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Scoops

August 2010

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The Renewal Issue

A close-up portrait of a man with long, wavy, grey hair and a grey beard. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. He is wearing a light blue button-down shirt. The background is out of focus, showing what appears to be a wooden structure.

Guy Penrod

New Territory, Same Message:

'I want to kick those box walls down.'

Freedom Dan Keeton Lights, Camera, Reality
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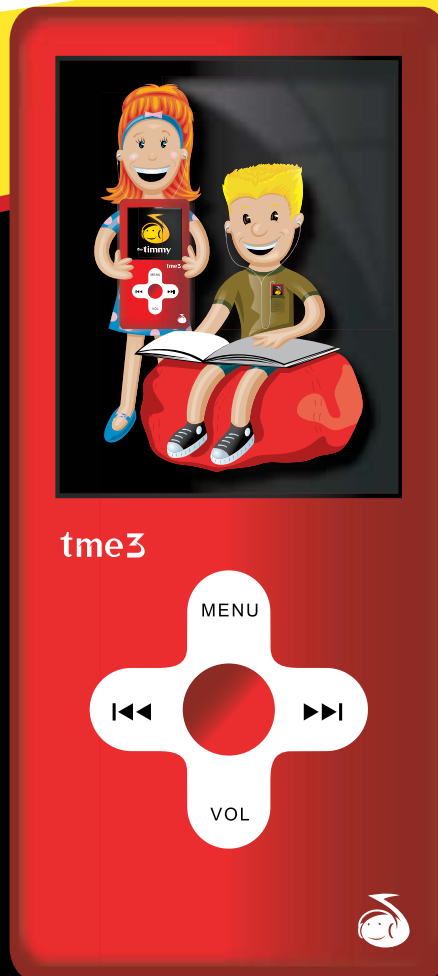
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August 2010


The Renewal Issue

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

Pray it again, sam.

Looking for a moment of trepidation?

Try the one just before a group of teenagers fresh from youth camp stands up to testify during the Sunday morning service. With microphones. And messy hair.

As a former youth leader and a current parent of teenagers, I know that moment makes the heart race a little more quickly. What are they going to say? Will they be honest? Melodramatic? Embarrassing? Will the truth embarrass me? Will they give great testimonies that bear no fruit a few weeks from now? Where is the nearest exit?

At the recent time I recount in this writing, both the youth of my church (Calvary Assembly of God in Flossmoor, Illinois) and my family were freshly home/back/down from mountaintop experiences. For the youth, it was camp. For us, it was the Branson Gospel Music Revival. Like the teens standing in front of me, I sat in the pew full, worn out, excited, exhausted, anxious, really tired, hopeful, beat. See a pattern?

As usual, each of the teens had a great, personal spin on his or her experience at camp... be it a timid "God was really there," a heartfelt, "God called me into ministry," or a humorous, "God is going to use me, my messy hair, and my sarcasm to win the lost." My smile was big as they took turns sharing their joy, and then my heart broke.

One of the young men whom I don't know very well took his turn. He didn't have any big thing he'd needed to be delivered from, nor did he receive any written message on the wall for what God wants to do with his life. What he did say was that he prayed, fervently, for God to renew his passion, excitement, and fire, and he knew God heard him.

As I sat listening, my eyes pouring from emotion and fatigue, I prayed for that boy. I prayed he would never give up on that prayer...because though God heard it, though He always does, I know it's a prayer we must continually offer through our lives in service to Christ. I prayed also for my own passion, which was clouded by the whirl-

wind week I'd just had in Branson, where I experienced extreme highs and lows of life in ministry, in Christian brotherhood, and of self-employment.

I felt beaten down and confused, because after a mountaintop experience, a time set aside to focus on God and His wonders, shouldn't we be rejoicing? As I looked at this teenage boy, I saw a reflection of my own heart. The Christian life has supernatural elements, for sure, but it is full of choices. We are not always going to feel motivated, loved, useful, focused, equipped, special, pretty, appreciated, purposeful, strong, cared for, financially stable, or as if we have any clue what we are supposed to do next. But faith in God means we do what we do anyway.

Later in that same service, our sweet pastor preached from Galatians 5. Many of us church kids know this as the fruit of the spirit chapter, but the verse Pastor Michael kept going back to was 25: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."

That sounds simple in theory, but in practice, it means more choices. It means when I don't feel like setting up for a Sunday night concert...when I don't feel like reading my kids David and Goliath for the fifth time...when I don't feel like giving the \$20 earmarked for dinner to the visiting missionary...when I don't feel like forgiving the fellow church member who was so hurtful to me...when I don't feel like putting together a magazine...when I don't feel like praying...when I don't feel like I can perform one more act through the filter of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentles, and/or self-control:

I must choose to do it anyway!

In this issue, you will hear from different



KELLY CAPRIOTTI BURTON,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

We are not always going to feel motivated, loved, useful, focused, equipped, special, pretty, appreciated, purposeful, strong, cared for, financially stable, or as if we have any clue what we are supposed to do next.

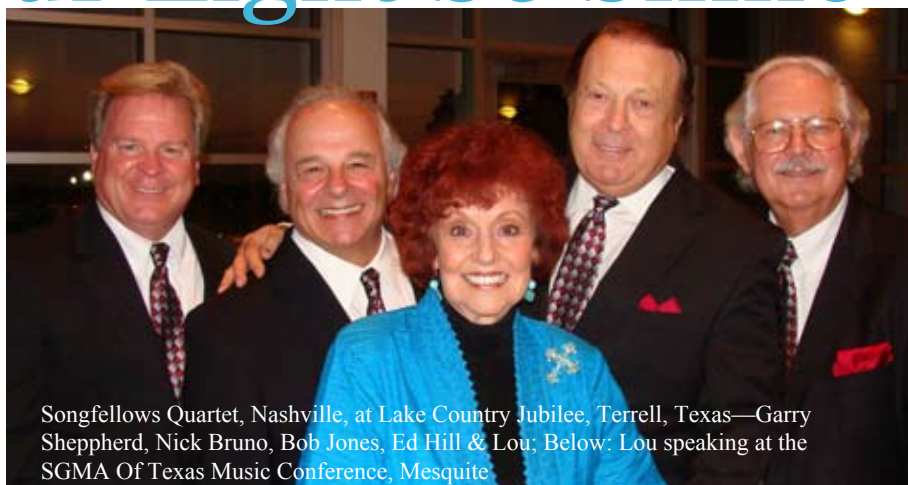
Love, Life, Legends with Ms. Lou: Let Your Light So Shine

Howard and I are still basking in the love shown us by the artists and leadership at the Branson Gospel Music Convention.

Thanks especially to Rob Patz, and to Rod and Kelly Burton. When we arrived, we were given the printed July issue of SCOOPS magazine with an article and photos covering the history of the "Lou Hildreth Award."

On Thursday night at the Diamond Awards, I presented it to Bill Traylor, and he accepted with gracious appreciation. We will have copies of the magazine at the National Quartet Convention, Louisville, in September. Howard and I will be at the Family Friendly Entertainment TV Network booth.

Recently I spoke at the Texas SGMA Educational Conference for gospel singers and songwriters seeking to learn how to broaden their ministries. After Regina Huckaba Bestul, President, had the opening prayer, I walked to the platform, silently praying I could speak words of wisdom to the eager faces in the conference room. My spiritual gift is that of "encouragement" and on this early Saturday morning in Mesquite, Texas, I majored on "relationships" and "pure motives" closing with the scripture Matthew 5:16 "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." We were off to a beautiful and informative day with excellent sessions led by JIM WESSON, vocal technique, NICK BRUNO, recording & promoting, and PHIL CROSS, songwriting.



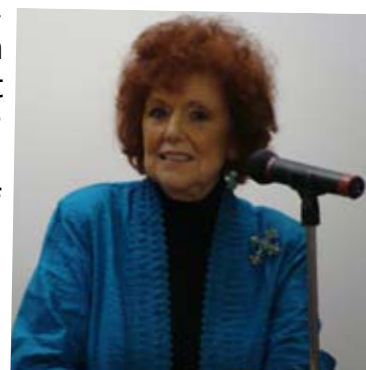
Songfellows Quartet, Nashville, at Lake Country Jubilee, Terrell, Texas—Garry Sheppherd, Nick Bruno, Bob Jones, Ed Hill & Lou; Below: Lou speaking at the SGMA Of Texas Music Conference, Mesquite

All three of these men shared their knowledge and poured out their hearts to those in attendance.

When the seminar ended at 3:30, Howard and I headed for Lake Country Jubilee, Terrell, Texas, to be with Harold and Jean Marshall, dedicated gospel music promoters.

At Terrell, Phil Cross premiered his latest production of "Song Of A Lifetime" honoring songwriters. We enjoyed the fellowship and singing of the SONGFELLOWS from Nashville--Bob Jones, Garry Sheppherd, Ed Hill, Butch Owen, with Nick Bruno at the keyboards. The Hoppers headlined the concert and sang their hearts out. Kim Hopper was sidelined by minor surgery, and Melissa, wife of Jim Brady who sings with the Booth Brothers, was an excellent choice to fill in for her. I love and respect the Hoppers. Connie Hopper will be inducted into the SGMA Hall Of Fame in Dollywood, September 29th. Connie, Claude, Mike, Dean & Kim are a reflection of the love and commitment of all of us for "letting our light shine" as we share the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

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Greenish Me | cont'd

gospel ministers who are either taking off in a new direction or re-planting their feet in one traveled for awhile. You will hear from those doling out encouragement and from those who have needed some recently. These stories are good reminders of this Christian life we're all called to lead. The journey will not always be easy, the answers will

not always come quickly, and the mind will not always be at peace. The enemy will battle us in many forms as we struggle and preserve to make choices that serve God's purposes. But the Good Word tells us –

"Do not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." (Galatians 6:9, NKJV).

The verse is not a promise ("You will not grow weary"), but rather, some advice. Choose not to grow weary. Fight against weariness. Hold on to the heart God gave you for whatever calling He put on your life. Continue to ask for passion and fire and renewal.

In good season, the harvest is coming. Choose this day to work until it comes! 🌾

Beacon Park: Filled with Gospel

at the 31st Lighthouse Messengers Annual Gospel Festival



The last weekend of June, Beacon RV Park in Harrison, Arkansas was packed with people and gospel music as they gathered for the annual free-to-the-public singing event, organized by Lighthouse Messengers. The Bowling Family (left), just days before the terrible bus accident they suffered, were one of the featured groups. The staff of *SGN Scoops* pray along with you for continued healing for this dear family. Also pictured: (clockwise): The Whisnants; the excited audience; The Perrys on stage; Tracy Stuffle and event host Arvin Adams.

Photos by Brenda Denney



(This author wondered: What would it be like if the Apostle Paul were alive and able to write a letter to the modern-day church, particularly in America? Of course, no one knows for sure, but it might have been something like this . . .)

Paul, a servant called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, along with Thomas our brother, to the churches in the Dispersion of the former English colonies, together with all those who serve Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, I give thanks to my God for you, because thy faith is known around the world. Your charity to those in need across the far reaches of the earth is also verily known to all. Indeed, I wish I could be there with thee in body, though I am there with thee in spirit. For a long time ago, I fought the good fight, I finished my course, I kept the faith. Before then, I was torn, for to live was Christ, but to die was gain. Now I have gone to receive my reward. Nevertheless, it comforteth my heart to learn of thy faithfulness.

I speak to you now as I spoke to you then: Live at peace with one another. Avoid foolish questions about genealogies and Sabbaths, and contentions about various translations. Let thy faith be visible to the entire world. Use all possible means within the arts to reach all, that you might by all means save some. Whether thou useth VeggieTales or *The Book of Eli*, make your case for the gospel known to all. Useth both hymns and hip-hop* to make Christ



Tom Holste Imagines: What Would Paul Say? Paul's Epistle to the Americans

Use all possible means within the arts to reach all, that you might by all means save some. Whether thou useth VeggieTales or The Book of Eli, make your case for the gospel known to all.

known. (*Check original Greek: Some translators use "boogie-woogie.")

Indeed, thou should use even those photoplays from the Gentiles to make your case. I hear of those who maketh a flickering-shadow story called *The Matrix*. These unbelievers

have crafted a tale filled with ungodly behavior and philosophies, yet with some truth about our Savior therein. Many saints and apostles hath used the good moments in this cinematic construction to further spread the gospel, and therein I do rejoice. Yea, some (such as our brethren

at Big Idea) preach Christ out of love; others (such as the makers of *The Matrix*) preach him in pretence, in order to achieve filthy lucre.** Notwithstanding, in every way Christ is preached, and I will therefore rejoice. (**Other ancient authorities read "to achieve strong box-office.")

But I must speak to you sternly for a moment, not to make thee ashamed, but to admonish thee as my beloved children. It is reported commonly that there is one among you who practices a kind of immorality that is not often found even among the pagans. For some time, he was exalted in your circles, for he hath made a stirring moving-picture portrait of the suffering of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, for whom I spent much time in chains.

But this man hath divorced his wife, then known another woman until she was with child, though she remains not his bride. Not only that, but he hath beaten her, called her names, and derided the Jews, as well as our brethren from Ethiopia and Spain! Surely he ought to remember that there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

This man hath been given to much wine, and hath given in to anger. Yet indeed, though many of ye doth not condone his actions, still yet many of you speaketh

not against them. And further still, some of ye are puffed up, ready to defend this one on the basis of his past actions.

Yet I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged him as though I were present, concerning him that hath done this deed. This wicked person should be driven out from among thee. Let it be known to the Gentiles that this man's immorality does not reflect the true body of Christ. Let those within your midst know that his actions are contrariwise to the love of the LORD.

But shouldst this man turn from his wicked ways, and repent, after punishment has been inflicted on him by many, and should show change in his life, then I beseech thee to confirm your love for him, and forgive him, lest perhaps he should be swallowed up in too much sorrow.

Also, beware the false teachers, for as many exist in thy own time as did in mine. For some of these false teachers wouldst come into people's homes through recorded mirror transcriptions*** showing signs and

wonders to deceive, if possible, the elect. (***Some ancient authorities read "through rabbit-ears TV"; the Septuagint reads "cable TV"; a Best Buy flyer reads "the latest in HDTV with digital converter that will BLOW YOUR MIND!")

They speaketh prosperity to all believers, though our Lord Himself suffered much. They make worldly gain their goal, rather than the truth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Avoid them, and dissuade others from listening, that they may not also be led astray. Thou must remember, however, that the format of recorded mirror transcriptions (Ed. Note: See above.) is not at fault – only the truth, or lack thereof, being proclaimed.

I have much I would yet sayeth to thee, but my time grows short. Indeed, all thy time groweth short, so labor hard, for He is returning. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

The other saints who have gone before and are now with me do also greet you. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.



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Rhonda Frye's Faith Boost >> *'How to' become a gospel singer*

I'm grateful to live in the advanced information age. Information covering every topic imaginable is at our fingertips via the Internet. Not just general information- but specific "how to" sites as well. Recently curiosity got the best of me I suppose, so I searched "How to become a gospel singer!" Many sites were helpful and some- well... One did claim that if you imitated church musicians and joined a music association, you'd be impressing your friends and family in no time! There's nothing wrong with impressing people, I suppose, but it's not exactly my number one goal.

"Gospel" is the "Good News of Jesus Christ." Gospel singers share

There's nothing wrong with impressing people, I suppose, but it's not exactly my number one goal.

the good news of Christ through song- which technically makes us messengers. The task of a messenger of Christ is to teach and preach the gospel. Every gospel song teaches a Biblical lesson, story or principle in some way, thus making the one singing- the messenger! When all is said and done, we will stand before God and give an account for the ministries and talents He entrusted to us, holding those in authority to the highest standard.

Being accountable to God is serious and prompts me to strive to be the best I can be. Being the "best I can be" involves education, dedication and dependence upon the Holy Spirit. To me, being a gospel singer means more than just being a person that sings gospel songs; it's a privilege to be a minister of the gospel *through* song. Obviously, it's

important to become skilled in the area of music, but even more so to become skilled as a messenger of Jesus Christ.

It's fairly easy to improve music and performance skills. There are schools and private instructors that focus on training in the areas of vocals, performance, staging, music reading and presentation. There are helpful reading materials making navigating the industry much easier too. What I haven't found is a lot of information preparing the "Gospel Singer" in the areas of ministry training. Just as studying the art of music and the craft of songwriting is important, one must study the art of evangelism and the craft of discipleship to be effective as well.

As a pastor, I am disturbed when I read statistics claiming as many as 80% of people fall away from their faith. I'm not convinced 80% is accurate, but isn't 1% too many? The reason people fall away from their faith are that the full gospel message wasn't received, resulting in a superficial decision or there was a serious lack of discipleship.

As an artist, I am convinced we can do better to help people go beyond making superficial decisions to genuine conversions instead. My prayer is to encourage my fellow "gospel singers" to invest as much time into the "Gospel" half of the term of Gospel Singer as the "Singer" half. Here are a few ways to improve the aspects of evangelism and discipleship of music ministry:

IMPROVE YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD - this means active dedication of pursuing spiritual maturity through submission and discipline. The benefit will be recognition of the voice of God which is essential to effective ministry. It is crucial to get in tune with the Holy Spirit to experience ministry that transforms lives. Learn to lean on the Holy Spirit's guidance for song selection, song writing, play lists and the exact words to say exactly at the right time. It is critically important to stay saturated in the word of God and to pray without ceasing. Our relationship with God must be elevated to and maintained as the highest priority of our lives.

ESTABLISH AN ACCOUNTABILITY TEAM Satan plays hardball, plays dirty and is on a mission to destroy credible ministries. Guard your heart, guard your mind, and surround yourself with godly, same sex friends in whom you can confide, confess, and depend.

WRITE A MISSION STATEMENT First, let the Holy Spirit define your purpose and calling- then put what your ministry is all about into writing. Nail down what God wants and then stay true to it as decisions are made. Example: "It is the mission of Rhonda Frye Music Ministries to lead people into a reconciled, relevant and real relationship with God through Jesus Christ."

STUDY EVANGELISM It is imperative to understand how people come to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. If anyone leads invitations, it's important to improve skills in this area. Often, information is inaccurate or the presentation is confusing. Genuine salvation requires repentance

of sin- there is absolutely no way around the sin and Lordship issue, but often people are misled into believing in the existence of God only. Many times, the concept of placing our faith in Christ is neglected. Haven't we all cringed during some altar calls? There have been a few times I felt I should dodge lightning bolts due to blatant lying and manipulative tactics. The goal is to make disciples, not pressure people into superficial decisions. The Way of the Master lists ways to "botch" an altar call: <http://www.wayofthemaster.com/botchaltarcalls.html> There are many great articles available on the internet and great books concerning effective ways to lead children and adults to Christ.

BE PREPARED FOR "TABLE TALK" When ministering to a congregation, keep in mind you are ministering to marred victims of a fallen world in dress clothes! For some reason, some people find it difficult to confide in their church leadership, but they will bare their soul to the guest artist of the night. Generally speaking, the most common "table talk" discussions revolve around grief: over various losses, tragedy, or devastating illness. Hurting people are rampant! I think of Jesus making His way through the crowd when the woman pressed through the crowd to touch the hem of His garment. We are "Jesus" in their eyes as these desperate souls press through to be touched by us. Again, it is VITAL to be in tune with the Holy Spirit to know how to pray, what to say, and how to minister.

DISCIPLESHIP Remember one reason people fall away from their faith is lack of discipleship. Perhaps you're thinking, "That's the church's job." Yes, discipleship is the church's responsibility, but with planning and a little creativity, artists can help those making commitments get started on the right path. Basic discipleship encourages Bible Reading, Prayer, Baptism and Church Attendance. Artists could reserve a page on their websites that convey this message. Honestly, I was shocked recently after visiting MANY artist websites to find only a handful that includes

When all is said and done,
we will stand before God
and give an account for the
ministries and talents He
entrusted to us.

the plan of salvation. Often times, hearts are stirred, but for various reasons, a response isn't made right then. Reserving a page on the artist website for explaining salvation and basic discipleship steps could be an effective way to reach and disciple people long after artists are gone. I suggest adding links <http://needhim.org/> or <http://www.theinvitation.tv/> to point people to Christ simply because not everyone attending a concert is connected to a church.

Final thought: Remember God always rewards honest efforts to build His Kingdom. Now that's what it's all about! If I can help you on the "gospel" side of becoming a great Gospel Singer, please contact me at rhonda@sngnscoops.com



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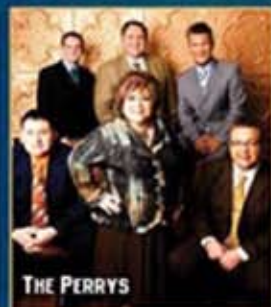
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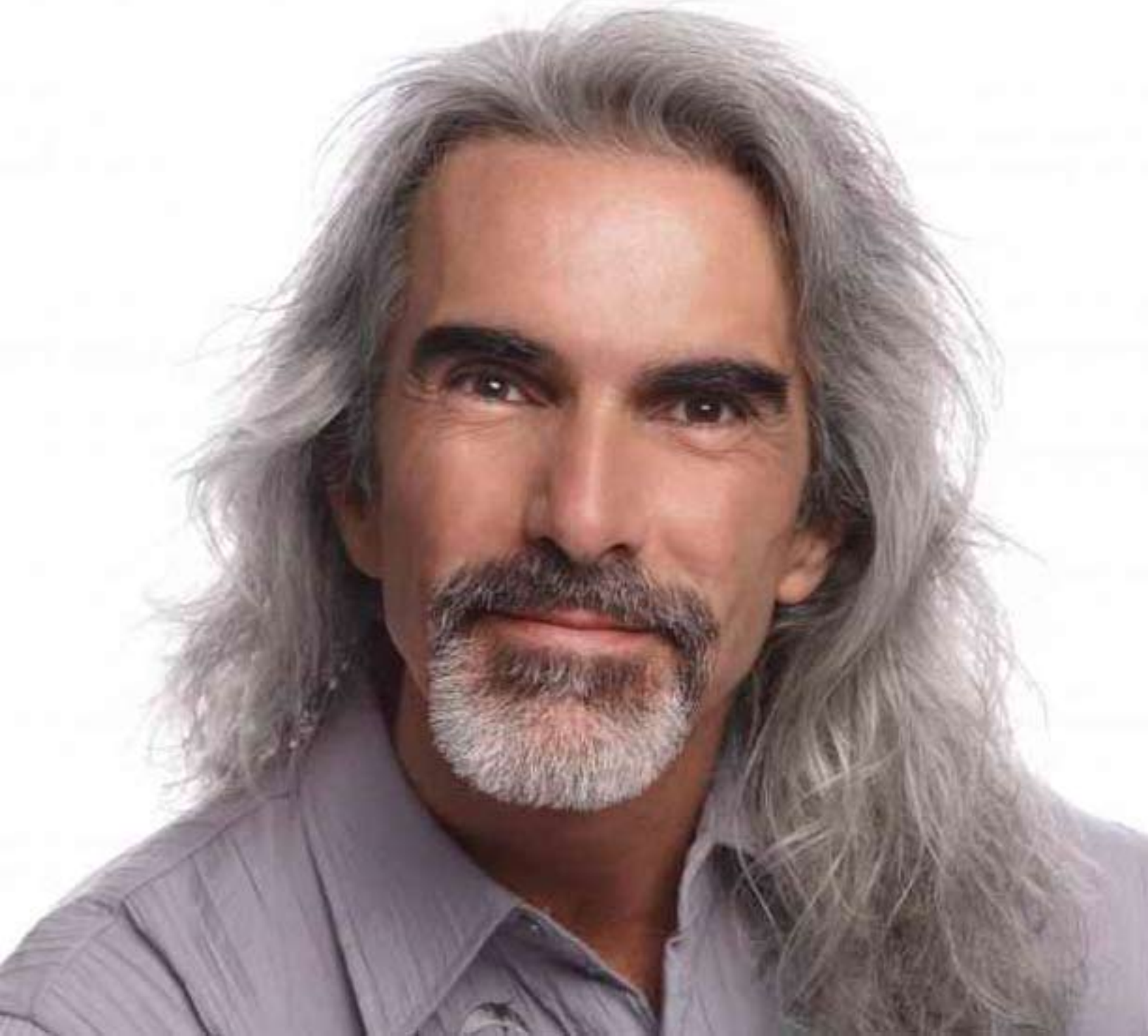
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With the release of his solo, country project *Breathe Deep*,
Guy Penrod is delivering a message with

Life, not labels.

By Kelly Capriotti Burton



Guy Penrod wants to tell you something: “Love God, live for Him, dream big.”

He’s not quoting a bumper sticker or a country song, but believes it’s a message for our time. “I feel God wants me to say that to my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ right now,” Guy said during a recent phone interview. “Dream bigger, expand your faith, try things that you know you cannot accomplish unless God shows up.”

This plan is working for Guy these days as he works his musical calling into new territory as a soloist with a mainstream country CD (after 14 years with the acclaimed Gaither Vocal Band) and plans his first solo tour to Europe this month.

Guy’s exit from GVB last year came with mixed reaction. As the fan favorite sought to explore other nuances on his own, Bill Gaither comforted the audience by re-tooling the GVB and re-welcoming other fan-favorites Michael English, Mark Lowry, and David Phelps. Meanwhile, Guy released his first solo CD, *Breathe Deep*, on Servant Records, a division of Gaither Music, filled with songs that talk about family, God, and “growing up and growing older.” And while you may not find a hymn on this project, you will get a clear message of Guy’s heart and life. And while he still plans appearances at National Quartet Convention and church concerts, he also appeared – to a large crowd – at June’s Country Music Association Fest.

This isn’t a shift in musical genres, as Guy sees it, but more of a blur.

“For anybody that grows up in West Texas [as I did], country

music is part of your diet. I love the format of storytelling to get your truth across. I like real instruments: bass and drum and guitars, and I like major keys. Country music combines all of those things.”

And country, Guy attests, is a mindset. “Wholesome, hard-work ethic, strong family values, strong commitments to your loved ones – your wife, your kids, your friends, honesty. Those are the kinds of folks I grew up around,” he recounts.

As a pastor’s son, Guy honed his love for people at his father’s side, retreating to the “vestibule” at the back of the church to greet people after services. It’s a practice he continued after concerts with GVB, staying around and simply

talking to people. And what he found in both places: “Salt of the earth country folk,” he says.

As Guy describes, “It’s not a matter of where you live that makes you country. It doesn’t matter if you live in downtown Chicago, downtown Nashville, out here in the woods south of Nashville or in West Texas...Country is a mindset to me. That’s the kind of people I met after gospel concerts, and I found they are one in the same. They go to church on Sunday, they raise their kids to love God. They’re not perfect, and neither am I.”

The foray into country music has been a combination of tentative and seamless. Full of humility, Guy recalls that he didn’t get a booth at CMA Fest this year (“We didn’t know if I should be that bold and try that”) but did manage to fill The Du-



Guy in Washington, PA;
by Darci Ellerd

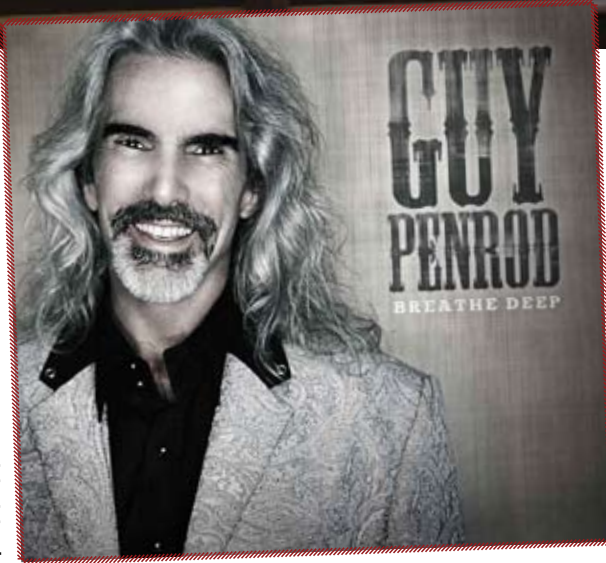
“I think we’re the goobers for calling music ‘gospel’ or ‘Christian.’ You just get out there and do it, put it out there, and let the people who are listening to it call it what it is.”

rango (650 AM WSM/Durango Boots’ “Acoustic Corner Stage”) when he sang there.

Back when CMA Fest was known as Fan Fair, the Gaither Vocal Band made



The Penrod family on stage in Lynchburg, by Sonja Russell; the cover art for *Breathe Deep*.



appearances there, and Guy recounts that the now-defunct TNN (The Nashville Network)

cable channel used to be one of the largest sellers of Homecoming videos. So it was with amusement that Guy watched some of his publicity staff members, strangers to gospel music but well-versed in country, react with great surprise as they saw the number of fans reaching out to Guy at CMA Fest.

"They didn't realize how big the audience is for GVB and Homecoming stuff," Guy says. "I wasn't - not because I'm all that, but because a lot of that crowd is who comes to the Homecomings. I stacked the deck by having connected with these people through the years."

One such person, Mary Spratt from Peotone, Illinois, is having no problem connecting with Guy in his new role. "His passion for Jesus and his country style are what I enjoy so much about him," says the gospel fan. "He has always been a blessing and continues to be."

The transition into a country market is full of business decisions and marketing strategy, but when it

comes to the music itself and its impact on audiences, Guy is both instructive and passionate about labels, songs, and the notion of selling-out.

"You cannot even begin to define [Christian country music] as selling out - that's ridiculous," he says. "That's what Jesus did. He lived his life in a way that was relevant to the people around Him; he said the things and did the things that worked in front of those people, and He loved them, and by doing that, he drew them to Him."

Melissa Flores, general manager for He's Alive Radio (hesalive.net) agrees, and has this to say from the radio perspective: "If we termed it 'bridging over' rather than 'crossing over,' perhaps folks would have a greater appreciation for what [artists such as Guy] are endeavoring to do. Since God loves the saint and the sinner alike, wouldn't He send some of His finest to bridge that divide?"

Guy believes that the body of work he produced over his years with GVB states straight forwardly what he believes. "It's all out there, and I haven't changed one bit," he says. "I just wanted to take my Biblical view of the world and wrap it in everyday, country kind of talk and throw it out there in the marketplace and hopefully have an influence on the culture."

"We're living in a time when truth has become relative in the culture, and in reality, truth is not relative: truth is the word of God. What He says is like fact: it's more like gravity. It happens the way He says, no discussion."

So why then, transition from straight-up gospel music to a more mainstream country recording? Guy has a big answer to this often-asked question.

With a laugh, Guy says, "I think we're the goobers for calling music 'gospel' or 'Christian.' You just get out there and do it, put it out there, and let the people who are listening to it call it what it is." And more somberly, he continues, "We weren't first called 'Christians' by ourselves; we were called Christians because we are followers of Christ. We make narrow our own message sometimes. I want to broaden it; I want to kick those box walls down."

continues>

Penrod cont'd



"We as Christians are responsible to get out into the marketplace what we believe and how we live our lives."

It seems the kicks are penetrating, as *Breathe Deep* is currently at no. 64 on *Billboard Magazine's* Country Albums chart, and when released in February, debuted at #2 on Nielsen SoundScan's Christian/Gospel-Christian chart. The single "Are You The One" is currently sitting on several charts, including the New Country Music Euro Chart. Clearly, Guy's current audi-

ence is expanding beyond the breadth of American southern gospel.

Of late, there are mainstream country songs with decidedly Christian messages that have impacted the country charts and one hopes, the listening audience. Carrie Underwood's "Jesus Take the Wheel" and more recently her "Temporary Home" are prime examples, but artists such as Martina McBride, Brooks and Dunn, Tracy Lawrence, Craig Morgan, Brad Paisley, and Diamond Rio have done the same, and over the years, others like Johnny Cash, Oak Ridge Boys, Dolly Parton, and of course, Elvis, have made it a career standard to record and perform music from across genres, including gospel, and have done so to great success and longevity.

While there will always be traditionalists who outcry against the blurring of Christian and country (Editor's note: We heard from a few of them during the Diamond Awards voting process, and we respectfully disagree), Guy is part of a modern crop of those working and ministering in music who believe it can be used an evangelistic tool just as well, if not better, outside the confines of a Christian genre label.

"We as Christians are responsible to get out into the marketplace what we believe and how we live our lives. It's more poignant and more relevant to people's everyday existence than having all of our music be just a philosophical, theological statement." Guy says. "That was our attempt with this record: to make a palatable piece of art that people could listen to and glean strength from and find answers in. Because at the end of the day, people are searching for truth, things that work. Even if they don't know Christ, if you hold up something that works and they give it a shot...you will be leading them to Jesus!"

Logistically, Guy views the latest chapter of his career as a work in progress, and the current progression has him, at the time of publication, embarking on his first European tour as a soloist. He will be having 12 concerts with a live band in places like Sweden, Holland, and Ireland, before returning home to his farm, his

Radio's Melissa Flores: on the business of 'bridging over'

In order for an artist to bridge over successfully, he or she must maintain a Christian identity in both worlds. Believers will rejoice to see their brethren spotlighted in secular media, as long as he or she maintains a consistent witness. The body of the crossover work must also maintain moral integrity that is harmonious with Christian values. Finally, the artist must have accumulated enough social capital with their fan-base to expend on costly potential misgivings. We all know, the secular publicity machine can injure the innocent and sully the spotless. While it seems a difficult task to pull off, we must remember the Lord spent a great deal of time "crossing over." He was misunderstood, too.

family, and more concerts around the United States.

For this European trip, at least, the rest of the Penrods – including Guy's wife Angie and their eight children, whom they raise and home-school in middle Tennessee, will cheer Guy on from home. "Ang will be gearing everyone up for a new school year," Guy says fondly. "She always says that when I'm working, I'm not as much fun to be with!"

It's hard to imagine this good-natured country guy as anything less than pleasant to be around, but easy to believe that the heart he exudes – one willing to work hard to reach a goal, one whose goal is to further the Kingdom of Christ in culture of lost people – can accomplish whatever is set before him.

"I believe we lay our plans and God directs our steps," Guy says matter-of-factly. "I can't see that far down the road, but He's given me enough light to see this step for today. He is so faithful." 🇺🇸

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A photograph of Rod Burton, a man with grey hair and a goatee, wearing a dark button-down shirt and jeans. He is standing with his arms crossed next to a large, rustic wooden cross that serves as the background for the text.

What makes

The Difference?

Knowing who I am in Christ,
knowing whoever has or
does not have my back,
God always does...
Knowing my family knows Him,
knowing His peace...
the old rugged cross,
burying the man I used to be,
the promise of a sweeter land,
just knowing His name...
It all makes

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Coming to radio: 'Son of Man's Man'
Written By Sue Duffield

Thanks to everyone who supported and was part of Branson Gospel Music REVIVAL. We are already getting excited about 2011! Pray for Kelly & I as we travel this month to Columbia with Compassion International. God is expanding our territory, and we ask for wisdom as He reveals new plans for our ministry.

See you along the road...by His grace! - Rod

FREEDOM: Born out of adversity

By Lorraine Walker

Liberty, independence and choice: is that your definition of Freedom? In the spring of 2010, a new trio called Freedom was formed and a new definition was created: Talent, experience, enthusiasm and commitment to sharing songs with a strong message of the Gospel. Josh Garner, Joel Trimble, and John Rulapaugh are now redefining the sound of trio Southern Gospel. Rulapaugh now speaks from his heart about choices, liberty and Freedom.

"Josh and I both traveled separately with other groups over the past 15 years," begins Rulapaugh. "I was with The Dove Brothers and then Palmetto State Quartet and Josh was with the Florida Boys and then had a solo ministry for a while. Following this, Josh and I traveled together for about a year with another group. Toward the end of that run we both met to discuss what we were going to do because we knew the situation we were in could not last very long. We didn't know then, but the Lord had ordained that meeting to prepare us for what was coming. Shortly after our meeting together we were informed that the group we were a part of was disbanding. We were given a month's notice and an apology."

"But what we didn't recognize then was that God's timing and providence are always perfect," continues Rulapaugh. "Historically speaking, 'freedom' is always born out of adversity. Josh and I both see the name 'Freedom' as having multiple meanings. Anyone who knows me knows that I am a patriot. I love America. And at a time when it seems our freedoms are disappearing, the name seems to have great significance. The freedom for which we are most thankful in America is our freedom of religion, and we as Christians had better exercise this boldly lest it disappear as well."

"But the one freedom that can never be taken from us is our freedom in Christ, and this is the freedom that we proclaim from the stage every night. For Josh and I, Freedom is a unique experience because it is the first time we have sung without a bass singer. It's amazing how different it is too. I never realized just how comfortable I had become walking on a stage with three other guys. For the first several

concerts I made my way to the stage and kept looking for someone else to go with us!"

Freedom's self-titled debut CD, released on Homeland's Riversong label, has received a good response and has fans on Freedom's facebook page applauding.

Rulapaugh shares, "We're blessed with a great lineup of songs. Josh had been holding on to some great material for a long time, since his days with The Florida Boys, and I am glad he didn't let these get away from him. Our debut recording *Freedom* is packed with some of the strongest material that I've ever had the opportunity to sing. It's hard to say which song has the biggest impact on the audience."

He continues, "Because of the range of topics that we've covered, each song seems to have a different effect on the audience. With a song like 'When The

continues>



Freedom publicity photo.

Saints Go Marching In,' the impact is nostalgia and excitement. Then we sing a song like, 'If It Wasn't For That Cross' and people seem to reflect on where their lives may have ended up, if it wasn't for the cross of Christ. So it would be easy to say that one particular song really gets the crowd going based on tempo and energy, but we're more interested in what is making an impact that the audience will remember for a long time after they go home."

Rulapaugh continues, "My favorite song on the recording is, 'If It Wasn't For That Cross.' I've recently gone through a time in my life when I had to re-evaluate my priorities and focus. I have, within myself, really sought God's direction concerning my calling and what He would have me do. The first time I heard this song I remembered why I ever sang a Gospel song in the first place.

"If it wasn't for the Cross of Christ there is no telling where I might have ended up in life," shares Rulapaugh. "Lord knows, I've made so many mistakes and have failed in so many ways, all the while having the knowledge of Christ and knowing Him as my Savior. I cannot imagine what my life would have been without Jesus, without His nudging me along when I didn't know it and didn't care. It took several concerts for me to be able to sing the song without becoming so introspective that I couldn't really get through it. My favorite line is: 'In my heart the scene returns to see the bridge sin couldn't burn.' Sin burns so many bridges in our lives including the destruction of self-confidence, friendships, and marriages, but there is one bridge that sin could not burn and that is the bridge that connects God and man: The Cross."

It is obvious that Rulapaugh has found personal freedom through his faith in the cross of Christ. He and the rest of Freedom sing out of a desire to see others find that same liberating faith.

"Gospel music is a calling for me," says Rulapaugh. "I've had people tell me that I could make it in other fields, but I don't know. I think my style and approach are best suited for this style of music and I know my heart is in tune with these songs. I wouldn't say that I will never sing anything but gospel because I really love country, jazz, and the pop music that artists like Michael Buble' have made famous again over the past

few years, and I'd enjoy singing that kind of stuff as well. But it could never satisfy my calling to share the gospel through song."

The strong calling on the lives of the members of Freedom also comes with a responsibility to be accountable. Rulapaugh says, "The pastor of my old home church in Maryland, Brian Mentzer, used to call me out of the blue and invite me to lunch. We'd go to Ripp's, a local restaurant and have the best crab melt sandwich in the world, and he'd give me a spiritual check up. I've never had anyone care enough about me before or since to take me out to lunch just to talk and encourage me to continue in my calling. He taught me the value of personal accountability, though I've not been the best at adhering to that practice, he certainly taught me well."

Family is another good source for personal accountability, and Rulapaugh talks about the role his wife has in his ministry. "Jennifer has always been a large part of what I do, I think mainly because it is what brought us together in the first place," Rulapaugh shares. "I met Jennifer while singing with The Dove Brothers in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. After we were married she became the office manager for The Dove Brothers and through my time with Palmetto State, she always helped with order fulfillment and the like. She still helps me with the day-to-day office stuff like she always has and continues to be my biggest source of strength and support. I couldn't do what I do if she didn't do what she does."

For Rulapaugh and the other trio members, along with family support, accountability also includes attending a local church when possible. "We recently became members of Sevier Heights Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tennessee," says Rulapaugh. "It has been a long time since we have been excited about church membership, and we believe that God led us to Sevier Heights at this time in our lives because we needed a loving, caring, understanding, group of Christians who are living their faith, not just showing up on Sunday morning to show off their new clothes. As new members we are taking our time getting involved but I've been able to serve as an usher a time or two and we're enjoying attending Bible Fellowship along with the regular worship services."

As Freedom works and worships together, they are

JOHN RULAPPAUGH: We're seeing response from people who would normally never go to hear a traditional male quartet. That's an audience that I've never had the opportunity to reach on a large scale, so I'm really excited by that."



John pictured in January.
Photo by Sarah Matheny

learning other aspects about each member that is strengthening their relationships. Rulapaugh says, "Josh is the biggest music fan that I know. He owns the largest and most diverse collection of music that you can imagine, and he has memorized the song list on

most all of the al-

bums that he owns. The other day he said to me, 'I hear this Cathedrals' thing playing on XM and they said it was [whatever the name of the song, from whatever album], but it was a different arrangement than the one that I have because...', and he went on to describe in detail how the arrangement was different and who was singing a different note here and there. By the time he finished, I think I had dozed off. That's what makes him a great music director, arranger, and producer. He lives, eats, sleeps, and breathes this stuff.

"We're still getting to know Joel," continues Rulapaugh, "But I learned very early on that he has a heart of gold and will go out of his way to help anyone who needs it. He has quickly become a good friend. I'm looking forward to many years of singing and ministering together with him."

Even though John, Josh, and Joel have only been traveling together a short time, Freedom has already discovered its niche audience. "I think by default, having always been members of traditional Southern Gos-

pel Quartets, Josh and I both have always appealed to the very traditional quartet lovers," says Rulapaugh. "That's no secret. Thankfully, those folks seem to enjoy us as a trio, though many of them still have recommendations as to who we should hire to complete our group. But we're seeing response from people who would normally never go to hear a traditional male quartet. That's an audience that I've never had the opportunity to reach on a large scale, so I'm really excited by that."

Rulapaugh himself has always been a quartet fan and says his favorite singer is the legendary tenor, Rosie Rozell. "Rosie had a style all his own," says Rulapaugh. "And no matter what [some] might think, no, Ernie Haase didn't invent 'Oh, What a Savior!' Actually, maybe he did, because before he started singing it, Rosie sang an incredibly similar tune known as 'What a Savior.' Rosie had a feel for a song that just cannot be duplicated and is often poorly emulated."

With 15 years and impressive quartet names to his credit, Rulapaugh is creating his own style and carving his own path in the Southern Gospel industry. However, he does have a list of other artists whose careers he respects. "As far as gospel music careers that I would like to emulate, that's a tough question as well, as I really look up to several people. Of the younger generation, Gerald Wolfe has always carried himself with a dignity that I admire. Michael Booth has a charisma that is contagious, and I'd really like to catch it. But my real 'heroes' are gospel music businessmen like Hovie Lister, Dr. Jerry Goff, Les Beasley, Charles Burke, Maurice Templeton, and many others that it would take pages to list."

Rulapaugh's appreciation of the legends in Southern Gospel is just one reason why he has such a love for the genre. Rulapaugh shares, "There is such a diverse group of musical styles and sub genres that fit under

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[We're singing to] an audience that I've never had the opportunity to reach on a large scale, so I'm really excited by that."

the umbrella of Southern Gospel. We encompass everything from the Appalachian leanings of The McKameys and Inspirations, to the bluegrass stylings of The Primitives, to the family harmonies of The Lesters, Collingsworths, Crists, and Perrys, to the more traditional male quartets, progressive male quartets, trios, soloists, and now even a few popular duets. That's a pretty wide range of styles and yet they all fit into this little box that we call Southern Gospel. I think this in and of itself is a great attribute, that we all have different styles of music, performance, dress, etc., yet we still portray the same message to an increasingly diverse audience."

Rulapaugh remembers his first appearance before a diverse audience of Southern Gospel fans. "My first major concert performance in gospel music was at the Grand Ole Gospel Reunion in Greenville, South Carolina. I don't remember much about what we sang other than 'Get Away Jordan' five times. I thought it would never end and then when it was over I couldn't

remember it ever happening. It was a blur!"

John Rulapaugh has come a long way from that first stage in Greenville, and Freedom is a testament to his commitment and that of Josh Garner and Joel Trimble to excellence in their craft and faithfulness to the calling of Christ. The debut CD contains songs that offer hope, life and liberty to the listener.

The goal of Freedom is to share the good news of the Gospel and to set free those who are bound. Rulapaugh says his desire for their ministry stretches to the foundation of the United States. Freedom wants "to see souls saved, but also to reach out to those who have become disenfranchised from the church through one circumstance or another." Rulapaugh states, "Personally, I also have a deep desire to see a return to greatness in America, and I know that this can only be achieved through a nation wide revival where our citizens and our government recognize and affirm a dependence on God. To be used of God to help facilitate that would be my ultimate goal and desire." 🇺🇸

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Reflections & Road bums in the life of a gospel singer



By Jimmy
McMillan

Many times people will come up to us after a concert and say how they would love to do what we (my group McMillan and Life - my wife Liz, our friend Devin Brumfield, and I) do: to ride around the country, seeing the sites, getting to dress up and sing every night. We often hear how glamorous it must be and how great it must be, not having to work a "real" job. I thought I would take a few minutes this month to stand in agreement with them by sharing just how what we do is "unlike" a "real" job.

Let's see, a few weeks ago we left on a five week trip. Before leaving I got to replace our motor home generator (thank you Mike Allen for your help), spend eleven hours on a ladder replacing rain gutters on the "Tune Buggy" (this job included two rather ridiculous but painful falls), and move a vast majority of our belongings in for the trip. This move always includes loading a portable office since booking, ship-

ping and all forms of office work wait for no man. Now what really makes this unlike a "real" job is that it was all done after office hours or on the weekend, and yet there was no over or double time involved.

Since we've been on the road there have been lots of long hours of driving, main engine oil changes, and three generator services. I know I should just spend the money and let someone do it for me, but once again unlike a real job there is no way to budget that cost into a salary.

We were blessed to meet some wonderful new friends on this trip and when I mentioned that we needed to re-carpet the Buggy, they graciously offered for us to go to their store and get as much as we needed of whatever carpet we would like. This was a gift from them to our ministry. I love it when God's people can bless one another.

So then we had a roll of beautiful new carpet lying in the middle of the aisle and we had three more weeks before we would be home. Soooo, once again unlike a "real" job, Devin and I spent the next three days gutting and laying carpet in the Buggy in between concerts. (Ya'll pray cause again this job included several more falls!) Oh and did I mention it was 102 degrees with 85% humidity? That my friend, made it *glamorous*!

You will find a picture of me here in the middle of the job. I know it will be hard to recognize me without my standard stage attire but I am the one with my legs stretched skyward. Not sure how many business professionals (or in my age category WalMart greeters) would find themselves in this position.

Now at this point we need to remember that Liz is doing graphic design from the road. And when there are files to be uploaded to the internet, at times they are too large for her cellular wireless internet, so we find ourselves racing around towns looking for wireless service we can "borrow" to make one of her deadlines. So much for that magical router that follows us around the country.

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Liz comes from a great heritage of gospel music. This gave her a very realistic view and knowledge of what was involved before she ever picked up the mantel. Her grandfather Alden Toney sang with the Blackwood Brothers in the late 1940's and early 50's. The stories he told of sleeping in the back seat of cars on top on records and sound equipment really made one what to leave behind all of their comforts and hit the road singing for Jesus. He missed the birth of one of his sons and lived through at least one horrible crash.

After leaving the Blackwoods he went home to Detroit where he started the Toney Brothers who are still in existence over 55 years later. While all of the early Toney Brothers worked jobs during the week, they sacrificed almost every weekend traveling and spreading the message of the gospel. Sometimes as much as I know we do as fulltime artists, I look at groups that work a fulltime "real" job plus sacrifice their weekends with a sense of awe and respect.

While Devin doesn't have an "outside" job he has the fulltime duty of assisting me in all of my follies and being the encouraging life of the party. I know that when he is standing and holding a flashlight for me to see by while repairing something at two in the morning, he is thinking how much easier and more glamorous this is than his former occupation as a church music director. His mind must drift back to the parting words of a church member when he left to join us on the road, one who told him how he "was making a big mistake" and how he was surely "simply blinded by the fame, glamour and riches of a career in gospel music." Next time you see Devin, ask him how that's all workin out for him.

Liz, Devin, and I as well as countless other gospel artists are so grateful for how God has seen fit to use us. There is NO other calling we would rather have, nor any other thing we would rather be doing. Please notice that I said "calling." That is what one must have to do this. If anyone reading this is considering a "career" in gospel music, please take a great

deal of time to pray and seek the Lord's will before making that decision. Be sure that it is indeed a calling and not simply a desire. Desire will fade. A calling will endure and sustain you through the tough times that WILL come.

As for me, this article is not meant as a complaint or to sound in any way ungrateful for the amazing blessing and honor of spreading the gospel in song. On the contrary I am amazed every day that God would chose to use a worn down broken vessel like me to play even a small roll in His master plan. I just thought some folks would like glimpse of what it looks like from center stage.

Note: I wrote this on the way to a concert in Brookeland, TX. Tonight's concert put this entire article into perspective with eternity. In addition to watching the Holy Spirit move throughout the entire service, a 15 year old girl gave her heart to the Lord! That is what this calling is all about. Like the old song says, "I wouldn't take NOTHIN' for my journey now!" 🇳🇮



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CHRISTY SUTHERLAND



Who else holds the ocean in His Hand?

The Bible says God holds the oceans in His hand (Isaiah 40:12). Therefore, He holds the oil spill in the Gulf. Christy Sutherland recounts a recent trip to Grand Isle in the midst of recovery.



Recently, my husband Matthew and I went down to Grand Isle, Louisiana to do a concert at First Baptist. This was our third summer at First Baptist, but this visit was like no other. I believe all of our tour dates are divine appointments. There could not have been a more perfect time for us to go to Grand Isle. I remember thinking as we were driving from Tennessee to Louisiana, "If there ever was a time when these people needed to hear an encouraging word, it is now." I had no idea of the encouragement we would receive once we got there!

The churches in Grand Isle have really pulled together and are using the oil spill tragedy as an opportunity to reach the hurting and lost on the island. Members of the Army and Coast Guard as well as bus loads of clean up crews were seen daily making their way to the beach along Grand Isle's one highway. Christians in these groups are attending local churches and even starting Bible studies for fellow transients on the island. One of the most moving things I have ever seen was on Sunday morning. I was singing the invitation song when a staff sergeant in the Army knelt down at the front of the church in full uniform. Wow..... what a picture. This tough soldier, protector of our nation, was seeking God's wisdom in this current crisis.

Prayer is held on the bridge weekly for the oil spill victims and workers alike. In spite of the halt on the island's main source of income, the people are still giving and good-hearted as ever. Soft shell shrimp had been waiting in the freezer for us when we ar-



rived. With all that is going on, this was even more of a treat than usual.

BP Oil has provided quite well for the people in Grand Isle, despite the bad press they have received. Shrimp boat captains' recent increased flow of income from clean-up relief is bitter sweet. One of our dear friends is a captain. He said he's making more money now than he ever has, but it is really tough not knowing how long it will take the waters to recover. Shrimping is his passion and is all he and his family have ever known. Such is the case for many on the island.

God is good, all the time. We may not understand, but He does. He is the restorer of hearts and oceans. 🇺🇸

Photos:

Previous page: A lighthouse, perhaps never more symbolic, on the coast; a closeup of the oil.

Opposite page from top: aid worker Ricky Polkey; Christy in the midst of a Bible Study for transients; another view of the oil in the water.

From top: a sign depicting the faith of the island; Christy at the wheel of a Hummer in the work area.

Photos taken by Matthew Dundey and Anonymous



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



Kelly Capriotti Burton is a former teacher and IT project manager, and a current gospel wife, mom of 2, stepmom of 2, event promoter, and writer/editor. She currently lives outside of Chicago sometimes and on a bus the rest, and survives to tell about it at mylifeastheglue.com



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



Jimmy McMillan is a singer and songwriter who, with his wife Liz, owns the trio McMillan and Life. They are based in Symrna, TN and travel full time in gospel music ministry. mcmillanandlife.com



Guest Dan Keeton is known as a stellar American tenor, a songwriter, humorist, and as having an outspoken heart for ministry. He recently reformed The Keetons with his wife of 21 years, Nancy. keetonsong.com



Guest Christy Sutherland was recently named 2010 Country Female Artist in the Diamond Awards. She is a prolific songwriter and has been singing Christian music since childhood. She and husband Matthew Dudney reside in Nashville. christysutherland.net



Rob Patz is the owner & publisher of SGN Scoops along with the owner & voice of SGMRadio.com & The Southern Styles Show. He resides in Seattle and loves Jesus, music, food, people, and talking as a job and hobby. sgmradio.com



Ms. Lou Wills Hildreth is always smiling, is married to Howard, is a member of the legendary Wills family, a member of the Gospel Music Association Board, and a television host, songwriter, publisher, journalist, an industry leader. Get to know her at louhildreth.com



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



Tom Holste is a writer living in Chicago and a graduate of Act One, a screenwriting program specifically geared toward Christians. He has written and directed numerous short scenes for church events. tomholste.com.



Stephanie Kelley is a public speaker and owner of Queen-O-Q, a frugal living blog. She and her family of 4.5 live in Washington State. queenoq.blogspot.com



Christian Fitness Expert and author Laurette Willis is the Director of Praise-Moves, offering fitness programs, DVDs, books and training for those interested in a Christian alternative to yoga, and fitness for spirit, soul and body at www.praisemoves.com twitter.com/Fit4Christ facebook.com/praisemoves



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



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"Yankee"
kid from
Detroit,
who spent
his first
11 years
living in



the midst of hell, a "Ministry"

was far from my destiny. According to the experts, I am supposed to be a drug addict, in prison, a child molester and an alcoholic. When you go through the divorce of your parents, your father's alcoholism, physical abuse and a foster home, your destiny does not include love, harmony and happiness.

My father, Shelby Keeton, worked as a city transit bus driver in Detroit. After divorcing my mother, marrying another and years of discord, he found that something needed to be fixed. We left everyone and everything in Detroit and moved to Kentucky to live with our Grandmother. Daddy found my mother, brought her to KY and married her again, 3 days later.

DAN KEETON: Renewed

I was saved in a tent across from Grandma's house, found her Gospel

Music tapes and

my journey had begun. She bought me a guitar with the last of her Social Security Check and this "Yankee" began a search for his place in Southern Gospel Music. In 1989, my search was side-tracked by a pretty girl named Nancy. I've always remembered when God spoke to me after our first date, "I've got something for the two of you to do". For years I ran from that statement and literally auditioned for every group you can possibly imagine.

On May 18th, 2010, I was finished. I had sung my last Gospel song. I had been kicked in the head for the last time. It would be the last time I trusted anyone in Gospel Music. With my finger in God's face, I yelled, "I'M FINISHED"! He immediately replied, "Good! Now I can get started". I got out of the driver's seat and gave complete control to God,



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so he could take us where he wants us to go.

Since that day, I have sit across my kitchen table from a man who said, "Go find a new mode of transportation, and I'll write the check... then figure a budget for you and Nancy to do this full time till December, 2011 and I'll write you another check."

Today, I am overwhelmed by the dates that are coming in, and the big, red, beautiful coach that may be ours in the next couple weeks. Daddy passed away in 1998 and he always dreamed big. I sat in the driver's seat today and looked to my left at the switch that read, "kneel".

My Daddy's city bus was "state of the art", it would lower the front end inches from the ground so, people who couldn't step up high could get on the coach easier. Guess what they called that? My bus, just like my Daddy's bus, will "kneel".

Someone asked me just a minute ago, "what are you going to name your new bus?" Without a doubt, the big red bus or a different one, the name of The Keeton's new coach... "Shelby." 🇳🇮

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

A: Admit that you are a sinner.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If you would like to accept God's free gift of salvation, then all you have to do is pray and ask Him. Your prayer might sound something like this:

Dear Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I know that I deserve Hell because of it. However, I believe that you died on the cross and rose again in three days to pay for my sin. I ask you to come into my heart, cleanse my sin, and make me one of your children. Thank you, Jesus. Amen.

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

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

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Mountain-Moving Prayer: You can do it!

"Christian Fitness" by Laurette Willis

The Lord gave us the perfect prayer outline in the 11th chapter of the book of Mark for removing mountains in our lives. Mountains are situations and conditions that stand between us the fulfillment of God's best for us.

Mountains standing in your way can be things such as lack, debt, or a bad report. A mountain can be a physical, emotional or mental limitation, relationship challenge or job situation.

Even if the mountain in your way appears to be a certain person, the enemy is not that person. "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12).

Experiencing Attacks in the Area of Your GREATEST GIFT?

Have you noticed that the enemy always attacks you in the area of your greatest gift? For me, fear of people and worry over what they thought about me was a mountain that stood in the way of the gift of communication the Lord gave me. I had a desire to act, write, speak--to communicate in any form--but fear kept me from taking action. I had to come against that mountainous "spirit of fear" that was not from God but from satan.

If you will look at the scripture in which the spirit of fear is mentioned (2 Timothy 1:6 and 7), Paul exhorts Timothy to "stir up the gift of God" within him. He reminds Timothy, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." God has given you power, love and a sound mind (also translated "discipline and self-control").

If you are afraid to express the desire of your heart, know that is the spirit of fear sent against you from the enemy. He knows the lives you will touch and win to God by expressing your God-given gifts and talents, so he will try his utmost to stop you. He'll say things such as,

"You can't do it. You're just being conceited. No one in the family has ever done anything like that. People will talk about you. Who do you think you are?"

You may even have become so accustomed to that negative, accusatory voice that you think it's your own voice saying, "I'm scared. I can't do that. What will people think?"

If the Enemy CAN Stop You...

My friend, if satan can stop you, he will. YOU are the one who decides whether he can or not. Remember that "he walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." He's not a roaring lion; he's only sounds like one. His teeth were knocked out by Jesus. YOU decide if he may try to devour you or not. May he?

I hope you shout a loud "NO!!!"

The temptation is to talk about the mountain that stands in our way. Jesus, however, did not tell us to talk about the mountain. He told us to talk to the mountain.

I've used this method of prayer for over 15 years now and have noticed an interesting thing. Each goal set and prayer prayed using this outline has done one of three things: it has come to pass, is in the process of coming to pass, or is no longer important to me. That's the power of focused, mountain-moving prayer! I believe it will be a blessing to you, too.

Once you write out your prayers and the mountains facing you, read the entire outline aloud during your prayer time. Copy it down and change it from time to time as you see the mountains moved and prayers answered. God's Word works! Speak it aloud daily.



Following along the lines of Mark 11:22-25 --

Jesus said, "Have faith in God." I have faith in God.

continues>

"For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain..." (List the mountains you are facing):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

"Be removed and be cast into the sea," and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says."

Therefore I say to these mountains, be removed and be cast into the sea! I do not doubt in my heart, but I believe those things I say will be done. I will have whatever I say.

I now ask and pray for

(Write your prayer list and goals):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Jesus said, "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them." I believe I receive those things I ask for when I pray. I will have them.

"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

I forgive

(Write your list of people to forgive below):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

*Now praise the Lord for answered prayer!
He is faithful.*

Has this strategy helped you? Please let us know! Write to Laurette at praise-moves@gmail.com. (From the book *BASIC Steps to Godly Fitness* by Laurette Willis, Harvest House Publishers)

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Who's making new music...

CD Reviews by Chad Hayes

SISTERS *Healer of My Heart*

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Since the mid-1970s, sisters Heather Day, Kim Lord, and Valerie Ruppe have been in some way involved in Southern Gospel music. All of them at some time or another spent time singing with their mother, Brenda, as The Ruppes. This ladies' trio became known for some tight, beautiful harmonies and arrangements in an industry that was dominated my all-male or mixed groups.

The Ruppes went through many changes over the years as each of the girls, at one time or another, went their separate ways. However, the sisters have now reunited to form a ladies' trio called Sisters- a very apropos name. *Healer Of My Heart* is their first mainline studio album, and it's one that many people have been eagerly anticipating.

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

The album kicks off with a driving, up-tempo song called "I Can't Keep From Singing." It's apparent from the start that the tight harmonies and blend that characterized The Ruppes' music is alive and well with Sisters. Interestingly, they almost sound like a mixed trio on this song. The information I got from Daywind lists this song as the first single to radio, but the promo flyer that came with it lists another song as the first single. I personally hope it's this one.

The tempo stays pretty much the same for the next song, "You Made My Day." This is another thoroughly enjoyable song that would do well at radio. Song no. 3, "God's Grace," is a mid-tempo song with an acoustic arrangement that provides a nice change-of-pace after the first two songs. The ladies do a fine job of switching from power-driven vocals to a smoother sound. "Everything You Do," the fourth song, is a mid-to-up-tempo song with a slight praise & worship feel.

The fifth song, "We All Came to the Cross," is the first ballad on the album. It's not really slow, though- it gets up to the mid-tempo range after the first verse. Still, it's a classic power ballad that the ladies pull off beautifully. The tempo speeds up just slightly for the next song, "Brothers And Sisters." This is an enjoyable

song, but there's a male guest vocalist here whose name is not mentioned anywhere in any of the information that I have. It's striking to hear the sisters in what is essentially a background vocal role on their own studio album! Next up is the CD's title track, "Healer Of My Heart." This is a slower ballad and features some straightforward harmonies that serve to get the mes-

sage across clearly. The tempo speeds back up again for song no. 8, "Unexpected Blessings." This one has a bit of a country flair to it, which is similar to the style that I remember from The Ruppes.

"Mercy Leads" is the ninth song. This is the one that was mentioned in the promo flyer I received as the first radio single instead of "I Can't Keep But Singing." This is a slower, lighter ballad with an arrangement that really shows off the vocal blend these ladies can pull off. Still, I don't think it

would work better as their second single off

this project.

Next up is a mid-to-up-tempo song called "I'm Sure." Here the ladies get back to the more power-driven vocals found on the early part of the album, and the arrangement allows them to do some fun things vocally. The last full song on the album is another slower ballad called "You Always Answer Me." I refer to it this way because the album actually ends with a reprise of "Healer Of My Heart." Personally, I don't think the album needed this reprise. "You Always Answer Me" was a fine ending point to me.

I have to say that, without a doubt, I greatly enjoyed this album. The song selection fits these ladies perfectly, and there's a variety in the song styles and arrangements that will keep the attention of most any listener. Vocally, "Sisters" just picks up where "The Ruppes" left off. Any fan of The Ruppes will want to have this album in their collection as well. Overall, I give this album a rating of **9.5 out of 10**

microphones!

Favorites: "I Can't Keep From Singing," "You Made My Day," and "We All Came To The Cross." 🇳🇵





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