellis' questions.

Tyler Ellis Biography

It was not a major task to answer each question. Mr. Ellis states in his explanation of the book that reading the Bible verse first or answering the question first didn't matter. I elected to read the scripture first. I don't think I could have reversed this pattern and enjoyed it.

Tyler Ellis is a Campus Minister at the University of Delaware and a member of the Campus Cross-Walk board. He previously served as a missionary in Western Samoa through Adventures In Missions, a program he later served on staff with for three years. Tyler and his wife Jennifer, live with their daughter in Newark, Delaware.

I found if I was familiar with the verse, I would often skip the scripture reading it and just answer from what I had heard someone preach or teach in the past. Sometimes that would not be the wise thing to do. By reading the scripture and dwelling on it, then answering the question, my response COULD/MIGHT be more in depth. I would re-read not just accept what I heard.

I liked the fact that not only did I read the New Testament through as I completed the book, I also changed my thought process on just why and how this study would make a difference my life and found that I really enjoyed searched the verses more closely, allowing me time to take a clear look at my assessment of the scripture.

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Christian Country News: Barbara Lowman –

“My prayer is for the Holy Spirit to always be evident in my music.”

By Rick Kiser Jr.

The last thing this North Carolina girl ever imagined was that one day God would use her songwriting talents and beautiful voice for His glory. “God can’t use perfect people, but He can use willing people,” Barbara told me in a phone interview.

At the early age of 10, Barbara became a Christian while attending her home church in Morganton, NC. Her pastor, George Simmons, prayed with her that simple prayer and she asked Jesus to come into her life, and He has been there ever since. “I have made a lot of mistakes but because of God’s merciful grace He was always there for me. He never gave up on me, and because of that I will praise Him always.”

Her first time singing on stage was at that same church soon after she asked Christ to be her Savior. The church piano player, Sadie Williams, picked a song that she wanted Barbara to sing. With baby doll in hand and sitting in her rocking chair Barbara sang her first solo. For the next several years she continued to sing at her church and with Life Corp, which was a Wesleyan Teen Singing Group. During her time with the group she witnessed firsthand how God used music to change people’s lives. “That is when I felt God wanted to use me,” she tells.

After graduating from high school and with the breakup of her then boyfriend, Barbara joined the US Army. After basic training she was stationed in Texas. She still wanted

to sing and she loved to see people get saved, but she began to wonder if God could really use her. Then she began singing for a Christian rap band called, The Sword. They traveled over parts of Texas singing, testifying and street preaching. “I had the awesome opportunity to pray with many people and see many give their lives to Christ.”

Years later she moved back to North Carolina, met Mike Lowman, the man that God had planned for her, and got married. She started working in sales, but never lost her love for music or her unconditional love for her Heavenly Father. In 2010 God began to deal with her about her singing. It was time for her to step out and sing God’s glory. During a youth retreat, which her and her husband had volunteered, they took part in a “prayer walk” with the youth. They took their shoes off, walked across the stage and looked in the mirror. She and her husband were able to see what God saw. She again realized that God does have a plan for her life. “That is when I realized I needed to stop running. My passion for ministry became stronger than ever. Our lives were transformed that night. God was there for both of us and He changed me that night. I have never been the same since.” Barbara had Jesus in her heart but now it was time to put Him in her every thought. She gave Him her everything.

Barbara wanted to start singing God’s praises in her church and tell people her testimony. God was ready for her to go, but her church was not. A lady at the church



knew of Barbara's calling and told her, "You don't have to just sing at this church." That opened a whole new world for Barbara.

Barbara started singing at a local cowboy church and traveled with that pastor, George Patton, singing and preaching around NC. She also began volunteering at the Christ Centered Recovery Program with director Steve Smith. Today she regularly volunteers there and whenever they travel she is with them to sing and share her testimony. "I love to sing God's praises and share His love. People cry, sing along, and raise their hands. It's just awesome to see people's lives being changed." She also leads the little Awanas in praise music every Sunday night at her church along with singing with the praise team.

With the release of her latest project in April of 2012,



titled *CHILD OF GOD*, God has opened doors for her she never thought possible. Six of the 12 songs on that CD are original songs. "The lyrics are from my heart, how I feel and what I've been through. I know God will use them to touch others' lives," she explains. Her first single "Child of God" was charted at 56 in the top 80 new release charts on Southern Gospel Radio which was sent out on Crystal Music & Promotions compilation to about 60 charting stations!

God has opened doors for Barbara to be on several radio interviews in North Carolina and Kentucky. She has sung in over 100 churches, several conferences, and a showcase at the National Quartet Convention. Last year she opened up for Adam Crabb. "That was pretty awesome!" she says.

Barbara told me a story of one time she was on stage



and she felt God leading her to sing a new song that she wasn't that comfortable with. "I told God, 'If you let me sing a familiar song first, I promise I will sing the other one next.'" She told me that as the music started playing that familiar song; she looked at her husband and completely forgot what song it was she was going to sing. "I learned that night that if God says to do something, do it. Don't go and do your own thing, do His thing."

Barbara's heart goes farther than just singing and giving her testimony. Her voice is anointed. "I don't want to entertain, I want to minister." Who is Barbara Lowman? She's just a humble girl from NC that will follow God wherever He leads her and her family. "I Love the Lord and I am truly thankful to Him for all He has done. This is all for Him."

When I asked what the most important thing in her life is she responded, "My family is my number one. I give God the glory for my wonderful husband and kids. My ministry is second. I love the fact that I get to sing for my Heavenly Father. Barbara is starting her next project and hopes to release it by January 2014. To learn more about the music of Barbara Lowman please visit her website, www.barbaralowman.com

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West Coast, GET READY! By Rhonda Frye

West Coast, GET READY for three wonderful days and nights of amazing gospel music with the Southern Gospel Music Industry's best of the best! That's right! The GREAT WESTERN FAN FESTIVAL will begin on Thursday, April 25th, and will last through Saturday, the 27th. The Convention Center in beautiful Visalia, California will provide the meeting place for an unforgettable Southern Gospel musical experience!

Many Dove, Grammy and Fan Award winning artists as well as Hall of Famers will delight the fans! This year's stellar lineup includes: The Hoppers, Triumphant Quartet, Greater Vision, Liberty, Jeff and Sheri Easter, Mark Trammell Quartet, Booth Brothers, Collingsworth Family, Gordon Mote and more.

Southern Gospel artists are known for their accessibility and this year's event will be no exception! The fans will have several opportunities to connect with their favorite artists as well as attend specialty sessions. The GREAT WESTERN FAN FEST offers specialty showcases: "Best of the West," "Songs and Hymns You Love," "They Write the Songs," "Funniest Stories Ever Told," "Parade of Pianos," and "Person to Person" - a new Q & A feature with some of these top artists. FAN FEST will also extend fan appreciation by offering the attendees a comfortable "courtyard concert" while supper is being served!

Mike Hopper shares: "With fewer Gospel concerts in the western United States, fans come here for the fellowship with their favorite artists and to hear sing-

ing, singing and more singing. Many plan this as their vacation and they love the concerts, the showcases, the fellowship and the sight-seeing during the week. This is the biggest western event in southern Gospel music on the west coast for the year. The Visalia Convention Center is where everything takes place. There are several hotels within easy walking distance, along with restaurants and shopping. The entire event is very convenient and the fans enjoy it. Parking for the event is free at the convention center. If you've never been to California, if you love Southern Gospel music, and you love to travel this is your ideal vacation."

Publisher of SGN Scoops Magazine, Rob Patz continues: "Knowing Southern Gospel Music as I do on the West Coast, everyone looks forward to the GREAT WESTERN FAN FESTIVAL with much anticipation. For many Southern Gospel fans, it is the highlight of the year. Each year I look forward to reconnecting with some of the finest west coast artists that I don't get to see often. I love Visalia! The people are warm and friendly and the weather is always beautiful. I'm looking forward to being there again this year."

With Southern Gospel's finest musicians and artists along with inspiring morning devotions, fun, food and fellowship, the Great Western Festival promises to be an unforgettable Southern Gospel Musical Experience! West Coast, GET READY! The GREAT WESTERN FAN FESTIVAL is almost here! For more information visit: <http://fanfestivals.com/>. Ticket information: 1-800- 965-9324.

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WHAT IS CHRISTIAN MEDIATION?

By Laurette Willis

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God”

(Romans 12:2).

Do not be a world conformer. Be a world *transformer!*

As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are not to be conformed, or molded, by the world’s ideas and ways, or by tenets and practices of mystical world religions. God promises that we can be transformed by renewing our minds, and thereby prove God’s perfect will for our lives. Who wouldn’t want that?

How do we renew our minds—and what do we need to do it?

The Word of God (the Scripture, as found in the Holy Bible) is the only thing that can truly renew your mind and transform your life for the better. Nothing else can do that for you. Nothing.

While the world may beg to differ, as believers we do not “leave our minds at the door” once we walk into a church. Quite the contrary! *“Come, let us reason together,”* the Lord says in Isaiah 1:18.

Proverbs 4:7 tells us that *“Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.”*

He wants us to gain wisdom and understanding by developing our spiritual nature and our mind through focusing and meditating on His Word, His will, and His ways—and then implementing what we’ve learned into our lives.

Meditation is God’s idea.

Regarding the righteous man: *“But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he **MEDITATES** day and night”* (Psalm 1:2); *“When I remember You on my bed, I **MEDITATE** on You in the night watches”* (Psalm 63:6).

If meditation is such a biblical practice, why do we often associate it with Eastern mysticism (Hinduism, Buddhism, yoga)? Well, I’m sure we can think of a number of things God created that the enemy of our souls has twisted and perverted to bring people to the feet of false idols.

Photo Courtesy of Chefranden

Christian Meditation versus Eastern Mysticism

Eastern mysticism calls for us to “empty our minds.” Christian meditation calls for a fully engaged, alert mind—focused on the Word of the Living God found in the Holy Bible.

Christian Meditation is NOT guided imagery, visualization, out-of-body experiences, subconscious suggestion or mental manipulation.

Christian Meditation is NOT Transcendental Meditation, hypnosis or Silva Mind Control. It does not involve chanting, nor reciting mantras or vain, repetitive words.

Christian Meditation is NOT an altered state of consciousness or “contemplative prayer” (*Lectio Divina*, “Centering Prayer” or “spiritual formation”) — these are NOT Biblical meditation practices. We do NOT enter a trance-like state.

While prayer (talking and listening to God) is a vital part of our relationship with Jesus Christ, meditation is a bit different — although it does *involve* our relationship with the Holy Spirit, our Teacher and Guide.

Let Me Just CHEW on That for a While

In Hebrew, “*haghah*” is “to meditate,” which means “to murmur; to mutter; to sigh.” When done in the heart, this is considered “musing, or meditation.” According to Zodhiates’ AMG Complete Word Study, “It is possible that the Scriptures were read audibly during the process of meditation.”

In Hebrew, meditation carries with it the unappealing, but descriptive picture of a cow chewing the cud! The idea being that we “chew” the Word, “swallow it,” and then bring it back up to chew it some more throughout our day as new truths and revelations are revealed.

Ever hear the expression, “Let me ruminate on that for a while”? To ruminate means to ponder, reflect or meditate on something—it also means “to chew”! Cows are

considered “ruminant” animals.

Meditate Day or Night? BOTH!

*“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **MEDITATE** in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success” (Joshua 1:8);*

Consider: Meditating on the Word of God day and night means to speak the Word of God to yourself day and night, and also speak to yourself *about it* day and night!

The OLD ME

Before I became a believer in Jesus, I taught yoga classes. At the close of class, I guided people into meditations and visualizations (not inviting them to fill their minds with the Word of God and meditate on His promises, but guiding them to “listen to the sound of my voice and relax” as I used to say). I used guided imagery to lull them into a false sense of serenity — to go someplace else — even meeting their “spirit guide.” These are horrible, demonic practices. I’m grateful the Lord has forgiven me.

When I was a New Ager, I did not point people to the peace that the Word of God brings. I knew nothing about it. Instead I used mental manipulation and the soothing quality of my voice to operate my own agenda. I *prided* myself on it. People were relaxed after my yoga classes. They experienced stress relief, but not peace. Since I did not know the Prince of Peace, all I could offer was the emptiness and temporary bandage of “self-help,” not Jesus.

Christian Meditation is focusing on and “soaking” in the Word of God

Take a portion of scripture and “ruminate” on it throughout the day. Write it on an index card and take it with you to work or school. Go over the passage again

and again, savoring it, seeking the wisdom of the Lord in it. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you hidden truths and personal application. “How can I apply this to my life, Lord?”

We are transformed by renewing our minds on the Word (NOT “emptying” our mind). Allow deep revelation from the Holy Spirit, our Teacher and Guide, to ignite your heart and mind with the refreshing intimacy of the Presence and Wisdom of the Lord Jesus Christ — our all in all.

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—MEDITATE on these things” (Philippians 4:7-9).

See also: Psalm 77:6; Psalm 77:12; Psalm 119:15; Psalm 119:23; Psalm 119:27; Psalm 119:48; Psalm 119:78; Psalm 143:5; “I will MEDITATE on the glorious splendor of Your majesty, And on Your wondrous works” (Psalm 145:5); Isaiah 33:17-19; Malachi 3:15-17; Luke 21:13-15; and 1 Timothy 4:15.

These scriptures leave NO question about what we are to MEDITATE upon—with a fully engaged, alert mind.

Selah [pause, and calmly think of that]!

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FOCUS ON THE YOUNG

ZACH FLOWERS

BY VICTORIA SHIREY

Back in December, I met a young man that I hadn't seen before in the Southern Gospel industry. We were singing with several different groups that night for an early New Year's celebration. The Diplomats had a new drummer, and they let him come out and sing "Mary Did You Know." He tore it up! So, if you don't know Zach Flowers, you're about to. Here's the scoop...

Victoria: How long have you been traveling with the Diplomats?

Zach: I've been with the Diplomats for about 6 months.

V: What's your favorite thing about traveling in ministry?

Z: I enjoy a lot of things about being on the road. We always have a blast! But my favorite part is seeing people come to know Christ. Whether it's something we played or a message that was brought, it's an awesome experience to be able to be a part of someone giving their heart to Jesus.

V: What's your favorite place to eat while out on the road?

Z: So far my favorite restaurant has been Tony Gores BBQ in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.

V: Have you traveled with any other groups?

Z: This is my first full time group. I have sung in a couple of my own groups growing up.

V: What other talents do you have besides playing the drums and singing?

Z: Well, musically, really nothing. Ha! But I have a lot of hobbies in various sports. Before I played with The Diplomats I rode bulls.

V: What's one of the funniest moments you've had on the road?

Z: With Corey Pearson, there are endless hilarious moments, but it's always funny to mess with Rita. She's so gullible.



Personally one of the funniest moments has been, we were getting ready to go on stage in Panama City, Florida one night. I was in a hurry to get up there fast so I could get my earbuds so I could be ready when we were called. So I went to go up the steps, I tripped and fell flat on my face in front

of everyone in the whole church. The worse part of it all was having to get up and go and act like nothing had happened.

V: What do you see yourself doing in the next 10 years?

Z: It's hard to tell what God has in store for me 10 years down the road, but If God sees fit, music is my life and playing is what I love to do.

V: Are you dating anyone right now?

Z: It's true, I am dating Rachael Shirey. I'm a lucky fella.

V: What's been the most rewarding moment while traveling with the Diplomats?

Z: The most rewarding moment has been when we went to Angola Prison in Louisiana. We sang to about 900 prisoners there. As Jimmy always does he opened the altars at the end of the service and the prisoners just flooded the altar. As I was sitting there behind the drums, I began to think how awesome our God is, that it doesn't matter what we have done, or where we have been, Jesus still loves us and will forgive us. It was an amazing service and time there.

V: What is the website for the Diplomats so people can see where you're going to be?

Z: The Diplomats website is www.Diplomatsqt.com. Y'all come see us!

Thanks to Zach for a great article! If you get a chance, go see the Diplomats live and meet Zach. He's got a great personality and is easy to like.

Editor's Note

Victoria Shirey is certainly one sharp young lady! She has faithfully contributed articles for nearly two years covering Southern Gospel's young folks. We are sad that Victoria is going to step away from the Scoops Writing Team, but we are so proud of her for pursuing God's call upon her life. God has blessed her with many talents. She sings, writes books, and songs and she speaks! What a special young lady indeed with spiritual maturity well beyond her years! We ask you keep Victoria in your prayers and keep up with her adventures at <http://www.victoriashireyministries.com/>. We Love you, Victoria and thank God for you.



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Provided by: Rich Bruce - Music Director

1	JUST PREACH JESUS	KINGDOM HEIRS
2	WAY PAST READY	MARK TRAMMELL QT
3	HE DIDN'T WHEN HE COULD HAVE PASSED BY	GREATER VISION
4	IT'S GONNA TAKE SURRENDER	STEEL BRIDGE
5	I GOT A HOLD OF GOD THIS MORNING	PERRYS
6	BEAUTIFUL DAY	BROWNS
7	TELL THE MOUNTAIN (ABOUT YOUR GOD)	BACK HOME
8	RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE	BOOTH BROTHERS
9	MAKE WAY FOR THE MASTER	TALLEYS
10	STEPPIN' OUT	11TH HOUR
11	LOVE, MERCY, AND GRACE	RICKY ATKINSON & COMPASSION
12	I GET DOWN	GOLD CITY
13	I CAN REJOICE	MARK BISHOP
14	WHEN HE SPEAKS	MCKAMEYS
15	THERE'S ONLY ONE WELL	LEGACY FIVE
16	GOD'S GREAT	THE OLD PATHS
17	PRAISE YOU IN THIS VALLEY	BROWDERS
18	MY HALLELUJAH SONG	PFEIFERS
19	GETTIN' READY TODAY	TAYLORS
20	HIS REDEEMED	LESTERS

INTRODUCING SCOOPS ON THE ROAD



If you need an Emcee for a special concert or event, check with us about having Rob Patz or Rhonda Frye to host your next program! With more than 19 years experience in media, Rob is the owner of Coastal Media- parent company of SGM Radio and SGNScoops Magazine and the host of the Southern Styles Show. Although Rhonda is fairly new to the industry, she is no stranger to the stage. She is a singer/songwriter, an associate pastor and the editor in chief for SGNScoops Magazine.

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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 emceeding concerts and special events. Email Rob at rob@sgnscoops.com.



Rhonda Frye is an ordained minister serving as the Associate and Worship Pastor at Rock Pointe Church in Fort Oglethorpe, GA. She is a recording artist, songwriter, preschool music teacher and sings with family trio, "Rhonda Frye & RiverSide." Rhonda is from Ringgold, GA and is supported

by her husband and their 3 children. To learn more about Rhonda Frye Music Ministries, visit: <http://rhondafrye.com>



Lou Wills Hildreth appears on the Gaither Homecoming Videos, and is a founding member of Texas First Family Of Gospel Music, the "Singing Wills Family." She helped pioneer Christian television as host of "Wills Family Inspirational TV." After moving to Nashville in the sixties, she was the

first woman to own an artist management agency. Lou is an inductee of the Texas Gospel Music Hall Of Fame, GMA Gospel Music Hall Of Fame, SGMA Hall Of Fame at Dollywood, and the Christian Music Hall Of Fame. She is a recipient of an Honorary Doctorate Of Sacred Music from Louisiana Baptist University. Recently, Gaither Homecoming Magazine named Lou in the "Hall Of Honor" series, and the Southern Gospel Music Guild gave her a "Lifetime Achievement Award." Lou is celebrating a 65th wedding anniversary in 2011 with Howard, and they live in Houston near son Dr. David Hildreth and daughter Kathryn Mumaw, and 4 grandchildren. Visit Lou at: <http://louhildreth.com>



Victoria Shirey first took the stage at 3 years old. Strong vocal abilities and harmonies are a God given talent that started in her at a very young age. Along with writing for SGN Scoops, she designs websites, is a Producer and Background Vocalist for Homeland Records out of Gallatin, TN and

is a part-time cruise director for Paradise Tours & Travel. Victoria writes and arranges most of The Shirey's music as well. Most importantly, she loves the Lord with all of her heart and makes it her goal to let the love of God shine through her.

Visit victoria at: <http://theshireysministries.com>



Sandi Duncan Clark and Cliff Clark make their home in Easley, S.C. where they enjoy traveling, gardening, and the beautiful South Carolina weather. Sandi has worked in journalism for more than thirty years, and she is thankful that her love for God and Gospel music provides a great opportunity to positively impact the careers of so many in

Gospel music. Email Sandi at sandi@sgnscoops.com.



Through a series of events, Jeff Hawes has moved from the classroom where he taught high school English in Jackson county, Alabama to the tour bus of gospel great Karen Peck & New River. Jeff chronicles the fulfillment of his gospel music dreams and his road

life exclusively for SGN Scoops. Learn more about him at <http://www.karenpeckandnewriver.com>



Christian Health & Fitness Expert Lorette Willis is an author with Harvest House Publishers, and the Director of Praise-Moves Fitness Ministry with DVDs, a training program and PraiseMoves Instructors

on four continents (<http://PraiseMoves.com>), on Facebook <http://on.fb.me/PraiseMoves>. Lorette 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>

Contributors

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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. Queen-noq.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



John Mathis Jr's life and musical influences have given him years of experience in the music industry in the areas of songwriting and music publishing, radio, publicity, A&R and recording. Another influence in John's life has been ministry. His grand-father was a church-planter

and minister for 43 years, his father was a national evangelist. John has spent a number of years as an evangelist, pastor, worship director and public speaker. Currently, John works with Mansion Entertainment in the aspects of media promotions, publishing and recording while continuing to write, manage his own music catalog and occasionally speak.

www.themansionentertainment.com
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www.johnmathisjr.com



Angela Griffin is an International Field Representative for Love A Child, Inc., a 501 c 3 humanitarian organization to the island of Haiti. A rich Christian family heritage guided her path to minister in song to the broken, to feed the hungry, and lead others to Christ. On December 31, 2002 she married Tim Griffin, an accomplished Southern Gospel pianist. Tim and Angela then combined their musical talents and formed the group "The Griffin's." They have traveled throughout the Southeast spreading the love of Christ.



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, spreading the message that there is joy around the

bend. She serves as a group leader for Women of Faith, designs websites, and writes an inspirational blog at <http://jenniferjoycampbell.blogspot.com> Learn more about Jennifer at <http://jennifercampbell.net>



Scott Rhoades has a passion for writing, and enjoys sharing his experiences and interests through publication and speaking in public forums. After completing graduate work in 2006, he began to pursue freelance writing and continued public speaking. In 2009, he took to the airwaves, joining the staff of WMUG in Indiana, Pennsylvania where he is the Program Host for Sunday Morning Light. The owner of Ivory Hill Studios, he is the co-author of Legacy of Love: Memories from Ivory Hill - a collection of stories and poems highlighting the history of the Rhoades family and the small coal-mining town of Nanty-Glo, Pennsylvania. Scott is also a songwriter, publishing his first song, I'm Under His Wings, with Asheville Music Publishing/Chris White Music in 2010. Website: www.scottrhoades.net

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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!



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.



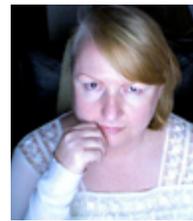
Richard (Rick) Kiser Jr. is the author of the children's book series, Carly and Friends. He also has written one novel, "Forever My Son." He is a full time computer technician and lives in Virginia with his wife and two daughters. To learn more about Rick visit his web site

www.carlyandfriends.com



Dixie has been married to Pastor Paul Phillips for 35 years. The couple has been honored to serve the congregation of the Gospel Lighthouse Church in Floyd, Iowa, for 31 years. They have four grown children and four "perfect" grandchildren.

Dixie is a ghostwriter, award winning children's author, and songwriter. She and her sister-in-law Sharon won the 2012 Singing News/Solid Gospel Songwriters Search with their song "Hidden Heroes." Her favorite pastime is counting her blessings. If you'd like to know more about Dixie, visit her website at www.floydslighthouse.com or www.phillipsandphillipsmusic.com. You can e-mail Dixie at Phillips4Him@myomnitel.com.



Susan Werchonowicz is a lover of our Lord Jesus Christ. Susan is Canadian-born with a deep love of Southern Gospel Music. Her passion for Gospel Music was re-ignited when Russ Taff performed at her church in Brampton Ontario Canada a few years ago.. When Russ performed "Ain't no Grave" Susan

became re-enamored and consumed with Southern Gospel music. By trade Susan is an analytical "left brain" type, with her profession as a Project Manager in the Telecom Industry. Susan has returned back to her passion for writing, including her love for Lyric Writing, including writing a Christian play which she hopes to see on stage one day. Susan is single and lives about 1 hour north of Toronto. She has recently joined the SGN Scoops Magazine team Dec. '12. "It's your heart, not the dictionary, that gives meaning to your words" (Matthew 12:34) (MSG). You can email Susan directly at swerchon@sgnscoops.com



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

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Dr. Jeff R. Steele is a pastor, conference speaker, singer, songwriter, husband, father, grandfather and friend. He is currently the Senior Pastor at Faith Baptist Church in Cullman, Alabama. Their services are webcast worldwide; they have a weekly television program and host an annual

Jubilee each August that attracts hundreds from around the southeast. Dr. Steele is beginning his eighth year there. As a songwriter Jeff has been credited with 17 Number One songs in Christian music as well as four BMI Gold Medals for Great National Popularity as measured by Broadcast Performances. He has also been recognized by BMI as Christian Songwriter of the Year on several occasions. The group, The Steeles was featured across the nation and was seen on numerous magazine covers, feature articles, television and radio programs during their ministry on the road. Jeff is still writes songs and articles, sings on occasion and speaks in conferences and revivals. Jeff is married to Sherry, his wife of 31 years and they have three grown children. Visit Jeff on YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and at www.jeffrsteele.com.



Charlie Sexton is a Minister Of Music near Atlanta, Georgia and possesses a passion for traditional Southern Gospel Music. His formative years were spent attending church with Wendy Bagwell and the Sunliters. He credits them for instilling a love for exciting, entertaining, yet heartfelt music presentations. An avid historian, Charlie has over 5000 vinyl

Southern Gospel recordings, cassette tapes and compact discs, as well as vintage memorabilia. He is an accomplished pianist, having toured with several well-known groups like Liberty and New Desire. As a sound and recording engineer, Charlie was nominated in 2008 for an Emmy® Award for his work on a featured documentary on Kennesaw State University's Men's Basketball team. Charlie and his girlfriend, singer Linda Foster, have worked with singers, musicians, promoters and pastors over the years promoting Southern Gospel Music. Email: chsexton@mindspring.com www.sweetcreekpromotions.com.



Erin Stevens is a uniquely talented 18 year old shutterbug, singer, guitar player, writer, blogger, social networker and shooting coach. She is the owner/operator of Photos For Keeps By Erin. She also travels in full-time Gospel music ministry with The Stevens Family. Photography is her passion, and singing for Christ is her calling. Check out her pho-

tography website www.photosforkeepsbyerin.com and her ministry website www.stevensfamilymusic.com.