

SGN

AUGUST 2017

SCOOPS

MAGAZINE

KELLY WRIGHT

The Wright Message



ALSO FEATURING

Autumn Clark, Jon Epley and The Akins

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Publisher's Point by Rob Patz
5	Autumn Clark by Fayth Lore
9	Hope To The Hill by Nathan Kistler
11	Kelly Wright by Craig Harris
15	Day to Day with Selena Day
17	The Joneses by Sarah Murray
20	Greater Vision's Jon Epley by Craig Harris
24	DJ Spotlight on Leighton Nunn by Vonda Easley
26	McKay Project by Debbie Seagraves
30	Christian Country Top 40 for August 2017
33	Younger Perspective on Logan Peck by Erin Stevens
35	Through the Lens With Craig Harris feat. Greater Vision, Hoppers, Goodman Revival
37	Vernon Alabama's Gospel Music Weekend by Leslie McKay
40	The Akins by Robert York
43	SGNScoops' Top 100 for August 2017
47	Covered by Love by Justin Gilmore
51	Randall Reviews It! by Randall Hamm
56	Bless'd Ministries by Lorraine Walker
59	Beckie Simmons by Charlie Griffin
64	Life Is Short, Live it to the fullest by Logan Smith
67	Creekside Update with Lorraine Walker
70	Hyssong's No. 1 Party by Kelly Hyysong
73	Editor's Last Word with Lorraine Walker
75	Contributors

OUR MISSION

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

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

PUBLISHER'S POINT

by Rob Patz

Welcome to the August edition of the Publisher's Point. Where has the summer gone? I've already started seeing back-to-school fliers. As a child those were the most depressing of any advertising throughout the year.

I have to be honest ... over the last couple of days, I have written and rewritten the Publisher's Point. It seems like I had no clear answer, no clear direction, of what I should say this month. I know that it is important for me to say exactly what God wants. It's like choosing the road you have to go on, the right road to get to your destination. That's what we're going to talk about in this month's Publishers Point.

It seems as though I have picked transportation themes over the last few months. We started off in the car behind a tractor. Last month we were on a train. This month, we're deciding on the road we are going to take.

Life is full of choices. I know that statement isn't anything new to any of us. I'm sure, since you were a child, you've heard your family tell you that life is about the choices you make. That is true. The choices we make today, even this minute as you're reading this, are the choices that will resonate tomorrow. I know that sounds ominous, but it's true. Choices we can make not only to follow God in our decisions, but to choose joy in the journey.

I have to be honest with you ... there are days when I can't figure out what road to take. I know I have to make a decision, but at the time, I'm not sure. I truly believe that over time, as Christians, we become more attuned to what God has for us, and those choices and decisions become easier. But even for someone who has been a Christian for a while, there are times where those decisions don't seem quite as clear.

I think this is where we insert ourselves into the equation. So often, we want to create the road that we believe God will bless, but God never had any intention for us to travel that road. Instead, He has a much better path for us, but we struggle because this is what we want ... this is what we've desired ... this is what we have built up in our minds to be the correct thing.



Think of all the people that walked with Jesus. They wanted Him to create a kingdom on earth right then. They didn't want to wait, nor did they really understand the whole scenario. They wanted the instant answer. They didn't understand the life-saving road that Jesus was taking them on.

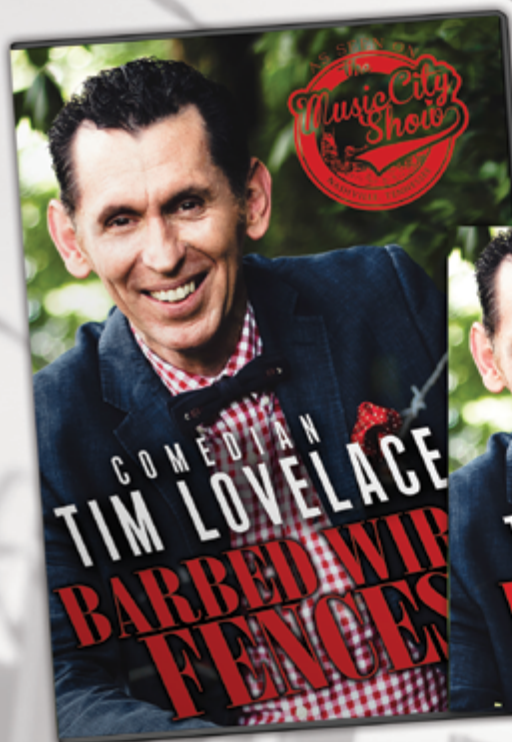
So many times in life, I've taken the road that I felt was right, but I wonder how many times the road that was paved by God was just one turn away. Yet, I refused in my own stubbornness to stop, to pray, and to seek the direction God was taking me.

Instead, I wanted to go 100 miles an hour on this road that I had paved, and what I believed was what God wanted. All along, just one turn away was a perfectly paved road with happiness, with joy, and with peace that I could've easily taken, if I would've only stopped and waited for His word.

As Christians, we are to choose God's road, and ultimately, prayer is the best GPS that we can have. If we seek God's will, we will know what direction to take.

Join me next month in Vernon Ala., from Sept. 8-9, and of course for the Creekside Gospel Music Convention, from October 30 through Nov. 2, in Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

Until next month, this is the Publishers Point.



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Southern Gospel Sweethearts: Autumn Nelon Clark

By Fayth Lore

Most individuals dream of living a life that will make this world a better place. They hope that they can leave a legacy behind that reflects a life of positive influence. This dream is one that Rex Nelon accomplished. It was his vision 30 years ago, which sparked the national ministry of the Nelons. It was also his influence that helped begin the careers of some of Gospel Music's most beloved artists, such as Karen Peck Gooch and Janet Paschal.

For years, Rex Nelon's daughter, Kelly, sang alto alongside him. Now, Kelly sings with her two beautiful daughters, Amber and Autumn, and her husband, Jason Clark. It is the legacy of this Gospel Music Association Hall of Fame inductee that is still being lived out through his daughter and granddaughters. I had the privilege of interviewing Autumn Nelon Clark, Kelly's youngest daughter.

Born on January 20, 1997, Autumn is now 20 years old. While she has always been behind the scenes of her family's career, she has recently taken on the role of singer/mandolin player for the group.

"For a while it was just the three of them – my mom, dad and sister," Amber says. "But a few years ago, my dad got sick, and I had to fill in for him. I've been up there ever since."

While Autumn has watched her family walk onto stages all of her life, it never made it easier when it was her turn to finally take the stage. The young lady confesses that it was more than a little intimidating for her to sing in front of people for the first time.

"I loved to sing but was terrified to step on stage," Autumn shares. "I always used to be scared to sing in front of people. I prayed about it, and I came to realize that

God didn't give me a spirit of fear."

She admits to still getting nervous "every now and then" on stage.



As mentioned before, not only does Autumn showcase an incredible voice every night on stage, but she can also tear up a mandolin.

"I loved the way it sounded," Autumn points out. "So, I decided to start learning to play. I've been teaching myself with a little help from some friends."

Autumn is thankful for the legacy and influence of her grandfather. The blonde songstress says that two of the most influential people in her life now are Kelly and Amber.



"My mom and sister have taught me so much, not just about singing but about life," Autumn shares. "I wouldn't be where I am without them."

The sisters have a special bond. Of course, with siblings come the inevitable stories that may only be funny from one sibling's perspective. Autumn notes that it is hard coming up with a story about her sister, but thankfully, she was able to pull one out for us that she still laughs about today.

"This story is funny to me but wasn't funny to her (Amber)," Autumn begins. "When we were younger, she had bruised her tailbone playing basketball. For some reason, I thought it would be really funny to pull the chair out from under her. She definitely didn't think it was funny."



Recently, Autumn had her own kind of accidental, not-so-safe experience with a birthday cake gone wrong.



"Oh my goodness that is one memory I will never forget," Autumn says. "It was my 20th birthday. I was lighting the candles when the banner on my cake caught on fire. It all went downhill from there. I didn't know what to do. Everyone just stood around laughing and shocked that this was even happening. Here was this cake, just up in flames."

The comical video of Autumn attempting to blow out the burning paper banner atop her cake is available on her Instagram page.

Back on stage, the Nelons have compiled quite a list of



awards, accolades and special performance opportunities. Some of those awards include three National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARA) GRAMMY nominations, four Gospel Music Association (GMA) Dove Awards and a host of other accolades. They have a full schedule of dates all across the country, with some exciting new things coming up.

“We are currently working on a new Americana CD that will be coming out very soon,” Autumn points out. “Stay tuned.”

Also, the group will be a part of special kind of concert series, which will be touring this year and next. It is called the American Family Harmony Tour, featuring some of the Nelons’ Americana songs.

New material is fun, but Autumn’s favorites include Nelton standards.



“Of course, my mom’s signature song, ‘Oh for a Thousand Tongues,’ is just an amazing song,” Autumn shares. “But, I think my favorite one we do right now is ‘Then Came the Morning’ or ‘Family Chain.’ I love to see people being moved by the lyrics.”

For years, fans have watched as the Nelons have poured their heart and soul into their music.

Thankfully, they are not stopping any time soon. Still, it can be easy to get discouraged on the road and to start wondering if what you are doing is really making a dif-

ference. Keeping a fresh mind and renewed spirit while traveling can become a challenge. One scripture that the youngest Nelton has relied on, which has become a personal favorite, is Psalm 147:3 (“He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds” KJV).



Autumn has definitely made a positive impression on the hearts of fans across the country. Her advice to young artists is simply, “Don’t try to be anyone else but stay true to yourself.”

By staying true to herself, Autumn is blazing the path for others to follow, showing just a glimpse of the great things that God will be doing in the life of this talented young Southern Gospel sweetheart.

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HOPE TO THE HILL

By Nathan Kistler



What a blessed month we have had. God has opened new doors of ministry, and on top of that, we had the great privilege of celebrating our nation's independence on July 4.

I am so thankful to God for His continued blessing in this land. Our nation's beginnings were truly guided by the hand of God, and even today, we find that He is still working amidst the seeming chaos we experience.

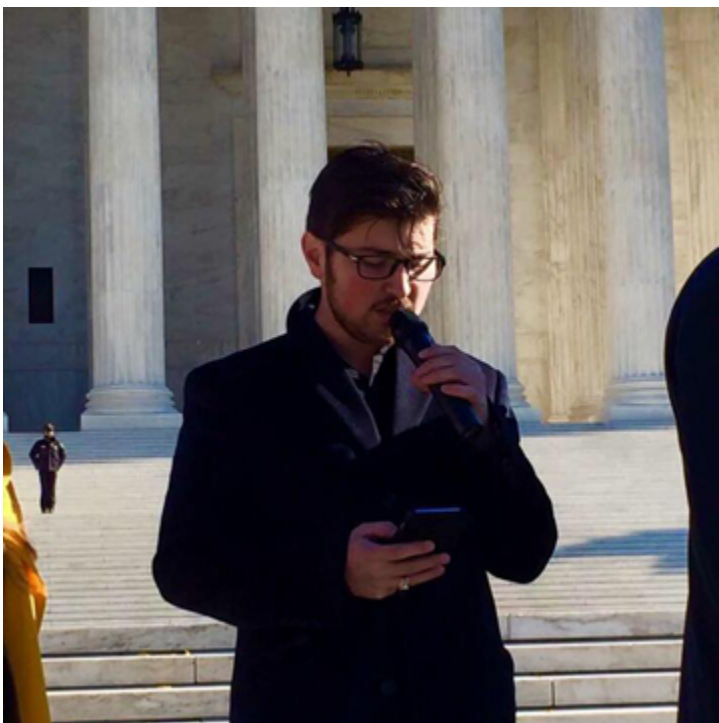
The media tends to blow out of proportion what is happening in Washington and in some cases they outright make up stories.

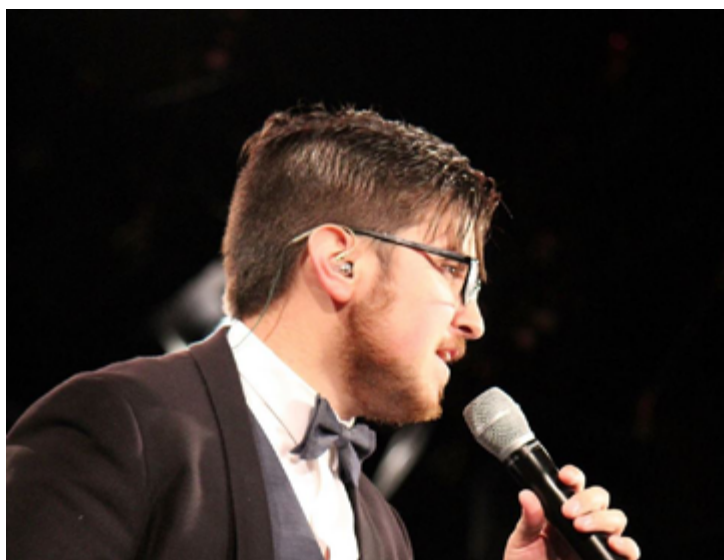
It is imperative now more than ever that we understand what is at stake here in this land and that we recognize what God is doing in the 115th Congress. There are more Christians in Congress right now than we've had in many, many years. I firmly believe that revival is just around the corner.



Every day, great prayer warriors are on their knees begging God for mercy and blessing, prayer warriors that include many members of the 115th Congress.

These men and ladies are key as they are standing in the gap for truth in this modern day Babylon we find ourselves in.





Please set down the TV remote and take some time in God's Word whilst praying for our elected officials.

Also, I would ask that you pray for us as we endeavor to minister to these wonderful men and women who represent us every day. We desperately need your prayers and support for the days of battle which are ahead of us. God's people must stand up while they speak truth in love.

I am so thankful for each of you and your prayers.

Your friend in Washington,

Nathan Kistler, nathankistler@gmail.com, www.hope-tothehill.com



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The Wright message in a song

By Craig Harris

Fox News personality Kelly Wright shares his excitement about his second Daywind release

In his 40-year journalistic career, Fox News anchor Kelly Wright has intimately witnessed a host of newsworthy events, including presidential elections and military efforts.

Now, he's conveying a more positive bit of news to his extensive resume.

"I'm a newsman who believes in the power of the good news in a bad news world," Wright says.

Wright recently released "Songs of Inspiration," his second project via Daywind Records.

"When I listened to the finished project, I was moved," Wright points out. "Not that I wasn't moved on the first project we did with Daywind ("Goodness & Mercy" in 2011). The bottom line is that this feels more worshipful, not that the other one didn't.

"This one is more thoughtful. It's more melodic. It's a musical project that really takes time to help people realize who they are in God and who God is in them."

Music – and more specifically Gospel music – has always been a part of Wright's life.

"My mother used to sing," Wright explains. "She also played piano, and my grandmother was a church organist. I pretty much grew up with music all around me. I picked up the vocal aspect of it."

The native of Hagerstown, Mary., began to publicly sing when he was 13 years old, and it grew from that point on.

"I continued to do that all through school, at various church functions," Wright shares. "My mother would also have me perform jazz and pop songs at events that she would help sponsor."

As he grew older, he sang with Oral Roberts University's (Okla.) Souls a Fire choir and also performed while



he was in the military.

“I grew up watching so many musical artists,” Wright remembers. “I remember, going back some time now, Tom Jones had a show. Sammy Davis, Jr. had a show. I used to watch all of those guys and how talented they were. They were brimming with talent. When I showed some ability to sing, I just kept pursuing it.

“Music was my first and only desire for the longest time until my teenage years. My mother (eventually) sat me down and said, ‘listen, there are a lot of singers. You get an education and make sure you have a foundation.’”

While in the Army, Wright broadcasted television news. Then, his journalistic career blossomed as he continued to perform.

“There’s one CD that I recorded that’s an independent project that is R&B and jazz,” Wright says. “But all of the others have been Gospel.

“It’s front and center. I’m a man who likes to talk about hope, faith and love. No music does that better in my opinion than Gospel. It’s music that uplifts, inspires, encourages and provides healing for the soul. You can’t always do that with all of the musical styles out there.”

Wright performs at least once a month at the Metropolitan Room in New York.

However, his overall number of appearances have slightly declined over the past couple of years. Ideally, he would like to perform once a week.

“I like to go and lift people up,” Wright emphasizes. “There’s something good and tangible about (Gospel music). You can taste the joy people have in Gospel. Even if it’s slow, it seems to strike a chord. Those songs palpitate. You feel the pulse of that.”

“Songs of Inspiration” was produced by Gary Prim and includes standards such as “Amazing Grace,” “Jesus Loves Me” and “Blessed Assurance.” It contains only



two original songs, including the Marty Funderburk/Joseph Habedank-penned anthem that was the first radio single (“America, Great Again”).

“It has nothing to do with politics,” Wright points out. “It has everything to do with uniting America and reminding people how great America can be with God.”

Wright wrote the other original song, “Take a Look Around.”

“In that song, I’m asking people to take a look around and at what you see,” Wright shares. “As a journalist, I see the pain. I see the poverty. I also see the hope that arises because of God.”



Wright – who estimates that he has recorded six or seven musical projects – has gradually developed and fostered relationships in the Southern Gospel industry.

On his earlier Daywind release, he recorded Gerald Crabb’s “Sometimes I Cry,” which Jason Crabb has also recorded.

“I like Southern Gospel,” Wright says. “I’m humbled

to have been able to sing at the NQC (National Quartet Convention in 2011 and 2016). I hope to do many more. It’s a family affair. I’m glad to be a part of the family. “There’s still more to be done. I’m praying the Lord will bless what I do musically and bless people and touch hearts and open up doors for me to do more.”



Now in his 15th year with Fox News, Wright feels that he has found a good balance between his personal and professional lives.

“I used to struggle with that as a younger man, making sure my personal walk matches my personal talk,” Wright – who

served as the associate pastor and minister of music at Open Door Chapel in Virginia Beach, Va., prior to his current tenure with Fox News – explains. “In spite of my own failures, I’m loved dearly by Christ and forgiven. I’ve learned to be comfortable in my relationship with God first. That allows me to face challenges I would never have dreamed of taking on, taking it on with a firm foundation in the Lord.

“I’m like everyone else, but I’m saved by grace. We don’t always think about what suffering brings. It’s hard sometimes to bring that to the table in a news business that can be very cynical. You’re putting on that smiling face and being very hopeful. The God I serve enables me to be who I am, to be comfortable in my own skin, to be comfortable in my own salvation, to help me to be a warrior – in fighting injustice that hurts people – and to do it gracefully.

“There’s only one Jesus. Yet, this is someone who changed history and changed the world. If I can follow His path and follow His footsteps and get within an inch of where He (wants me) ... as my mother used to say quite often, ‘then my living will not be in vain.’”

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Day To Day

Seeing Differently

By Selena Day

Chuck and I have taken the year off from traveling overseas due to our daughter's wedding. It's been a year of planning and dreaming, waiting expectantly for her big day to arrive.

I think this day is more meaningful to me than my own wedding, because I have been unconsciously dreaming of this day her whole life. I had the wedding of my dreams, so I have always wanted to give each of our girls their dreams as well.

I have been thinking recently about the mother's heart and how we tend to think of God only in a male form, but there are many scriptures that talk about his love for us in a maternal way.

During this year of planning, I have wanted to move heaven and earth so that my daughter's dreams can come to pass. As a mother, the joy hasn't been in only giving her what she desires. It has been having the experience of watching her as she tried on the many wedding dresses to find just the perfect one. It has been the moments when I have needed to give her a pep talk to trust in God's plan, when inside I was struggling to believe it for myself.

I am reminded of God's heart towards us and how He not only loves us as a Father but like a Mother as well. He holds us close to Himself and cares about every tiny detail in our life.

This past year, no wish my daughter has expressed has

been too insignificant to me. I have listened to her wishes and expressed my thoughts, and we have discussed the best outcome. But in the end, it has been whatever she has wanted that we have tried to make happen.

In every phase of my children's lives, I have learned more of how God sees us and how He delights in watching us and bringing our dreams to pass for us.

I will never forget the first wedding dress she came out in ... it took my breath away. The emotions that it stirred inside of me, it was better than the day I saw myself in a wedding dress. The wedding dress she chose



was the one she fell in love with the first day we looked at them, and when I was able to pay the last payment and hand it to her, my heart swelled as she pulled it close and hugged it thanking me for making her dream come true.

On Aug. 18, Chuck will walk her down the aisle, and we will all be watching her as she stares into the eyes of her love and pledges her promise to him.

I am so thankful that God allowed me to be a mother and to experience seeing my child in the way He sees



me. A mother's heart is fierce toward her children. I am pretty laid back in most cases, but when it comes to my children, I will fight any giant to protect my girls.

Chuck always says that he would gladly lie down and let someone run a truck over him to protect his girls. I think a mother's heart would be to take a stick to

that truck and beat the life out of it.

If we are created in the image of God, I believe that God has those same feelings towards us as His children.

I personally believe that it is beneficial for us to see the maternal side of our Creator in our life. He cares so deeply for us, and His love is boundless.

After 28 years in ministry, one of the greatest obstacles that I have seen people encounter over and over again is the belief that God loves them. When you struggle with that fact, you struggle believing that God is good, that God is for you and that every day God's desire is to give you all that you desire.

My prayer for you today is that you can see through any pain or rejection you encounter, to see the love our God has for you, and that just as we have worked hard to give our daughter all that she has dreamed of for her special day, God wants to work that hard for you and your dreams.

Selena Day is a motivational speaker and is available to speak at your conference or event. You may contact her at selenaday@me.com <http://www.queenliving.org> <http://facebook.com/queenismsbyselenaday>. Photographs courtesy of Selena Day.



The Joneses: New faces with years of experience



By Sarah Murray

The Joneses could easily be considered the new kids on the block.

However, unbeknownst to most people, it is a family from Ohio that is deeply rooted in a Southern Gospel heritage. Joy Jones is joined by her 20-year-old son Ryan, their cousin Andy McGinnis, and a close friend of Ryan's, Abbie Ailes.

Joy has children of her own but has always had a dream of adopting a child from another country. When Ryan met Abbie, they learned that she had been adopted from Taiwan. Joy quickly fell in love with where Abbie came from and grew to love her like her own child.

The Southern Gospel heritage for this group started 20 years ago in 1996 when Joy began singing with a group called New Journey. The group was founded by John Darin Rowsey, who also spent some time with Karen Peck and New River. During Joy's time with New Journey, she was very involved with the Gaither Homecoming Series.

Ryan and his brother quickly followed in their mother's footsteps when they began singing at an early age in a group called the Jones Boys. They sang, competed, and even won at the national competition level. They began to develop their family group in 2012 and were strictly a family trio.

Shortly after Ryan's brother got married, he decided that he needed to focus more on beginning a family and decided to step away from singing with his family trio. While this caused Ryan and his mother to step back and reevaluate their next step, they fully understood and supported his decision.

When Ryan was praying about going to college, he prayed that God would still allow him to be fully involved in ministry. God answered this prayer by leading him to Ohio Christian University. Ryan was asked to lead worship for the chapel services at the college. Ryan met Abbie and eventually the family asked her to join the group.

With their cousin, Andy McGinnis, joining the group – as well as Abbie – the Joneses began to see God lead in bigger directions. They are blessed to have Abbie’s singing talent and her violin playing. She has played since she was five years old and truly uses her talents for Christ within the ministry.



The Joneses are set apart and unique, pleasing all age groups with a variety of musical styles for the cause of Christ. The Joneses feel that they can’t label themselves as they have their own genre of singing old hymns, live music, and original music.

“We just say that God is in all of it,” Ryan said.

For the Joneses, ministry comes first and always has.

In 2013, the Joneses released their first project, self-entitled “Jones.” It consisted of their first single “Come On, Come On,” which charted in the top 80 landing at number 58 on the charts. “Come On, Come On” was co-written by Aaron and Amanda Crabb and is a song

that talks about preparing for the exciting time that Christians know as judgement day.

This song means a lot to the family, because it is fun to sing and truly informs the world of that exciting day to come that is not to be feared, assuming that you know Christ as your savior. Since releasing their first project, they have also released a Christmas CD. Both Ryan and Joy have also released solo projects.

The future for the Joneses appears to be very exciting. They are making preparations to release another CD and have just recently made the decision to go full time in the ministry. The father of the Jones family has just recently left his own business to focus more on the ministry as he runs their sound and manages the group.

The Joneses have also quickly realized that this ministry consists of many miles but feel as though if one person has been helped, every mile was worth it. For Joy, since the beginning, raising her children in the music industry, until just recently as a family group that has taken the road full time, they have all found that many groups strive to be people pleasers. They feel at times that they may have even been guilty of this as well, but as God has blessed and created new doors for them, their mindset has only been about placing God at the center of everything they say and do. The Joneses have one main goal, and that is to see people’s lives changed for the kingdom of God.

In this year alone, the Joneses have been invited to sing on main stage for the first time at September’s National Quartet Convention. Here they will also be a part of the Promoter’s Showcase held on Thursday at NQC. In addition, they will be opening for the Nelons, and they will be hosting a concert with the Martins. This year consists of traveling and singing in new states such as Oklahoma, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and





even out of the United States as they will be traveling to sing in Canada.

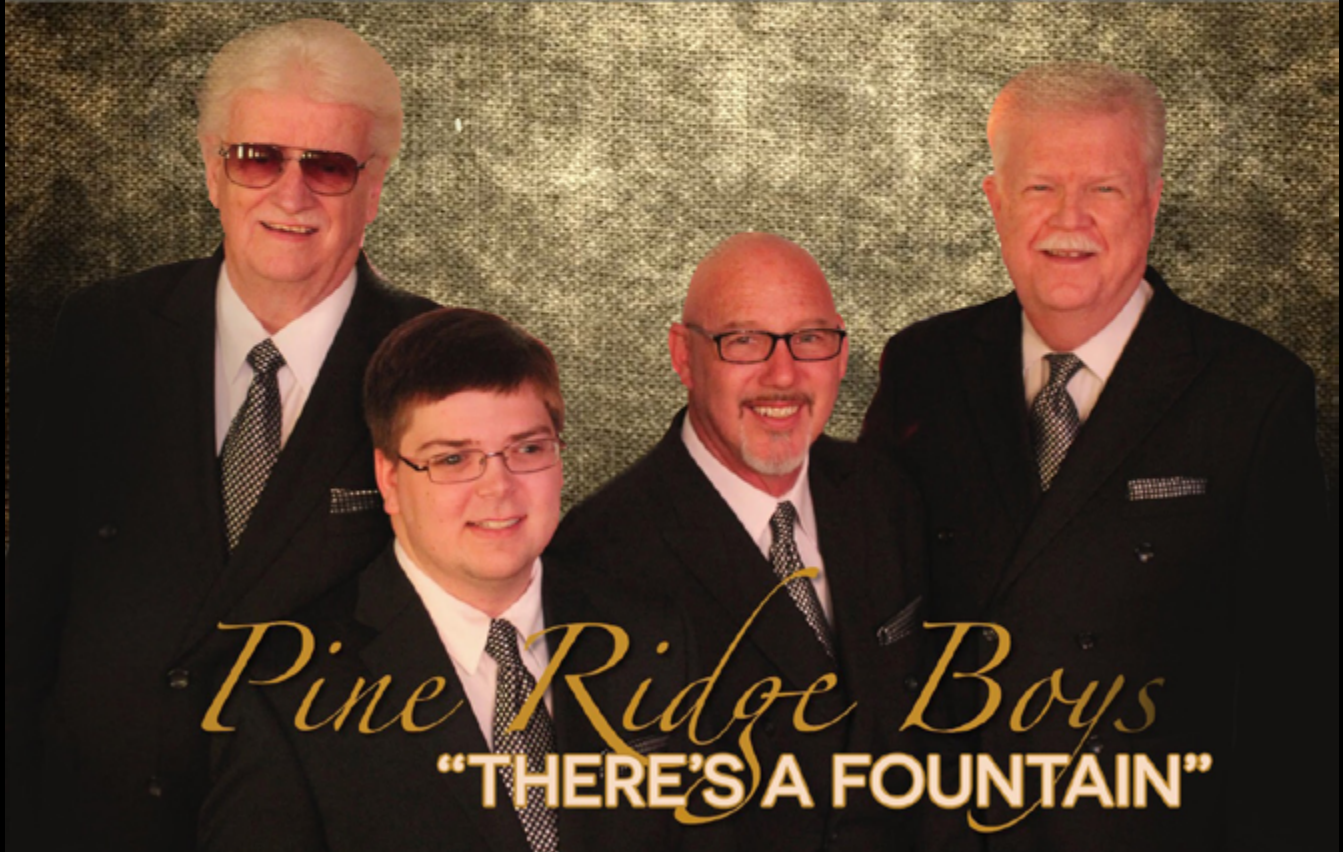
The one thing the Joneses would want the world to know about them is ... “We are in this for the right reasons,” Ryan points out. “If we see one soul saved, or even helped through our ministry, we have reached our goal. If God chooses to move us to bigger places, then so be it.”

Stay tuned folks, because if you haven’t heard much about the Joneses yet, you’re about to be surprised with where God takes this family ministry.

“If it begins with Him, people will feel something,” Ryan said. “We have built our group on staying real and never changing who we are, because we are nothing without Christ.”

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MEDIA

PRESENTS THE BRAND NEW SINGLE RELEASE



Pine Ridge Boys
“THERE’S A FOUNTAIN”

It's "Still" Greater Vision

Newcomer Jon Eply experiences a whirlwind welcome

By Craig Harris

Jon Eply never expected to be a part of Greater Vision.

Gerald Wolfe suddenly had other ideas.

The problem is ... Wolfe didn't tell Eply ... not until the last minute.

"We knew he could sing," Wolfe says. "We have the same kind of backgrounds, all of us. We all grew up the same. We have the same roots."

While the group didn't look at any other singers, Eply wasn't really "the guy" from the beginning.

After recent stints with the Ball Brothers and then the LeFevre Quartet, Eply had been away from Southern Gospel music for several months when he became interested in getting back on the road with a group last fall.

"I had sent Gerald a text (message) asking if he knew anyone who was looking," Eply recalls. "I was ready to get back and sing. It was around the holidays. He said, 'Let me get back with you after the holidays,' and I said okay."

Gerald adds, "I didn't think about it anymore. I just wrote it down in case anybody called me."

Wolfe has struggled with chronic neck muscle discomfort in recent years, causing pain and difficulty for him to sing for an entire concert. So, the group chose to bring in another vocalist as Wolfe would transition into playing the piano and singing select features, while also continuing to handle the emcee work.

"Three days before I called (Eply), we were already in the middle of a new record," Wolfe points out. "We had already done the tracks. I told Chris (Allman) and

Rodney (Griffin) that I was going to hire a new singer before we cut the vocals.”

Epley didn’t get much time to digest what was about to take place.



“He texted me on a Sunday night in February or March, and he said ‘what are you doing on Tuesday night,’” Epley remembers. “I was off (work). He said, ‘why don’t you come by the house and sing a few with us?’ He mentioned taking a vacation day on Wednesday. He sent me the 12 (songs) that were going to be on the new project. I said, ‘Sure, I can do that, but if you don’t mind me asking, why?’ He said, ‘Well, if all goes well on Tuesday night, we’ll be in the recording studio on Wednesday.’”

Needless to say, things went well.

“I kind of got to know these guys a little bit over the years,” Epley explains. “That Tuesday night at Gerald’s house, I have never been as nervous as I was then. It was surreal. It was hard to believe ... ‘Am I really here? Is this really happening?’ I was honored to even be there.

“We sang a couple of songs, Greater Vision songs. We went around the piano and sang through a few of the new songs. They said, ‘Okay, we’ll see you tomorrow morning.’”

Wolfe had no apprehension.

“I’ve known him for seven or eight years,” Wolfe ex-

plains. “The first time I met him, we were in Gaylord, Mich., and he was there with another group. On the second half of the program, I had him come out and sing ‘(The) Lighthouse’ with us.

“I knew he would be easy to travel with.”

Epley didn’t have any apprehension either.

“It’s hard to put it into words,” Epley shares. “I feel blessed. My wife and I had been praying for a while about me going back on the road. As far as it being with these guys, it was so quick, but we had perfect peace about it, my wife (Tiffany) and I both did. It was just a God thing.”

Wolfe points out that Epley proved to be a quick learner.

“He did all of his (studio) vocals in one day,” Wolfe says.

Epley has been immersed in Southern Gospel music since childhood.

“We lived way back in the backwoods of Kentucky,” the Fordsville native points out. “All we had to do was sing.”

The Epley family toured extensively.

“We traveled and sang all over the county, mostly in churches and revivals,” Epley says. “When I was a teenager, we went full time doing that. My mom played the piano, and we sang harmony.”



He joined the Inspirations in 2010 and remained there until 2015.

"I grew up on the Inspirations, listening to them," Epley shares. "At the same time, as I got older, I started listening to Greater Vision and those types of groups."



Epley has been a part of four well-known Southern Gospel groups with vastly different styles.

"I honestly wanted to try a different style," Epley explains. "I've enjoyed getting to do these different styles. It's been a good learning experience to do different things like that."

In addition to the three industry veterans who comprised Greater Vision before Epley joined, he also credits men such as Martin Cook and Mike LeFevre for the knowledge they have shared.

"I wouldn't trade it for anything," the 35-year-old Epley emphasizes. "I have learned so much."

"Now, for me now to get to travel with Gerald, Rodney and Chris – guys I look up to – I sit every week and learn more and more and more. It's like going back to school. I try to learn and improve. It's nice to travel with guys you respect and can learn from."

Greater Vision's established fan base has been very welcoming.

"People have been very receptive," Wolfe points out.

Epley adds, "In one word ... amazing. I'm just loving it. I'm loving being with these guys. We have so much fun on the bus. You sing for two hours out of 24. The rest of the time is on the bus and hanging out together. It's just been great. They're easy to get along with. They love to laugh. It's been awesome."

There has been some slight surprises though.

"Honestly, I knew they were fun guys, but I thought it might a sober-serious mood on the bus," Epley admits. "But you laugh and laugh and laugh on the bus. I'm on the bus with three comedians. They're hilarious. It's just a fun atmosphere."

The group is already having fun unveiling its new material from "Still," which released on Aug. 4.



"I've tried my best not to change the sound at all," Epley shares. "My goal is for Greater Vision fans to feel like nothing has changed, to feel like it's still Greater Vision. It is still a Greater Vision project."

"The orchestration is beautiful. Chris and Rodney have written some of their best work on this album. I think everyone will be very happy with it."



Griffin had a hand in writing or co-writing seven of the songs on the project, while four songs have Allman's name attached.

"It is different," Wolfe – who produced the project – says. "We worked with Lari (Goss)

for so many years. This is the first record we've done without his involvement in 15 years. It's the first album we've done without piano players besides me and Lari. We brought in Trey Ivey and Cody McVey for orchestration to give them a shot at it.

"The vocals sound the same, but everything else is different."

However, it's "Still" Greater Vision.

Photographs courtesy of Jon Epley, Greater Vision and Craig Harris.

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DJ SPOTLIGHT

Leighton Nunn



By Vonda Easley

The DJ Spotlight shines this month on Riding Point Radio.



We recently caught up with DJ Leighton Nunn. The following questions and answers will give you a chance to get acquainted with Leighton.

Vonda Easley: Riding Point Radio has a unique name. Can you tell our readers where its origins came from and what it means?

Leighton Nunn: Back when cowboys would drive cattle, the cowboy that led the way had the job title of riding point. At Riding Point Radio, we are pointing people to Jesus.

Easley: You seem to have a fantastic staff at RPR. Tell us about each one so we can all get acquainted.

Nunn: Vice President of Operations is my son Brian Nunn. He also helps in finding songs. My other son, Lane Nunn, is our music director and also one of our on-air personalities. Mandy Edwards is another on-air personality, and remotes and events coordinator Raymond Delmar is our chief engineer.

Easley: Tell us all about Leighton Nunn. Where did the idea for RPR come from?

Nunn: Well, there isn't too much to tell about me. I worked in radio in the late (1980s) and then had my own band in the 90s. The idea for RPR came on the way home from church, when the Lord put it on my heart to start a Christian Country station.

Easley: Where do you see the future of Riding Point Radio? What's next?

Nunn: As for the future of RPR, we are always upgrading our equipment, and our goal is to move to Sirius XM radio when the Lord tells us it is the right time. Our goal is to spread the Gospel to as many people around the world as we can, country style.



Easley: There seems to be new excitement and interest in the Christian Country genre. Why do you think this is the case, and what has contributed to its new rising?

Nunn: I think the excitement comes from all the great music that we have coming down the pike now. As long as we stay true to the country side of it and not drift from it, I believe that it will continue to grow. For me, a great Christian Country song should have the true country sound with a fiddle and a steel, and with a lyric that



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The McKay Project: *More than just a duet*

By Debbie Seagraves

Out in Columbus, Miss., you will find a married couple who knows what it means to have a second chance. The McKays have a country sound and an encouraging message that resonates with their audience, a musical adventure they began a year after they were married. Known as the McKay Project – since they refer to themselves as a “work in progress” – Dennis and Leslie McKay are more than just a duet. They are rapidly becoming a force for the Lord in the world of Christian Country music.

“Dennis comes from a very musical family,” says Leslie. “Dennis grew up in the back of a tour bus with his family group, the McKay Family. In the late (1960s) and early 70s, they were an evangelistic team that traveled around the country singing and playing Gospel Music while his dad preached. However, he walked away from God, church and anything religious for many years and played with blues and southern rock bands and indulged in everything that goes along with that lifestyle.”

Leslie was a farm girl, brought up with sacred music and

part of the Williams Sisters, making the rounds of the churches in the region for three years.

“You can imagine when Dennis and I got together, it was a diverse collection of musical styles,” Debbie remembers. “We often joke that Dennis had to teach me how to sing with the radio, because I had never done any country, blues, or rock style music. I’m still working on it. Like Dennis, I grew up in church, knew all the things to say and do, and got good at playing social Christian for many years, but my lifestyle and choices didn’t represent Christ.”

After the couple married, Leslie opened her heart to Jesus, and Dennis repented of his ways. There was a major change in their lives, and they began a new musical ministry.

“Between the two of us, we had participated in a lot of drugs, alcohol and sex, caused a lot of pain and disappointment for those we loved, and lived openly rebellious lives toward God,” Leslie shares. “We thought all

we wanted to do was write songs and perhaps someone could use them.

“We were contacted by a ladies group in Arkansas that knew my sister and wanted to know if we would come and do music for their Saturday meeting. So, we did, and that was the beginning of McKay Project. It has



been six years since that first outing. We now have a bus, work on bookings, travel around the country, load and unload equipment, sing and play instruments, and share the Word as well as the amazing grace that God has shown to us.”

Charting songs, nominations for various awards and winner of the International Country Gospel Music Association (ICGMA) Duo of the Year have been proof that audiences and peers recognize the talents of this hard-working couple.



“The awards and the charting songs are great, but our biggest reward has come from the other ministries and people that we have been blessed to partner with and



help to advance the kingdom of God,” says Leslie. “We have met some wonderful Godly people serving in the churches around the country. We love going into churches and count it an honor to be entrusted

with a pastor’s platform to share our music and our testimony.”

McKay Project often plays at non-traditional venues.

“We have had the opportunity to share our Gospel Music at secular festivals, RV parks, Six Flags and even Hard Rock Café,” Leslie points out. “Our most recent partnership is with various ministries to truck drivers across the nation. It is exciting, and we look forward to what God has in store next.”



The country couple has quite a few irons in the fire. In addition to McKay Project, they operate Studio 115A, a



teaching and recording studio.

“There has been a lot of good music of all genres come out of Studio 115A over the years – country, southern rock, Gospel, blues, jazz, instrumentals, bluegrass, folk ... a little bit of everything,” Leslie says. “We have had the opportunity to meet and work with some incredibly talented musicians. Studio 115A is a full-service recording studio, and we welcome folks of all musical styles.”

McKay Project also has a Christian record label called M.A.C. Records (McKay Audio Company Records) with two divisions – Magnolia Records for the Southern Gospel and Contemporary Christian artists and Route 82 Records for the Christian Country and Christian folk artists.

“We started the label because we saw a lot of good Christian artists with great ministries, and no one knew about them,” Leslie explains. “Many of the artists weren’t sure how to go about recording a CD, releasing a song to radio, or making contacts, and we wanted to help guide them.

“The M.A.C. Family is a small group, and we take our

time and pray a lot when we are considering adding an artist to the label. Most of our M.A.C. Records artists have had songs in the Christian Country and/or Southern Gospel charts, and many have won awards. We have a vested interest in seeing our artists reach their ministry goals, and we are proud of those that represent M.A.C. Records.”

The McKay Project is a busy couple who use every avenue available to reach out with the love of Jesus. Through singing, recording, teaching and playing, Leslie and Dennis are dedicated to use their days fully for the furthering of the Kingdom of God. Their lives have truly been altered 100 percent by the Lord.

“God is the God of second chances,” Leslie emphasizes. “There isn’t anything that you can do to make God stop loving you. No one is too messed up that God can’t or won’t clean you up and turn your life around. He loves you and is waiting to work a miracle in your life if you will only ask Him and surrender to Him. He did it for us, and He can and will do it for you.”





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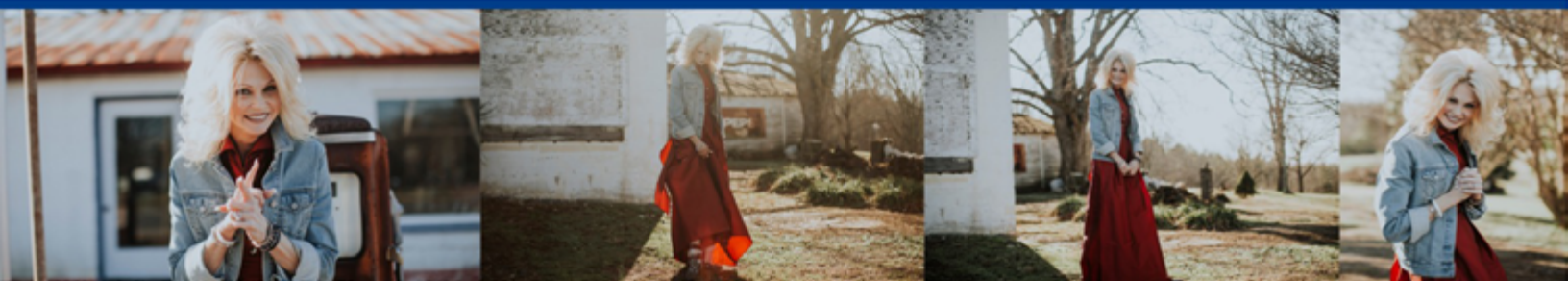
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TOP 40

CHRISTIAN COUNTRY SONGS

- 1 Bruce Hedrick - Wingin' It
- 2 Christian Davis - He Can't Stop Loving You
- 3 Justin Todd Herod - That's What Jesus Would Do
- 4 Taylon Hope - Showin' My Roots
- 5 HighRoad - We Are Broken
- 6 Michael Lee - God's Country
- 7 Buddy Jewel - I'm There
- 8 Steve Bridgmon - Angels By Another Name
- 9 Austin Zimmer - Quicksand
- 10 Chuck Day - I Love You
- 11 Ava Kasich - Looking Back
- 12 Debbie Bennett - He's Coming Back
- 13 Mike Manuel - Where's the Family?
- 14 Appointed 2 - Secret Weapon
- 15 Ronnie Horton - For You and Me
- 16 Arenos - Never Let Me Down
- 17 Butch Tinker - That's What It's All About
- 18 Brent Harrison - Follow Your Heart Home
- 19 Tommy Brandt II - Can't You See
- 20 Arkin Terrell - If This is All There Is
- 21 The Wards - Bible Revival
- 22 Tony Bates - Ordinary Joe
- 23 Karen Harris - Don't You Think Its Time

- 24 Shellem Cline - Why Can't Christians Share The Love of Christ
25 Johnny Rowlett - Where I'm Going
26 Debbie Seagraves - We're Not Gonna Walk, We're Gonna Run
27 Hillary Scott - Beautiful Messes
28 Kevin Rowe - Heaven Above
29 McKay Project - Taking Me Home
30 Eternal Vision - A Fathers Prayer
31 Charlie Griffin - Jesus Take A Hold
32 Chuck Hancock - Mustard Seed Faith
33 Lisa Daggs - Well Worn
34 Kali Rose - What's A Valley
35 Bev McCann - You Are Welcome Here
36 Chris Golden - On The Sunny Banks
37 Bradley Walker - Sinners Only
38 Jerry Branscomb - Hug 'Em While You Can
39 Peter Christie - On Grace I Stand
40 Tammy Renee - Dreams

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YOUNGER PERSPECTIVE

Logan Peck

BY ERIN STEVENS

A word from Erin...

It's all about variety here in the wonderful world of Younger Perspective, from fan-favorite vocalists, to musicians, to producers and arrangers and beyond. I thought, to add to the diversity, it would be fitting to bring you someone who pens some of the songs that you've heard. Maybe you're even humming along to some of them while you're reading these words. Songwriter Logan Peck, son of the ever-talented Rebecca Peck is today's man of the hour. Let's get to know this writer of songs a little better ...

Erin Stevens: Give the readers some insight into your background growing up in a musical home.

Logan Peck: There was always music in my house. Our spare bedroom has been a demo recording studio for as long as I can remember. I just grew up learning how to use the stuff and play the music. I started playing guitar at seven (years old) and continued from there.

Stevens: When did you discover your knack for writing?

Peck: I was a decent writer in school, and I think that had a lot to do with it. English came naturally to me, and I started writing my first songs in high school. One of those songs ended up getting recorded, and I was asked to sing another one for my high school. So, it came pretty quickly.

Stevens: At what age did you write your first song? What was it about?

Peck: I was probably 16, and it was about a girl, of course. Very soon after that I started writing worship songs though.

Stevens: How did you and your wife meet? Tell us a little more about Lexi.

Peck: My wife and I met in high school and dated for most of it. She is an amazing artist and baker.

Stevens: Who would be your top three dream people to co-write with?

Peck: If I didn't think I would ruin them, I would choose James Taylor, Andrew Peterson, and of course my mom – Rebecca Peck.

Stevens: What does your ideal songwriting scenario look like – place, atmosphere, type of caffeine, etc.?

Peck: Some place pretty boring without too many distractions. Probably a place in the woods, or at least somewhere fairly secluded.

Stevens: Where do you draw your creative inspiration from?

Peck: Most of my inspiration of music comes from the words I want to say and how to best sing them. Most of my inspiration of words comes from playing with words. Whenever I read or hear words, I usually repeat them in my head and start to play with them. I'll make puns out of them, rhyme things with them, or turn them into other words that sound similar. I usually do it because I think it's funny, but they can turn into good lines for songs too.





Stevens: Who are some of the artists we may know in Southern Gospel that have recorded your songs?

Peck: I've been blessed to have songs recorded by the Kingdom Heirs, the Kingsmen, the Whisnants, and the Old Time Preachers Quartet just made one of my songs their new single.

Stevens: So far in your career, what song holds the most meaning to you personally? Where did its idea originate?

Peck: I wrote a song years ago called "Walls In My Heart." I've never played it for anyone, but I'll occasionally go back and revisit it. It's just an honest cry to God about a desire to get past the walls in my heart that keep me from doing right. It's a lot like Romans 7, and it means a lot to me. It really came out of a true prayer to God, and all the songs that I write that have meaning to me come from that place.

Stevens: At the end of the day, what message do you hope to convey through the lyrics God has gifted you to pen?

Peck: Every song is different for me, and through it, I hope to say what God would have me to say and ultimately bring glory to Him and joy to us through all of my songs.

Closing thoughts from Erin Stevens...

It's been said before that music can touch a person in a way that the spoken word may not be able to reach. Peck, and

many such as himself, are equipping singers to share this gospel message in ways that a lost soul might be willing to hear. The words don't have to be lofty, and the message may be simple. But if Jesus is at the heart of the matter, then that is what matters most. Perhaps you're a product of a life that's been changed through the power of music. Thanks again to Peck for penning such praise-worthy songs.

And that's my take on it.

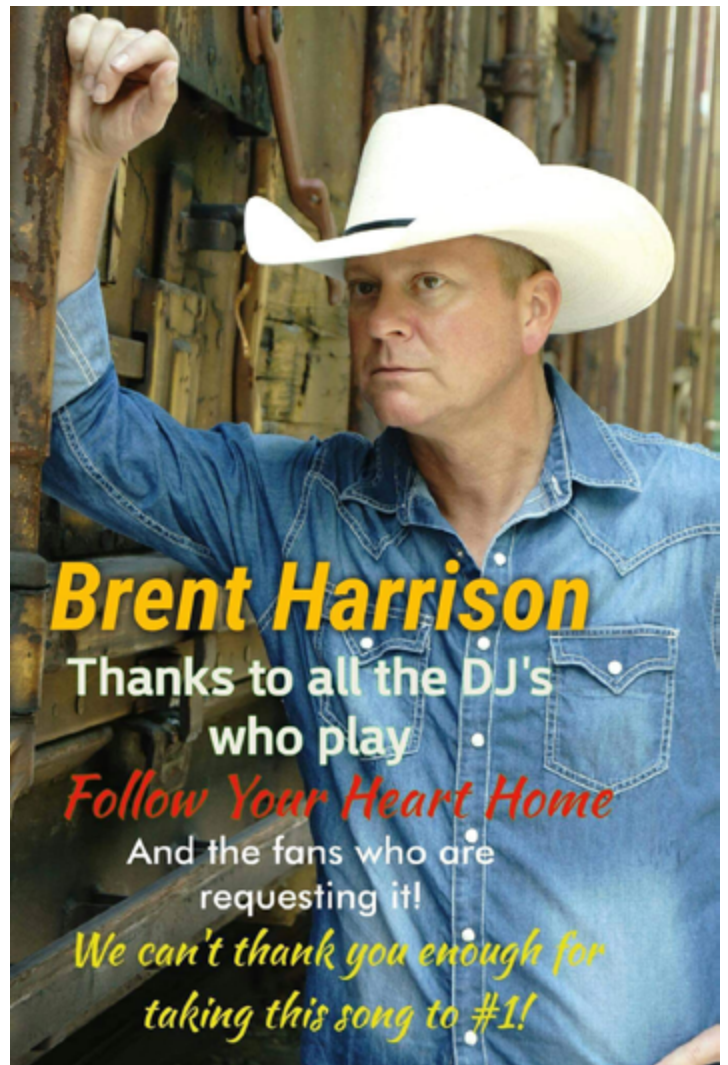
Until next month, Scoops fans.

Connect with Erin:

Twitter – @photosforkeeps

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Who would you like to see Erin interview next?



A Look Through The Lens of Craig Harris:

Feat. Greater Vision, Hoppers, Goodman Revival

Photographs by Craig Harris



SGNScoops was on hand at several Southern Gospel Music concert events recently. Enjoy the images of Greater Vision, The Hoppers, Triumphant, Goodman Revival, and many more. Greater Vision was in concert at Russell Springs First Baptist Church in Russell Springs, Ky., on July 8.

The Hoppers appeared at Center Point General Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tenn., on July 9.

Many of the top artists were in attendance as Bill Bailey and Josh Franks presented Jackson Sings the Gospel, which was held at the Carl Perkins Civic Center in Jackson, Tenn., from July 12-15.





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By Leslie McKay

Vernon Alabama's Gospel Music Weekend Update

September means football to many folks, especially in Alabama, but to the folks in Vernon, it also means Vernon Alabama's Gospel Music Weekend 2017. This is the weekend that more than 20 gospel artists from all over the country – soloists, duos, trios, quartets, family groups, musicians, and even a comedian – will gather to present two, free evening concerts featuring some of the best artists in Christian music.

“Last year’s event was just fun,” says Dennis McKay of M.A.C. Records. “I think the event is the best-kept secret in Gospel Music, but we want



folks to know about this secret and want them to come to Vernon, Ala., on Sept. 8-9. We want them to experience the music, worship, and fellowship that makes this

such a great event.”

Some of the artists appearing include: the Coffmans, Hope's Journey, Ava Kasich, the McKay Project, Pastor Pudge, Purpose, Debbie Seagraves, Chronicle, Day 3, the Connells, the Drummond Family, and many more.



Vernon Alabama's Gospel Music Weekend will be held at the Vernon City Auditorium. There will be a free concert starting at 6 p.m. on Friday and at 5:30 p.m. on Saturday. There will be a songwriter's seminar on Saturday, Sept. 9, at 10 a.m. led by Dr. Jeff Steele.



Steele is a writer, author, pastor, conference speaker, the owner and founder of the award-winning group the Steeles, and the owner of his own publishing company. He has written or co-written 17 No. 1 songs in Gospel Music. Steele will talk about songwriting, how to get your songs published, and how royalties work. The fee for the songwriting seminar is \$25 per person. Go to www.squareup.com/store/mckayproject under the events tab to register.



Through social media, folks have seen the fun had at Vernon Alabama's Gospel Music Weekend, and they say, "Hey, I want to come to Vernon." However, they always follow it up with, "Where is Vernon?" It is a wonderful town with southern charm, where you can find historical bed and breakfasts in the area and a number of restaurants with great food.

"We are excited about Vernon Alabama's Gospel Music Weekend. It is a great event for our community and we are thankful for what it means to the city. We are happy to welcome all the artists and visitors to Vernon for this weekend of fun. If you like gospel music, we hope to see you in September," commented Glenn Crawford, Vernon's Mayor.

If you are looking for lodgings, we recommend Willow Bend, a bed and breakfast just six miles outside Vernon.



Call Dot Howard at 205-695-6743 for reservations. For accommodations and/or to park your RV, check out the Tin Top Inn and RV Park in Fayette, Ala.

To register for the songwriter's seminar or for more information on Vernon Alabama's Gospel Music Weekend 2017, contact

M.A.C. Records by calling 662-312-4146 or 662-889-2829, or by e-mailing info@macrecords.net. You can also contact SGNScoops by calling 360-933-0741.



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The Akins

By Robert York

David Akin, a man called of God, is a preacher, musician, singer and father of three boys. His journey started 30 years ago when God called his name while he was leading praise and worship from a piano at his home church, Harp's Crossing Baptist in Fayetteville, Ga.. For a few years, he worked with preaching evangelists, leading choirs and singing special music. When his boys became three, five and seven, God laid it on his heart to go out on his own and form a family ministry. The Akins immediately started singing, never had any stage fright, and never looked back.

Some years earlier, David had been with a friend who had lost his dad, a well-known evangelist that had traveled worldwide. That night, as he watched the tears run down his friend's face, he felt compelled to go to his room, where he fell on his knees and asked God not to let him be the one who travels the world and doesn't get to spend time with his children.

"I believed that I could win the whole world to Jesus, but if I didn't have time for my own, I would have messed up on the most important thing that God put me

here to do," David says. "That night, I know that God heard a brokenhearted dad's prayer. My boys began to show interest in singing and playing musical instruments and began to flourish at an amazing rate. Only God could have done what was done in our family, and I give Him all the glory."

In 1990, the Akins sang their first song in public. David performed with his sons – Davey, who played bass, Nick and Eli. After 19 years, God called Davey and led him to leave the ministry and go to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.





If God hadn't led them into the ministry what would they be doing?

"Who knows ... I am a do-it-yourselfer," David shares. "I love taking on a project, doing research and completing it. I'm sure there would have been plenty of things that I might have tried if God had not chosen me for this."

Nick would probably record other people in their recording studio. God has really blessed him with an amazing

"I always want my kids to be exactly where God wants them to be," David says. "Davey was feeling that God wanted him to work with men hooked on pornography and (warn) young men the dangers of pornography. We don't feel like we lost a bass player but that we gained another minister going out from our family."

The Akins' ministry continues with David, Nick and Eli, singing and playing many instruments, leading revivals and concerts. Eli and his wife write almost all of the original songs that the group records. Their latest recording, "Eyes on the Road," includes 10 songs written by this talented couple. It is scheduled to be released on Aug. 27 at the Akins Harps Homecoming at Harp's Crossing Baptist Church in Fayetteville.

David confesses that with all of the concerts the group is doing, there is always an embarrassing moment on stage. At one concert, he realized in the middle of their first song that his fly was open. He couldn't even turn around because the choir was behind backing them up. He finally found the perfect opportunity to accidentally-on-purpose drop his mic so that he could quickly close his zipper.

"I don't think that it was successful, people noticed anyway," he admits.

ability to hear things in the mix-downs that no one else can hear. He would continue writing songs also.

Eli is a jack of all trades. He not only plays almost every instrument that he picks up, but he has built several guitars that he plays on stage and is an amazing photographer. He also would like to have his own restaurant some day as he loves cooking and smoking meat.

David is currently writing a book entitled "You've Brought Us This Far." It is about his life and family and all the miracles that God has performed over the years to bring them to this point. He hopes to finish it someday. Nick records young artists from time to time, and Eli and his wife Whitney shoot photos and videos for





realtors in Atlanta to assist with home sales.

Being Bill Gaither fans, they would like to sing on a Gaither video and share a meal with him. Dave said he would want his kids and the world to be able to say that David Akin was the same off stage as he was on stage, like their song, "My Stage Was an Altar."



"I recently had the opportunity to share a conference with the Akins," Dr. Jerry Vines says. "My, what a blessing this talented father and young men are. They play many instruments and sing beautifully. But, most important, they sing to the heart. We are in great need of musicians who are not only musically superior, but (who are) also spiritually sensitive. The Akins are both. If you ever have the opportunity, please hear them and use them in your meetings."

Photographs courtesy of the Akins and Robert York.

Charlie Griffin

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

1. Browders - Put It Into God's Hands
2. Triumphant Quartet - Chain Breaker
3. Joseph Habedank - Here He Comes
4. Bowling Family - Praise God He's Alive
5. Whisnants - Joy In The House
6. Tribute Quartet - God Of The Storms
7. Kingsmen - They Don't Know (What The Lord Can Do)
8. The Steeles - Meet Me There
9. Guardians - Packin' Up
10. Hoppers - Life Is Good
11. Brian Free and Assurance - He Will Carry You
12. Freemans - It Still Takes The Blood
13. 11th Hour - Ain't No Bones
14. Pruitt Family - Jesus Built This Church On Love
15. LeFevre Quartet - He Was There
16. The Isaacs - Rocks
17. The Perrys - Cry No More
18. Kingdom Heirs - Never Made A Promise
19. Jeff and Sheri Easter - More Than Enough
20. Old Time Preacher's Quartet - Wavin' This Old World Goodbye
21. Greater Vision - Still
22. Amber Nelon Thompson - Give It To Jesus
23. The McKameys - For The Record
24. Zane and Donna King - Beautiful Ever After
25. Hyssongs - Let The Hallelujahs Ring
26. Lauren Talley - I Hear A Song
27. Legacy Five - In The Hands Of A Carpenter
28. The Williamsons - I've Got To Tell Somebody
29. Wilburn and Wilburn - Living Proof
30. Mylon Hayes Family - It's Not A Problem For The Answer
31. Collingsworth Family - Gotta Get To Jesus

32. Erwins - He's Still Alive
33. Ernie Haase and Signature Sound - Give Me Jesus
34. The Coffmans - I Will Fear No Evil
35. Soul'd Out Quartet - Holy Spirit Come
36. Pine Ridge Boys - There's A Fountain
37. Dallas Rogers - Chasin'
38. Sunday Drive - I Thank You
39. Lore Family - Because of Grace
40. Terry Collins - Jesus Make A Way
41. Bates Family - Ready Or Not
42. The Old Paths - Tangled In The Middle
43. Battle Cry - I'm Amazed
44. The Page Trio - Perfect Redeemer
45. Shellem Cline - Why Can't Christians Share The Love Of Christ
46. The Bowling Sisters - He Sees What We Don't
47. Bless'd Ministries - Come To The Cross
48. John Whisnant - Had It Not Been
49. The Villines Trio - Elijah
50. Mark Bishop - That's When It's Time To Pray
51. Christian Davis - He Can't Stop Loving You
52. The Journeys - I Can Smile
53. Jim Brady Trio - God Is With Me
54. Jordan Family Band - My God Is Faithful
55. Steve Ladd - All Things Are Possible God
56. Ivan Parker - Walk My Way
57. The Spiritual Voices - Love That Led To Grace
58. Surrendered - You Don't Know The Half Of It
59. Mark Trammell Quartet - My Faith Still Holds
60. ReJeana Leeth and New Grace - Thank God For My Christian Home



61. Georgia - I've Been To The Bottom
62. Chronicle - Where Did The Wind Go
63. Summit Trace - You Love Me Anyway
64. Down East Boys - Somebody Left The Door Wide Open
65. Southern Raised - Instead
66. Exodus - God Of Always And Never
67. Michael Combs - That Same Hand
68. The Millers - Take A Moment and Live
69. Calebs's Crossing - I Promise You
70. The Sharps - Endless Day
71. Cana's Voice - Heavenly Father
72. Canton Junction - When He Was On The Cross
73. The Diplomats - Let Your Light Shine
74. Parson's Redeemed - Everything Is Going To Be Alright
75. Messiah's Call - Hope For The Day
76. King James Boys - Somebody Prayed For Me
77. Jonathan Dale - I'm Still Standing
78. Austin and Ethan Whisnant - Steppin' Out On A Limb
79. Sneed Family - I've Never Seen A Promise
80. Karen Peck and New River - Hope For All Nations
81. Soul's Harbor - Saying Goodbye
82. Cody McCarver - Rise Up
83. Lore Family - Joyous News
84. Matt Linton - Now I'm A Christian
85. Lindsey Graham - A Little More Love
86. New Ground - Make It
87. Mercy's Well - Thanks To You
88. Purpose - Trust Him
89. Gibson's - No Wonder
90. Daniel's Purpose - Jesus Loved Us To Death
91. The Browns - Aim Higher
92. Sons Of The Father - I'm Ready
93. Misty Freeman - A Day In The Life Of Jesus
94. Three Bridges - Livin' In The Lion's Den
95. Second Half Quartet - Gonna Shout All Over Heaven
96. Matt Felts - Trust Me With The Trial
97. The Bibletones Quartet - Portrait of Love
98. Spoken 4 - Lay It Down
99. Goulds - Where Are The Voices
100. Eric and Laura Ollis - I Won't Compromise



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Living Proof: A Look at

Covered by Love

By Justin Gilmore

Covered By Love is a relatively new trio in the Southern Gospel field. This family group based in Ohio is steeped in tradition and faith in Christ. Gospel Music has been a major part of this family, and now the Smith family is sharing its faith with the world. The exciting new group is comprised of Rhonda Smith and her sons Cody (age 17) and Ethan (15).

"I began singing in church in October of 2007 when I was seven years old," Cody says. "My desire to sing began much earlier. At age 18 months, in 2001, I happily followed on stage the Narrow Way Singers comprised of my grandparents, Larry and Mary Van Meter, and my aunt, Roseanna Neal Adkins. My brother, Ethan Smith, soon followed singing in March

of 2009 at the age of seven.

"In January of 2016, at the age of 14, Ethan answered the call to preach God's word wherever He leads him. My mother soon after heard the call from God that the work He wanted us to do was sing for Him."

Now the group travels across the country in full-time ministry spreading the love of Christ to all who will hear it.

At just 17 years old, Cody has a maturity and soul to his voice that is sure to delight audiences and listeners. Ethan is following in his brother's footsteps vocally, which – at 15 years old – is only going to get



better. Rhonda's tender alto rounds out the trio's unique yet classic sound.

According to Cody, this sound was inspired by several of their favorite artists – including the McKameys, The Paynes, and the Hinsons – as well as Rhonda's parents, Larry and Mary Van Meter. These veteran singers of 50-plus years have been the main influence on the trio's sound, which is classic yet modern. Each vocalist has great range and natural vocal ability that allows for more versatility.

These enthusiastic harmonies can be heard on their latest recording, "God Wants You," which features songs written by Mike Payne, Bill Schell, and Randy Shafer.

"It is truly a collection of message music," Cody explains. "The project was produced by John Darin Rowsey and engineered by Dan Ward at Hitmaker Studio in Wheelersburg, Ohio." This traditional Southern Gospel recording includes

many great songs, including the group's current single, "I'll Lay My Crown."

"Cody is featured on this ballad with his mature, soulful voice," Rhonda points out. "A special addition to this song is guest bass vocalist Dan Ward, which is a dear friend to the group. Dan has a rich history in Southern Gospel Music and is sure to delight fans."

Another standout track on the album is "I'm Living Proof," which expresses the group's core mission. This powerful ballad features Cody and Rhonda and tells of the transforming power of Jesus Christ. Some of the lyrics say, "He can make a change in you, just look at me. I am living proof. I am living proof that His word is true."

Although this trio hasn't been on the road for very long, they have already made some cherished memories. Of course, being family makes for some fun travel adventures. While these adventures are important, it is the ministry moments that make this worth it for the trio.

"The most memorable and meaningful encounter was when an elderly woman in her 80s came to church in her wheelchair to hear us sing," Cody recalls. "Although she was weak and frail, she waved her hand and praised the Lord while we sang and gave her testimony. We later discovered that this service was the last one she attended, for God had



called her home.

“Our prayer is that the audience will come to the realization that there is hope, life and love in Jesus Christ. We present Christ by being a living example of what He can do in your life. We express the hope we have in Jesus Christ and the miracles He has done in our lives and that He can do the same for you. Hebrews 11:6, ‘But without faith it is impossible to please Him. For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.’”



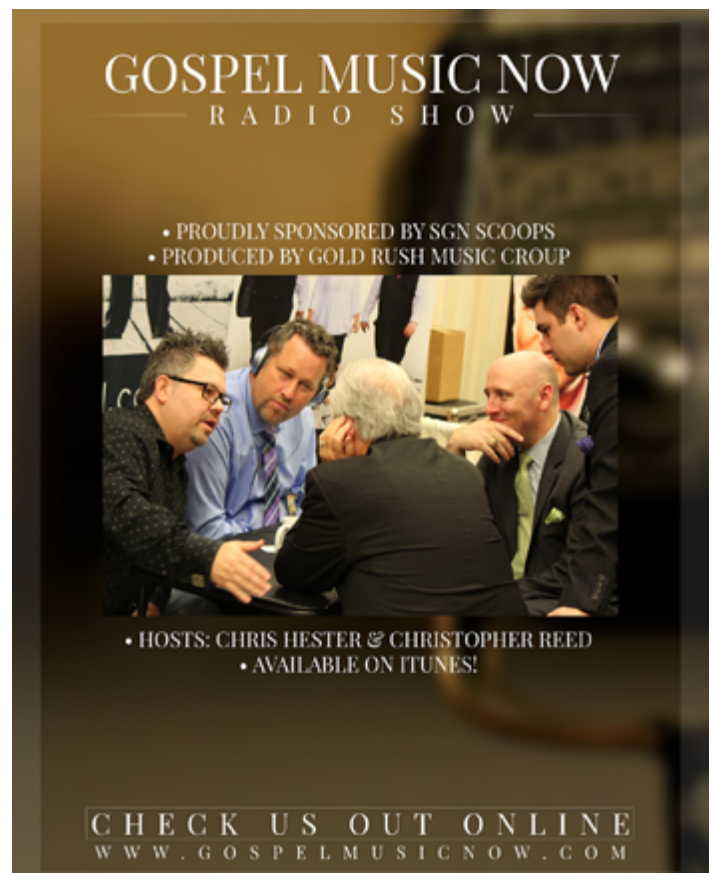
Their mission is also expressed in the timely hymn “Dust on the Altar,” which encourages us – in these trying times – to spread God’s love throughout the world. Kindness, goodness and the love of Christ will never go out of style or be old fashioned.

Covered by Love is a group that is an example of what the Lord can do in lives that are devoted to Him.

“We are living proof,” Cody points out. “We walk by faith daily, trusting and believing that God will use



our ministry to see victories in people’s lives, whether it be salvation, healing, deliverance from addictions or restoring what Satan has destroyed. We trust and believe that God will supply our every need as we travel and minister across the United States as our ministry expands.”



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Randall Reviews It - August 2017

by Randall Hamm

It's the month of August. Once upon a time, there would be another month to go before schools were in session. But with the passing of time, many schools now begin the first week of August.

So with that in mind, school is back in session, and I am turning in this month's assignment of new CD reviews. One group who goes back in time for their lineup, an established group with a new male vocalist and a north-of-our-border Country Gospel group you're going to love.

The Inspirations, Karen Peck and New River, and the McGuires from Canada are all the subjects in my review this month. Enjoy.

As always, if you enjoy my reviews, get the music wherever you get good Gospel music.



Inspirations

"The One in the Water"

Producer: Jeff Collins

2017 Horizon Records

Songs:

The One In The Water (Kyla Rowland); I Want To Be Like My Lord (Jimmy Jones); I Know Him (Gary Epperson); When Jesus Turns My Prison Into My Shouting Ground (Leonard Fletcher); Shall Not Be Moved (Public Domain, arr. Inspirations); Teaching Me To Fly (Karen A. Dyess); I Am So Blessed (Matthew Browder, Tommy Browder); We Are Christians (Tracy L. Jones); Thank God For Preachers (Larry Whitehead); Jesus, They're Offended At Your Name (James M. Jones)

Imagine if you jumped in a time machine and vaulted yourself from 1972 to 2017. If you're an Inspirations fan, you'd think that nothing's changed. Well, there are no time machines, and there have been changes in the Inspirations from 1972 to now; but if you loved the

1972 lineup of the Inspirations, you'll love this CD, "The One In The Water."

Earlier this year, Martin Cook retired from the group and sold the Inspirations to longtime former member and tenor Archie Watkins. Also, bass singer Joe Brown left the group as well. Archie had been touring with other former Inspirations as "Smokey Mountain Reunion," and those members have now rejoined the Inspirations.

The Inspirations are: Matt Dibler on lead and the only holdover from the last lineup, Archie Watkins on tenor, Eddie Deitz on baritone and Marlin Schubert on bass. The only missing piece from the 1972 lineup is Ron Hutchins at lead, but he still works for the Inspirations as their webmaster.

I was curious about how this new lineup would sound, but I needn't have worried. Their mountain sound is still there and even a few songs that are a little different for the Inspirations in sound, actually are quite good.

The lead-off single is the title track "The One In The Water," with strong vocals from Archie and that familiar Inspirations sound making you feel like you're there at the baptism of Jesus. Marlin Schubert has never sounded better and is featured on the classic "I Want To Be Like My Lord."

The song "Teaching Me To Fly" I hope will be a single release. This song features Archie at his best on this story song of God watching us mature. One of my favorite baritones over the years has been Eddie Deitz and he's featured on "Thank God For Preachers." Eddie has always had a familiar voice I could pick out anywhere and here he really sings his heart out.

For us Inspirations fans, this is a dream come true of the reunion of the classic Inspirations.

Also returning from the last lineup is Roland Kesterson who has shifted to the band and does occasional specials and is featured on the song "When Jesus Turns My Prison Into My Shouting Ground." Also Lucas Vaught remains as piano player.

Overall, this CD lives up to how I thought it would sound. Deitz, Schubert and Watkins still have it and I can't wait to hear more from this lineup.

Visit the Inspirations here www.facebook.com/

groups/333076353490571/ and get a copy of the new cd here www.theinspirations.com/Prod_Insp_cds.htm.

Strongest songs: "The One On The Water," "He's Teaching Me To Fly," "I Want To Be Like My Lord"



Karen Peck and New River

"Hope For All Nations"

Producer: Wayne Haun

2017 Daywind Records

Songs:

Love Will Never Give Up (Jeff Bumgardner, Karen Peck Gooch, Joel Lindsey); Hope For All Nations (Lee Black, Karen Peck Gooch, Benji Cowart); Who He Is, What He Does (Lee Black, Jason Cox, Kenna West); The Reason (Lee Black, Karen Peck Gooch, Wayne Haun); Gotta Be Saved (Karen Peck Gooch, Joseph Habedank, Wayne Haun); I'll Keep On Praying (Karen Peck Gooch, Daniel Doss, Wayne Haun, Kenna West); The River (Dave Clark, Karen Peck Gooch, Michael Farren); Victory Is Mine (Lee Black, Gerald Crabb, Karen Peck Gooch); God's Got A Blessing (Lee Black, Wayne Haun); All You Need (Tim Lovelace, Nathan Woodard); I'll Know I'll Be There (Dave Clark, Karen Peck Gooch, Wayne Haun); I'm Gonna Love My Neighbor (Karen Peck Gooch, Rodney Griffin) ft. the Isaacs, Triumphant (StowTown Records), Greater Vision, Jeff and Sheri Easter, the Bowling Family, and the Whisnants

Karen Peck and New River releases a new CD every two years, like clockwork. Since 2015 and the "Pray Now" CD, Jeff Hawes has left and new male vocalist Ricky Braddy has joined. Every time when the male vocalist leaves New River, I always say, Karen will never find anyone as good as the last one.

Well, Karen's done it again with Braddy and with the stepping up of Kari Gooch her daughter, Karen and New River have stepped it up a notch. "Hope For All Nations," is by far the best CD Karen and the group have recorded in 26 years. I must say the wait between "Pray Now" and "Hope For All Nations" was worth it.

The first single "Hope For All Nations," is already getting many spins on Gospel radio and many views for the concept video as well. The only hope we know is Jesus and He is the "Hope For All Nations".

One of my favorite songs on the CD features Kari and Ricky ("I'll Keep On Praying") on a 50s flavored song about faithfulness. The swamp guitar from "Revival" is back on "Gotta Be Saved" and this could be a single release.

Closing out the CD is a guest-filled song, "Gonna Love My Neighbor," with many special guests. This also has single written all over it.

Karen, Kari, Ricky and Susan have crafted a great CD from beginning to end. Not one bad cut on this one and no need to fast forward to the next song; the true mark of a great CD. Another Dove winning effort and another possible Grammy nomination for this CD. It can't get any better - or can it?

Visit Karen Peck and New River here www.facebook.com/KarenPeckNR/ and get a copy of the new CD here www.karenpeckandnewriver.com/catalog/.

Strongest songs: "Hope For All Nations," "Gonna Love My Neighbor," "Gotta Be Saved"



The McGuires

"Travelin' On"

Producer: Shane Roark

2017 Upper Room/Chapel Valley

Songs:

Red Hot Desire (Carroll McGruder); Baptism of Jesse Taylor (Dallas Frazier/Sanger Shafer); Family Bible (Walter Breeland/Paul Buskirk/Claude Gray); I'll Stand For Jesus (Don H Johnson); Secret Place (Steve Chapman); Traveling On (William Hunter); Address Change (Michael Wilson); It Won't Be Today (Shane Roark); Sometimes It Takes A Mountain (Gloria Gaither/Mark Mathes); It Came To Pass (Todd McGuire/Penny McGuire)

The McGuires, TD and his wife Penny, hail from Perth, New Brunswick, Canada. I first met them a few years ago at Chapel Valley's "Christmas In the Smokies." With the release of this album "Travelin' On", all the fine things that Canada has given us, has increased by one.

Although an album of standards, there is one new song written by TD and Penny, "It Came To Pass." As with all Chapel Valley recordings, the Chapel Valley Band and Shane Roark as producer, do their fine jobs. If you love Southern Gospel on the country side and laid back, this CD is for you. Plenty of steel guitar, fiddle and relaxed vocals make this CD a treat to listen to.

From the McGuires' cover of "Red Hot Desire," to their original song "It Came To Pass," DJ's and listeners will not hear a bad cut. I must say though, if you close your eyes, you just might think it's Tim McGraw on vocals and that's not a bad thing.

One of the standouts is a re-working of the Michael

Booth classic "Secret Room." It's given the country treatment and with a little rephrasing gives it a fresh new interpretation. Did I mention he (TD) sounds like Tim McGraw or possibly John Michael Montgomery?

Anyway you slice it, DJ's and fans looking for something new to listen to, or to spin on your station, give the McGuires a listen. You won't be sorry you did, nor will your listeners.

Visit the McGuires at www.facebook.com/themcguiresmusic1996/ and get a copy of the CD here www.mcguires.ca/music.

Strongest songs: "It Came To Pass," "Secret Room," "Family Bible"



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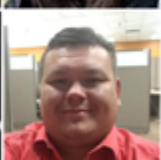
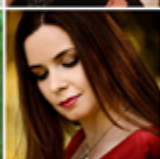
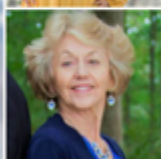
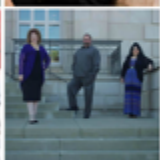
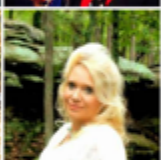
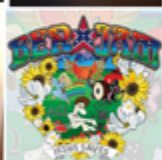
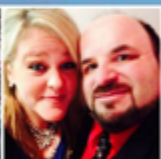
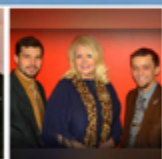
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Walking through fire but still

Bless'd



By Lorraine Walker

Death. Illness. A young mother gives birth to a child with congenital abnormalities. These kind of challenges can strike anyone at any time, but does it happen to a Christian Gospel Music group giving of their lives to further the Kingdom of God?

It's hard to believe sometimes that artists seen on stage or screen are real people with real problems. The group Bless'd Ministries – consisting of Kaleb Powell, Chase Murray, Sarah Murray and Ashley Edens – has faced the above challenges within a span of one year. Throughout this trial by fire, they kept on singing. To discover the secret of their determination, one must rewind to the formation of the group.

Bless'd Ministries was started in 2011. Powell and a friend performed for Christmas and immediately knew this was something God had orchestrated. The current formation of the group is now into their fourth year of singing together, united with a single mission.

“Our purpose has always been the same, serving through song,” says Sarah Murray. “We’ve sung in big churches, small churches, festivals, nursing homes, and even an auction house. But wherever God points, we go, because someone there may need to hear about who we serve and sing for.”

The members are seasoned singers, even though they are in their 20s, hitting the road with help from family and friends.

“We have had a ton of help from Chase’s dad, Chris Murray, who runs sound for us,” Sarah points out. “Shellem Cline has also been a great help and resource to our group.”

Cline – who calls their music a mix between the Collingsworth Family and the Taylors – adds, “I am so proud of them. I am helping them with the next project by helping to search for material, promote their music to radio and also doing the recording for them. They are a distinct sound group, and (their new CD) “Come to the Cross” will get anyone excited. They are a real Southern Gospel group and refuse to get caught up in the politics, but actually focus on winning souls for Christ, which in my eyes makes them true and real Gospel artists.”

The work in progress is the group’s third CD, consisting of original material that is very important to the members.

“The songs we choose to sing are songs we feel we can testify through and help others who may be facing their own struggles,” Sarah explains. “Bless’d, as a whole, has truly faced some struggles in the last year alone. We have faced the death of Kaleb’s grandfather, and Chase’s dad (Sarah’s father-in-law) becoming very ill, needing constant medical attention, and not being able to travel with us. Ashley also just had a beautiful baby girl who was born with club feet and has had to deal with some life changes as well.”

Powell adds, “My grandfather passed away on November 13, 2016, suffering from bladder cancer.”

Dealing with death in the family is never easy.

“With God’s help and the peace that He gives, knowing that my grandfather lived his life for the Lord, makes his death easier to cope with,” Powell shares. “I do not believe I will get over his death, but knowing that I will see him in heaven is a great peace to have.”

“My faith only grew stronger during this time. My prayer life has always been extremely important to me, not to only ask the Lord to do things in my life, but to thank Him for all the things He has and will do for me.”

Chase recalls the journey his father, Sarah’s father-in-law, has recently taken. A history of heart issues followed by divorce brought father and son close together. Then their world was shaken again.

“July 2016, my dad went in for a routine checkup with his doctor and was told his kidneys were only functioning at 12 percent and that he would need to be placed on peritoneal dialysis immediately,” Chase explains. “He did the at-home dialysis until December 2016, when we had to admit him into the hospital for fluid buildup. After that stay, he was switched to having blood dialysis at a center three days a week.

“This has proven to be a difficult time, but yet again, God has provided for us. He always has, and I know He always will. I have to admit that at times it was difficult to get up and sing with so much weighing on my mind, but many times, I felt as though the group was ministering to me while we sang. Many times it was difficult to make it through a song without bursting into tears, but that is when I felt the most ease, during those times.”



Illness and death of a close family member are trials that are experienced by many, but the fourth member of Bless’d Ministries faced a challenge more unique. Edens explains the day her world changed forever.

“We had a child born in March that was diagnosed with clubfoot at our 20-week anatomy scan,” Edens shares. “This came as a huge shock to us because we have two older kids without complications, and clubfoot is genetic. My family and I prayed for 18 weeks heavily that she would be born perfect without blemish. I remember when the doctor handed Landree to Josh ... my heart was crushed, because I could see her feet turned in. However, in that moment, God spoke to me and said, ‘I still have this, don’t give up on me.’”

“At two weeks old, she had casts applied from the hips



down. We went every week for five weeks to have the casts changed. The ladies of our church prayed from start to finish of each appointment. We could truly feel those prayers each and every time. Landree would lay down on the table and sleep as they re-casted her, or she would just laugh and smile. The doctor said she was the best patient he had ever had during castings. She is doing great now. Her feet are fully corrected, and she is in 23-hour-a-day braces to maintain the correction. The main thing that I have learned through this entire experience is that even when our plans don’t work out according to our plan, we still have to praise God through the storm because He is still there and still has a plan.”

Chase notes that even when plans change, the ability to keep walking through the hard times is indeed supernatural.

“My favorite verse is Isaiah 40:31 ... ‘But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint,’” Chase says. “This verse reassures me that my dad will always have strength because of his faith in the Lord.”



Sarah adds, “Through everything, God has proven to take care of each of us. We’ve faced struggles, but we have even more to thank Him for.”

Bless’d Ministries continues, through fire and storm, still thanking God ... and still blessed.



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Beckie Simmons is living a life-long Dream

By Charlie Griffin



Beckie Simmons and Glen Bates, a dynamic duo in Gospel Music.

In Southern Gospel Music, there are some iconic female vocalists, including Mom Speer, Vestal Goodman and Lily

Fern Weatherford to name a few. However, the behind-the-scenes list of female executives is sparse. Lou Hildreth and Faye Shedd have been involved in Gospel Music as agents and promoters. However, no lady has impacted Southern Gospel Music the way Beckie Simmons has to date. Her love affair with Gospel Music is heartfelt and genuine, and it started at a young age.

Simmons was active in the church where her dad and brother pastored.

“We all played instruments, sang and were very involved in the church full-time, with not only a church, but a daycare center, a printing shop, a radio program and a television show,” Simmons says. “I worked full time for the church and even taught piano lessons at the church.”

Simmons recalls the first concert she attended.

“I was featured on a local 30-minute organ show on the Southern Gospel station in our area, and one day the station manager called and asked if I would play the Hammond Organ 30 minutes prior to a Gospel concert the following week,” Simmons remembers. “I said yes. That concert featured the Rambos, the Oak Ridge Boys, J.D. Sumner and the Stamps, and the Downings. That concert I went to was promoted by Sonny Simmons. I

was hooked and just fell in love with the music.”

Sonny was from Columbus, Ohio, while Beckie hailed from Louisville, Ky. In time, Sonny and Beckie became what many would call the major power couple in the music business. They moved to Nashville for their concert promotions business, Masters Promotions. They set up shop in a borrowed, one-room office.

As the business grew, Masters Promotions evolved into a full promotions company and eventually a booking agency.

“It didn’t start out that way, but artist bookings grew out of the concert promotions,” Simmons explains. “It just happened.”

Eventually, a new name was chosen, and Century II Promotions became one of the premier companies booking Southern Gospel Music in the evolution and expansion years of Gospel Music. They relocated their office to Nashville’s famed Music Row. The Simmons were in the thick of things in the music world. Their agency expanded its talent roster to include all types of musical and entertainment artists. In doing so, the Simmons worked with some of the biggest names in the entertainment industry.

“Being a preacher’s kid, I loved the Gospel Music artists, while Sonny worked more with the country artists at that time,” Simmons shares. “It just worked for us.”

Sonny Simmons passed away in 2007, but his legacy lives on in those he touched over the years. For Sonny and Beckie Simmons, Century II Promotions was a work of family and love for the music and the artists.



Two southern gospel movers, Chris White of Crossroads/ Sonlite Music and Beckie Simmons of BSA Talent.

Over the years, Beckie Simmons became the face of Century II Promotions Gospel artists’ division, her first love, while working with Country Music leaders. She honed her craft by watching the greats of Gospel Music such as Les Beasley and Bob Brumley.

Absorbing their business acumen while mentoring her artists, Simmons paved the way for many aspiring artists.



Tim Lovelace and family with Beckie Simmons (center) and Todd Hames and his wife, Melinda.

This hard-working lady has taken virtually unknown musicians and developed them into some of the most well-known and best-selling Southern Gospel artists in the country. Included among the artists that she has worked with is Gold City, Heaven Bound, the Bowlings, the Crabb Family and a host of other talents. She was the first to book Karen Peck and New River, Jeff and Sheri Easter, and Chonda Pierce when Pierce was impersonating Minnie Pearl at Opryland.

“Being a (pastor’s kid), I have always wanted to be involved,” Simmons points out. “I even thought I was going to be a pastor’s wife at one time. But God had a different future for me. I am told I’m like a mom to the artists at BSA Talent. It just comes natural.”



The Southern Gospel Music Guild honored the lifetime achievements of Judy Nelon and Lou Hildreth, with Beckie Simmons positioned on left in black.

Over the years, she has been the recipient of many awards that honor her devotion and selfless work in Gospel Music. Among these, she received the Lou Hildreth Diamond Award in 2003 from SGNScoops.

In 2004, Simmons' life took another turn, one which included Glen Bates.

"I knew of Glen when he was with the Tennesseans," Simmons recalls. "We booked them at the time with Century II. In 2004, he came to (a large concert event), saw the BSA booth and stopped to say hello. He never said his name, just walked up and started talking. We chatted a few minutes, and he left. I tried to remember who he was and told some of my friends, 'I can't remember his name. I know him, but he is not from my world. He is from 'the other side.'"

Bates' love of music is rich. Bates sang with the Tennesseans, Downings and the Carole Lee Singers at the Grand Ole Opry. Louise Mandrell arranged for an audition with the Four Guys; he joined the group staying with them until 2000. During his last five years at the Opry, he was staff writer for Glen Campbell Music. He wrote Country Music, where he honed his songwriting craft. Then, as he began to write Gospel lyrics, he says the lines just flowed.

"It doesn't take long to know who really writes the music," Bates points out.

Today, Bates is an integral part of the Gospel Music scene. He heads BSA World Records while producing artists' music and writing songs.

In addition to being developing a relationship with Gospel Music, he developed one with Simmons as well.

"When I got back home, he called me at work," Simmons says. "In the conversation, I remembered that he was one of the Four Guys Quartet from the Grand Ole Opry. The first thing he asked me when he called was, 'Do you own a pair of tennis shoes and blue jeans?' I told him, 'Yes, but I seldom wear them.' After a day of flea markets and Dave's Ribs, I was falling head over heels. We started dating, and it wasn't long before he became my best friend."

They have been together ever since.

Since June 1997, Simmons has done what very few

people in her position have done even once ... she has put together yet another very successful second agency, BSA/Beckie Simmons Agency, which is one of the premier artist agencies in Southern Gospel Music. Simmons and her son Todd Hames partnered to start the agency.

"God knew exactly what I needed when Todd was born, because he does everything at BSA that I cannot do," Simmons points out. "He runs the company while I book and nurture our artists."

Her professional and administrative team includes son, daughter-in-law Melinda Hames, Dixie McKeithen, Matthew Hames, Judy Montgomery and Ann Smith. Each of those talented individuals bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to BSA.

Tenacity is one word that describes Simmons and her team. She is passionate, devoted and cares deeply about the growth and success of the artists she works with daily. Over the years, this writer has worked with Simmons in scheduling concerts for various groups and even closer when employed with the Singing Americans and Hallelujah Supper Club. Her work ethic is second to none, being determined to get the job done. Customer satisfaction is her priority.

At BSA, its goal is to get the Word out through song by bringing the artist and the promoter together smoothly and efficiently, and then get out of the way and let God do His work.

"We don't want to be conspicuous, but we do want to make the concerts go off without a hitch," Simmons explains. "The less the audience hears about us, the better we've done our job."



Glen and Beckie

So, if you ask Beckie and Glen how they wish to be remembered, Glen answer is ... "I want to be remembered as

a vessel."

Beckie's response is similar.

"The helping hand," she says. "Making a difference is the greatest reward on this earth."

Gospel Music is not just a business to Simmons. It is a way of life. It is family. Add those music artists to her family today, and you have 24 artists, 13 grandchildren, and a loving husband.

Life is full for a lady who is living and working the life-long dream in a music industry that she loves.



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Life is Short, *Live it to the Fullest*

By Logan Smith

I've learned a lot in the last few months about life. Many of you have kept up with my granddaddy. You've asked about him, prayed for him, come to visit, etc. It's meant the world to our family.

I sat by his bedside day in and day out while he was in ICU (intensive care unit) on and off of a ventilator. We'd have days where you thought things were looking up, and then, doctors would come in and recommend him going back on the ventilator for his lungs and body to heal. He coded twice ... scary stuff.

We prayed, cried, believed for a miracle, or asked God to take him because we didn't wanna watch him suffer. We knew that at 84, we had been blessed to have him so many years. I'd sit there and watch videos on my phone of him laughing with his family and pray, "God, I'd love to hear that laugh one more time, tell him I love him, go on one more road trip."

If you didn't know, Granddaddy has traveled with me on the road for the last five years. He's only missed a handful of dates in that time, so this was extremely difficult and hard for me to accept. Thankfully, I didn't have to. God wasn't ready for him. He still has work to do.

He spent 70 days away from home between his time in the hospital and the rehabilitation facility regaining strength. I got up this past Saturday morning at 6 a.m. to go pick him up from rehab. He had gained enough strength to go home. He was glowing from ear to ear.

While on the road, Granddaddy and I love listening to real Country Music ... George (Jones) and Tammy (Wynette), Conway (Twitty) and Loretta (Lynn), Dolly (Parton) and Porter (Waggoner) ... the good stuff. During this whole process, Granddaddy knew Rhonda Vincent and Daryle Singletary were set to release a duet record filled with real Country Music. He couldn't hardly wait. No one sings the good stuff anymore.

When I arrived at 7 a.m. to pick him up, I had their new record titled, "American Grandstand," in the CD player ready for him. I got him loaded in the car, turned it on, and he started to tear up and said, "I didn't think me and you would ever get to be in the car like this again, and listen to this good music, and spend this quality time together." I couldn't help but tear up with a heart full of gratitude. I realized at that time that I truly had a miracle in my car. It hit home.

My parents and I took him to Aiken, S. C., for his great granddaughter's first birthday party. It was surreal to watch him interact with his kids, grandkids, and great grandkids at the party, just thinking of all he had been through the last few months. I took him to church Sunday morning and watched as the whole congregation stood up and clapped when he walked in. It's totally a God thing. The whole situation.

I've been staying with him since he came home, and it's been an incredible couple of days. I was cooking dinner for us tonight, and Granddaddy comes in the kitchen



and says, "Move over. I'm gonna help you tonight."

It's so encouraging watching him do the things he's always done, watching him get back to normal a day at the time.

It's the little things. It's so easy to take the people you love the most for granted. Life is so short. I know I'm blessed to have a loving family that believes in me and supports me no matter what. I still have three of my four grandparents living at 20 years old. Not many people can say that. I have parents that after 26 years of marriage are still happy and in love. I could go on and on.

Hug the ones you love. Go out of your way to lend a hand. Say a few more "I love yous." Isn't that what life's about? After all, God is love. It has to break His heart with all the hate and crime that's going on in our world today. I read a statement the other day that stood out to me ... "It costs absolutely nothing to be a decent human." It's so true.

Remember that.

The purpose of this is to say ... I'm beyond blessed for this life God is allowing me to live. He never ceases to amaze me with the miracles He performs in front of us every day. Stay strong.

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singingnews



By Lorraine Walker

The 2017 Creekside Gospel Music Convention going to be an exciting event with great music, seminars and showcases for all who enjoy good Gospel Music. Creekside runs from Oct. 30 through Nov. 2 at the Smoky Mountain Convention Center in Pigeon Forge, Tenn. Tickets are free but must be reserved at creeksidegospelmusicconvention.com.

Most Creekside attendees love to stay at the Convention hotel, the Ramada Inn, for the convenience of just walking from their room to the Convention. However, accommodations are disappearing quickly, so those planning to attend should make their reservations now. Call and reserve your hotel room at 360-933-0741.

“I think one of the things that makes Creekside so unique is the atmosphere of worship,” says Kristen Stanton. “The artists are supportive of each other from the day showcases through the evening concerts and right through the bonding moments of midnight prayer. Even though everyone brings their own style, the commonality is that the artists want to see lives changed. It’s not just an event... it’s an experience!”

The Convention will begin on Monday with an open-air event and breakfast. Veterans will be honored with a free meal that morning. Showcases are held daily, and midnight prayer follows each evening concert. There will be a special breakfast with the Pine Ridge Boys on Wednesday and more events to be announced.

This year, Creekside will welcome more than 35 Gospel Music artists, including the Sneed Family, Mark209, Eagle’s Wings, the Williamsons, the Hyssongs, Jason Runnels, Hope’s Journey, the Shireys, Day 3, the Drummond Family, the Connells, the Chordsmen, the Berry Brothers and Steve Bridgmon in addition to Gospel Music Today and many more.

Special guests include the return of our friends, Dr. Jerry Goff and his wife Jan, who will be at Creekside for the entire convention. Goff will present this year’s honoree – Triumphant Quartet’s Eric Bennett – with a Life Achievement Award from SGNScoops Magazine in a special service on Monday, Oct. 30.

Eric Bennett, bass singing with the ever popular Triumphant quartet, is a former pastor who still has a pastor’s heart and has genuine compassion for both audience and artist alike. Bennett comments, “One of the highest achievements is to be honored by your peers. I am truly honored to receive the Life Achievement Award from the SGNScoops Magazine.”

Other guests include the Nelons, one of our spotlight artists for 2017. You won’t want to miss the award-winning music of this family group.

“It is a joy for the Nelons to be at Creekside this year,” Kelly Nelon Clark says. “We have been friends with (event organizer) Rob Patz for many years and can’t wait to see him and all of you there.”





Motivational speaker David Ring brings his presentation of resilience and hope during the evening concerts on Monday, Oct. 30, and Wednesday, Nov. 1.

Bass vocalist Pat Barker – who has been a part of the Mark Trammell Quartet and Second Half Quartet – will be there to lead the Pat Barker University, offering training from vocal coaching to stage presence. The PBU is available to artists and attendees for a nominal cost on a first-come, first-served basis. Please call Patz at 360-933-0741 or Vonda Easley at 256-310-7892 to reserve your seat today. The fee is \$25 per person.



The Board Of Directors of Creekside Gospel Music Convention have once again invited Charlie Sexton – along with his co-hosts, Troy and Tammy Burns – to present the ever-popular Red Back Revival segment on Thursday evening of the event. All of the artists at Creekside will gather on the stage to form a mass choir, singing out this time-honored songbook. Make your plans to join them for a power-packed evening of fun fellowship and high-energy music coupled with anointed lyrics.

2017 Diamond Awards

Voting for the 2017 Diamond Awards top 10 is now open on



the SGNscoops web site. Visit sgnscoops.com to select your favorites from the top 10 nominees. Fans, friends, artists and industry personnel are all invited to vote and to encourage their supporters to vote as well. To vote, visit www.sgnscoops.com/2017-diamond-awards.

The 2017 Diamond Awards will be held on Oct. 31 during

the Creekside Gospel Music Convention. Dr. Jerry and Jan Goff will serve as the guest hosts. The awards ceremony is a unique evening of recognizing the best in Gospel Music.

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We want you to be a Creekside Very Important Person. For only \$25, a VIP bracelet will be your entry into the preferred seating at each event, and you will also receive a Creekside gift bag and be the special guest at select backstage happenings. Purchase your VIP bracelet today from Easley by calling 256-310-7892 or by e-mailing at vonda@sgnscoops.com.

How you can be a part of Creekside

Do you have some free time either before the event or during that week? We are always looking for volunteers to help spread the news on social media, be an extra hand during the event, and also praying that this will be more than just an event. Pray for all attending that God will turn this week into an incredible experience for all. If you can become involved, contact Easley by e-mailing at vonda@sgnscoops.com.

Creekside Gospel Music Convention 2017 tickets can be reserved by visiting creeksidegospelmusicconvention.com. Accommodation specials at the Ramada Inn can also be obtained by calling 360-933-0741. For more information on tickets, lodging and special VIP tickets, contact Patz at 360-933-0741.





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Hyssongs

celebrate their No. 1



By Kelly Hyssong

The Historic Two Rivers Mansion, located in the rolling hills on the outskirts of Nashville, Tenn., was the site of the Hyssongs No. 1 radio party. On Tuesday, July 25, 2017, you could hear laughter and stories by Southern Gospel industry leaders echoing through the halls.

The Hyssongs single, “Let The Hallelujahs Ring,” came in No. 1 on both the SGNscoops July 2017 chart and the Singing News August 2017 chart.



Dell, Susan, and Richard Hyssong were excited to have their first No. 1 radio song. The afternoon festivities



were hosted by their record company, Chapel Valley, who also was celebrating their first No. 1 produced song.

The Hyssongs wanted those in attendance to know how much they appreciated each and every person involved in their ministry. As Richard stated on Tuesday, “Everyone had a part in the success of this song, but more importantly, together we can reach thousands for the cause of Christ.”

Dell Hyssong emceed most of the afternoon, passing out plaques and thanking those that mean so much to their family. His wife, Susan, who is not typically in



ent a plaque to the Hyssongs for their number one song in SGNScoops for July. The Hyssongs presented Vonda with a plaque for her company, Hey Ya'll Media, which provided assistance in promoting the song.

Writers of the number one song, Lee Black and Kenna West, were in attendance.

For more information about the Hyssongs go to www.thehyssongs.com. To reach Chapel Valley go to www.chapelvalley-music.com or call 865-278-3681.

the spotlight, came around to the tables and passed out the cake.

Chapel Valley CEO Travis Roark stated, "We are so proud of the Hyssongs and we are looking forward to much more success in their ministry."

His brother, and President of Chapel Valley, Shane Roark added, "To have their CD, 'Faith and Faith,' be nominated Top 10 Album of 2017 and then have their first No. 1 single in the same year shows how well the Hyssongs are doing."

Vonda Easley, SGNScoops Magazine was there to pres-





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The Editor's Last Word

By Lorraine Walker

It's August, and that means the last full month of summer. The fairs, outdoor concerts and tent revivals are heading into their last few weeks. How many concerts did you attend this summer? Was it more or less than last year? Why?

If you are a newcomer to the type of Christian music we talk about in SGNScoops, you may not understand the lure of a multi-day event featuring your favorite groups. There are more of these events all the time, making it possible to attend one without traveling for days. Those of us outside of the Gospel belt appreciate the chance to attend even one concert with several artists on the schedule. Thanks so much to those hardy, industrious promoters who present these festivals.

I attended a concert recently where we travelled a little over an hour, stopping to pick up a family member on the way. The church was packed, with a show of hands proving that most drove that distance or more. This music we love is not dying as some might say. Concert attendance proves that. Is it changing? I think so, and it must if it is to continue. Look at other forms of music, and you will find that as the artists themselves grow and their music matures, their songs must change as well.

That same concert I attended afforded me the chance to talk specifically with two artists from the crew of Triumphant. And I learned a few things.

First of all, to be successful in your ability to show the love of Christ to others, you yourself must love others. Sounds simple, but it really isn't. We know we should love others, but it's tough when you are met with people

you can't even like. The Triumphant guys learned this lesson a long time ago and they are able to love others. And the love of Jesus shines through them.

Secondly, as a member of the media serving Southern Gospel, I had better be sure I am reporting to you, our readers, the same thing that the artist is telling me. Integrity is huge. It only takes a second to be ripped apart and a lifetime to rebuild.

I also learned that although there may be a difference between a dream and a calling, they can become the same thing. My dream for the longest time was to become a writer. Then, the Lord called me into Southern Gospel media. I followed His calling, because He was giving me the desires of my heart. His desires for me became my desires for myself, and my dream and my calling merged.

Do you have a dream, a desire, a calling to be used of the Lord? Whatever it is, do it with integrity. Love God first, and love others second. Don't be afraid to allow God to grow and mature your talents and gifts to bring in more of a harvest for Him.

What it all boils down to, is that it isn't what or how you sing or write or play or perform. It's the interaction between you and another person, a chance for you to show love, a chance to be the person that God made you to be. Are you close enough to Him that the person next to you is drawn to His presence in you?

Enjoy the concerts near you and be encouraged, edified and enabled to go back to where you live, work and play, and love others. It's His plan.



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



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



Canadian-born Lorraine Walker has a love for Jesus Christ, music and writing. The combination of these passions has produced artist features and monthly columns for Southern Gospel publications including SGM Radio website and SGN Scoops Digital magazine. Lorraine desires that the power of the written word will glorify her Lord and bring readers closer to the love, peace and majesty of the Almighty. Email Lorraine at lorraine@sgnscoops.com



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



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



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

Contributors

SGN SCOOPS



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

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

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



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

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



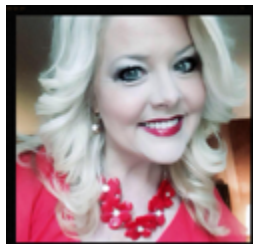
Pete Schwager is a web developer and graphic designer with a passion for Christ. He was born in Santa Rosa, California and moved to Oregon where he spent most of his life. He now lives in the quiet town of Ringgold, Georgia and enjoys living in the country with his family.

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



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

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



Vonda Easley is the Vice President of Sales and Marketing. Vonda draws on a vast knowledge of Southern Gospel Music for her expertise in the field. In addition to her many personal friendships within the industry she also hosts a weekly radio show which keeps

her in touch with many of Southern Gospel's leading executives and artists. It also allows her a fresh view of new music and the latest happenings inside the industry. Vonda is also a group owner and manager as well! A self starter Vonda has started and managed several "new" events in Southern as well as "Country Gospel" Music. These events are fast be

coming trend setters within the industry. She is a graduate of The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Contributors

SGN SCOOPS



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

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



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

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



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

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



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

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



After graduating from Middle Tennessee State University with a Mass Communication degree, Craig Harris has been in the journalism field for more than 15 years, working daily as both a photographer and writer at one of the largest non-daily publications in the state of Tennessee. He has experience in feature writing, news writing, action

photography, portrait photography, web-site maintenance and layout. Craig has been a part of numerous awards, both collective and individual honors in the journalism field. He has had articles published in numerous newspapers and magazines on a variety of subjects, most notably in the world of sports.

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

Contributors

SGN SCOOPS



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

David began singing at age 6 with family. In 1990, he filled in for the Speer Family and later that year he became the lead vocalist for The Trailblazers. In 2002, Staton filled the lead position with Priority. While with Priority, the group was the resident gospel group at the Silver Dollar City theme park in Branson, MO and they performed for over one million people in one year. After the group disbanded in 1995, David continued to write for artists in many different genres of music while occasionally performing solo. It was during this time that his song, "Every Knee Shall Bow", recorded by Dottie Peoples, was nominated for a Grammy Award. His song, "Together We Can" was adopted as the national theme song to bring awareness to violence in schools. The music video (Together We Can) that featured many Atlanta based artists was shown at the 1999 Grammy Awards show, which helped launch the careers of artists like R&B's Jagged Edge, India Arie, and 4.O. In 2004, David partnered with Mike LeFevre to form The LeFevre Quartet. During the seven years that he was the lead vocalist, the group had many hit songs and won many awards. After leaving the LeFevre Quartet in 2011, Staton began working on a solo project and also began singing with Palmetto State Quartet. The group appeared on television and toured with country music superstar, Wynonna Judd while Staton was there.

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



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

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

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

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



Paige Givens is a Christ follower, wife, mother of two boys and kindergarten teacher to 18 five-year-olds. She is a writer, reader, singer, studier, and teacher of words. Paige lives in Hayden, Alabama with her husband of 10 years, Chris Givens, and their sons Parker and Peyton. Paige loves to blog about faith, writing, music, and teaching. Her goal is to serve the

Lord by inspiring others to be who He has called them to be. You can listen to her music and read her devotionals at www.paigegivens.com.

Contributors

SGN SCOOPS



Nathan Kistler was born on the road and was singing at the age of three years old. He has had the opportunity travel with groups like Southern Gospel's beloved trio the Nelons, and most recently for almost two years with America's Favorite family of gospel music The Hoppers. Nathan has had the privilege to be in 49 states and

24 countries singing about the wonderful story of Jesus Christ our Lord. He has also been a part of three crusades on the National Mall in Washington D.C. and while there, he had the privilege of singing in the Pentagon courtyard twice. Through his father's ministry in Washington, Nathan began his work on the Hill as a ministry partner with different Christian organizations like Faith and Action and more. Nathan is a missionary to Washington and continues to work there during the week while singing Gospel music on the weekends around the country and being an artist in residence at the American Mountain Theater in Elkins, West Virginia.



Selena Day is from Atlanta GA. During her twenties she worked in the field of fashion, as both a make-up artist and model. Selena became a Christian in her early 20's and then quickly met her husband, Chuck Day, who is a songwriter and recording artist. Selena and Chuck have been in the ministry for 26 years raising

three daughters and homeschooling them while they traveled together as a family. During this time God taught her how crucial intergenerational ministry is for the furthering of God's kingdom. Selena travels the world speaking at conferences with the emphasis on empowering a multi-generation of women to rise up and become everything that God has called them to. Encouraging the next generation of the church to break the walls of limitations in their mind and rise to their full potential. Selena and her husband are life coaches for The World Race, which is an extreme missions trip for adults 21 through 35. They travel every two months somewhere around the world to mentor these missionaries. She and Chuck have been pastoring a home-church for 14 years where they have experienced God moving in community and seeing the body of Christ in action through each other.



Derek Simonis began singing gospel music at an early age, around the piano with his sister,s at home and in church. His mother, an accomplished pianist and music teacher, was his inspiration to sing. Derek was saved at an early age due to the influence of godly, praying parents and a faithful Sunday School teacher.

Derek formerly served as a Youth Pastor and previously sang with Southern Harmony Quartet. For seven years, Derek also served as a Communications Repair Section Leader for the U.S. Army; he was member of the 1/160th SOAR (A) Night Stalkers and served several deployments overseas. Derek is married to his sweetheart, Jana, and they have two boys, Daniel and Avery. The Simonis family resides in Boise, Idaho, and Derek is the baritone vocalist for Liberty Quartet. His life's verse is Romans 12:1 which says, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Derek's ultimate desire is to give his all in the service of the Lord.



Logan Smith is a 20-year-old with a lot of miles behind him. At the age of three, he would stand in his room with a pencil as a microphone and one of his dad's handkerchiefs singing his heart out to one of the Happy Goodman's songs, such as "I Wouldn't Take Nothing For My Journey Now." At the age of seven, Logan was asked to

sing at a senior's dinner at his grandparent's church. Logan recorded his first CD, "The Journey Begins," at the age of 10 and his latest release, "Hits Before My Time," at age 19. In October of 2008, Logan was invited to sing with The Gaither Homecoming Tour in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina for Gaither Fest. Since that night, he has sung at many different venues with the Homecoming Tour. As of 2017, Logan has toured all across America, Canada, and has headlined two Norwegian tours. Logan is on the road more now than ever spreading the good news and has no plans of slowing down.

Contributors

SGN SCOOPS



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

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



Fayth Lore is a young woman from southern Ohio with a love for God and people. Although she enjoys chocolate, oldies music and spending time with friends around the bonfire, her passion is ministry. In January of 2014, after pastoring for 20 years, her family decided to follow God's call into music evangelism. In September 2015, they

launched into full-time ministry. The Lore Family travels the country, spreading the Gospel through songs, sermons and seminars. While Fayth loves to sing, she also has a heart for encouraging young women in Christ. She has spoken at various youth/women's events, as well as hosted her own blog for young ladies. To see more about The Lore Family, visit their website at www.thelorefamilyministries.com. To learn more about Fayth's blog, visit www.truepurposegirls.weebly.com.



Debbie Seagraves is a Gospel music soloist, songwriter and speaker from Hull, Ga. She and her husband, Mike have been married for 21 years and have five grown children, including four sons and one daughter that graduated to Heaven in 2009, as well as nine grandchildren. She loves singing, speaking, and writing her own songs. Debbie is

currently working on her third project. All of the songs on this CD will be songs that she has penned. She is an award winning artist, having won Female Vocalist of the Year with Lighthouse Gospel Music Association, and Female Vocalist and Soloist of the year with the GGCBA (Georgia Gospel Country Bluegrass Association) in 2016. She enjoys speaking at Ladies Events, sharing her testimony of how God spared her life from a near fatal motorcycle accident in 2011, how He brought her out of the depths of severe clinical depression, and through the death of her daughter in 2009. Also, Debbie is an avid Georgia Bulldogs fan and loves to fish, read, and spend time with her children and grandchildren. Debbie says: "No one can come as close as I did to dying and have it not change you. I am forever changed, blessed beyond measure, and just so grateful for every day that the Lord allows me to spend with those I love and to serve Him." She considers Micah 7:8 her life verse as she says that verse has carried her through some of the darkest times in her life. If you would like to have Debbie at your church or venue, you can reach her through her website: debbieseagraves-music.com/, on Facebook, or send her an email at: fully-alive1956@att.net.



Jimmy Reno is from Birmingham, Alabama. He began singing in church at four years of age. Jimmy has sung with various groups over the years, until singing professionally for Mark209 and the Florida Boys. Jimmy is married with three children.

Contributors

SGN SCOOPS



Sarah Murray sings soprano for the Southern Gospel group Bless'd. The group is from Greenville, Tennessee and has been together for over five years. Sarah was born and raised in Jonesborough, Tennessee, but now resides in Greeneville with her husband, Chase. She has a bachelor's degree in K-6 Educa-

tion and a Master's degree in Human Resources Development. Her daytime job is being the Human Resources Director for a small company in Greeneville, Tennessee. Her passion outside of singing, writing, and crafting, is simply God's people. "I love the Lord and truly believe my mission in life is to reach his people, and that's both on and off the stage, behind my desk, and in my community. I just want people to see Jesus in me! I'm so honored to be a part of Bless'd and love our tight knit family group." For more information on Sarah, visit blessdministries.com