

September 2012

# sgn Scoops digital



## Michael English



**Also In This Issue:**  
The Williamsons, Greater Vision, Victoria Shirey &  
The Hoppers' GMA Hall of Fame Induction



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## OUR MISSION

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

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# PUBLISHER'S POINT

**by Rob Patz**



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September 2012





# Letter From The Editor “Let’s Go Team!”

By Rhonda Frye

“There is no I in TEAM!” says Rob Patz! Rob has taught me a lot, but the value in team work is a concept he consistently drives deeply into my thick little head! As Rob preaches teamwork, he doesn’t know what I’m thinking inside: “There may not be an ‘I’ in team, but there is a ‘M’ and an ‘E’!” Even my mother says the first words I spoke were... “I do it MY-self!”

I was one of those toddlers you saw barefoot with little arms folded across the chest refusing to wear shoes or to hold a hand! Momma earned stars in her crown raising me. Many times she watched me drive over and over into the fence as I taught myself to ride a bicycle. Surely she gasped as I flipped my body upside down landing flat on my back or on my head as I taught myself how to do cartwheels, handsprings and walk-overs! She endured countless HOURS of me banging on the piano playing along with records until I could play.

In time, I became a pretty good gymnast, bicyclist and decent pianist. I learned, but wow... the process was long and unnecessarily hard! If I would have just let someone help me or at least considered “their way,” I would have spared myself a few slings and Band-Aids AND saved myself time. I bet if I had received instruction better, I probably could have actually mastered something!

Flying solo is my natural tendency, but I am learning how much can be accomplished and how much I learn when people actually work together. Being that I’m a “hands-on” learner, it was great having Rob next to me teaching me this Teamwork concept first hand. My first lesson took place in a dark parking lot! Mercy! I pulled into a jammed packed lot with no exit and no space to park! Oh my, was I ever in a fix! I scooted up, then back inching and inching getting nowhere, but in a bigger fix! All the while, Rob was trying to tell me what to do as I did my own thing. Finally, he yelled at me, “Why can’t you just trust

me?!?” Thankfully, I gave in and he got out of the car and patiently coached me until I was turned around or I would still be there! But yes, once I was cooperative, we were a team accomplishing the task at hand!

Rob and I made our rounds, for sure, during his recent visit. We had been putting our heads together planning Creekside Gospel Music Convention for months, but I must say when we met with our colleagues in Pigeon Forge, ideas rolled! Two heads are better than one, four heads are better than two!

All week, we brainstormed with industry professionals from Pigeon Forge all the way to Oklahoma! When people work together, everyone grows and everyone wins! We’re finding many ministries in the industry are like us-- truly desiring to see people get to know God in a real, personal way through Jesus Christ! We’re finding that we are ultimately all on the same team, so why not help each other?

Randy Christy, and the Williamsons took very good care of us at the Seminole Sing in Oklahoma. Wow-- they get this “Teamwork” concept! We had a great time of fellowship, but also had great conversations discussing our mutual passion- and that’s using Gospel Music and the Media to spread the good news of Jesus!

I’m excited about the upcoming National Quartet Convention. I see it as an opportunity to team up with many ministries in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ! I’m looking forward to meeting new friends and seeing old ones with one common goal. Rob is right... There is no “I” in team and so much can be done if we all forget there is a “M” and “E”! Let’s Go Team! Are you with me? If so, email me at [Rhonda@sgnscoops.com](mailto:Rhonda@sgnscoops.com) or stop by at our booth at NQC! I would love to meet you!





Ah! Deep breath! I'm actually writing this Creekside Gospel Music Convention update on the banks of a beautiful mountain stream in Pigeon Forge! I have to say, the Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg area is one of the prettiest places on earth! Being that Gospel Music is the greatest music on the earth, Pigeon Forge is the perfect destination for the Creekside Gospel Music Convention!

The excitement is definitely in the air! Rob Patz and I traveled to Pigeon Forge last month to meet with the executives at the Smoky Mountain Convention Center! We walked over every inch of the space, planning how we could best utilize the spacious building that will host the Creekside Gospel Music Convention.

We also got a chance to touch base with Lou Hildreth recently regarding our special celebration of Ms Lou's 75 years in Gospel Music. And wow, the Diamond Awards Voting is breaking all voting records! We are excited as we grow closer to October 29, 30 and 31<sup>st</sup>!

We are thrilled to announce that we will participate in a service/outreach project while in Pigeon Forge. Those plans are still being made as I write, but I will say I am very excited to be allowed to partner with a local ministry during our stay. This isn't just any ministry, but a ministry of dedicated people dedicated to taking the Bible OUT OF THE BOX! Now those are OUR kind of people! The good folks at Live It Ministries are making a huge impact in their community and beyond. For a sneak peak at the work they're doing, visit: <http://www.live-it.tv/>. Also stay tuned to see exactly how YOU can help during the Creekside Gospel Music Convention.

Have you made reservations? Rooms are still available thru Smoky Mountain Convention Center at just \$54.00 per night. Reservations can be by phone or online. By phone, call toll free at Toll Free: [1-800-223-6707](tel:1-800-223-6707) or local call [865-](tel:865-)

[908-3015](tel:908-3015). Online Reservations- go to <http://www.smoky-mountainconventioncenter.com>. Click "Book My Room" then Click "SGN Scoops."

The line-up for performers is coming together very well! We also have room for more artists! To find out more information about booths, check with Rob Patz at [rob@sgnscoops.com](mailto:rob@sgnscoops.com).

So- this is the latest "Scoop" on Creekside Gospel Music Convention! Watch the website for more details to come. If you have any questions, please email me at [SGNScoops.com](mailto:SGNScoops.com), also pick up a Creekside Gospel Music Convention card or brochure at our booth during the National Quartet Convention and help us spread the word. Remember, all events are free to the public!!

We are looking forward to a fabulous three days of fellowship and fun and of course, great gospel music. Come with a great appetite for country cooking, too! There are so many local restaurants to choose from! Also, remember Pigeon Forge is a great place to get a jump-start on Christmas Shopping. We are excited! Creekside Gospel Music Convention, October 29,30 31 at Smoky Mountain Convention Center, home of the Diamond Awards and home of Ms. Lou Hildreth's 75 years in Gospel Music. Be there!





# Diamond Awards Finalists!



We are in the FINAL ROUND! This last and final round is open now through September 17th! Congratulations to the following 2012 Diamond Awards Nominees: Vote at - <http://www.sgnscoops.com/2012-diamond-awards>

## **JD Sumner Living Legend Award**

Lily Weatherford  
Tim Riley  
Ed O'Neal  
Ray Dean Reese  
Ann Downing

## **Female Vocalist of the Year**

Janet Paschal  
Charlotte Ritchie  
Taranda Greene  
Karen Peck Gooch  
Sheri Easter

## **Bluegrass Gospel Artist of the Year**

Dailey & Vincent  
Red Roots  
The Isaacs  
Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver  
Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder

## **Album of the Year**

THE SONG LIVES ON- Jason Crabb  
REACH OUT- Karen Peck & New River  
BLUE SKIES COMING- The Perrys  
LET IT BE KNOWN- Booth Brothers  
EXPECTING GOOD THINGS- Jeff & Sheri Easter

## **Sunrise Award**

Beyond The Ashes  
Red Roots  
Declaration  
Promise  
Logan Smith

## **Male Vocalist of the Year**

Guy Penrod  
Michael English  
David Phelps  
Ivan Parker  
Jason Crabb

## **Anthony Burger Instrumentalist of the Year**

Jeff Stice  
Kevin Williams  
Gordon Mote  
Greg Ritchie  
Kim Collingsworth

## **Video/DVD of the Year**

"She Still Remembers Jesus Name" Booth Brothers  
"The Song Lives On" Jason Crabb  
"Jubilee 2" Greater Vision, Booth Brothers, Legacy Five  
"Tent Revival Homecoming" Bill & Gloria Gaither, Homecoming Friends  
"The Old Rugged Cross" Bill & Gloria Gaither, Homecoming Friends

## **Mixed Group of the Year**

The Hoppers  
Karen Peck & New River  
Collingsworth Family  
Jeff & Sheri Easter  
The Isaacs

## **Christian Country Group of the Year**

The Isaacs  
Red Roots  
Wendy Word & Forgiven  
Dailey & Vincent  
The Amundruds

## **Dottie Rambo Songwriter of the Year**

Jim Brady  
Wayne Haun  
Rodney Griffin  
Christy Sutherland  
Gerald Crabb

## **Song of the Year**

"Celebrate Me Home" The Perrys  
"She Still Remembers Jesus' Name" Booth Brothers  
"I Believe" Brian Free & Assurance  
"Banks of the Promised Land" Karen Peck & New River  
"Hear My Heart" Jeff & Sheri Easter

## **Quartet of the Year**

Triumphant Quartet  
Brian Free and Assurance  
Ernie Haase & Signature Sound  
Gold City  
Gaither Vocal Band

## **Christian Country Female Vocalist of the Year**

Sonya Isaacs  
Wendy Word  
Sheri Easter  
Mary James  
Christy Sutherland

## **Christian Country Album of the Year**

REAL MEN, REAL LIFE, REAL GOD – John Berry  
BREATHE DEEP- Guy Penrod  
WHY CAN'T WE- The Isaacs  
RED ROOTS- Red Roots  
I BELONG TO JESUS- Jim Sheldon

## **Trio of the Year**

Booth Brothers  
Karen Peck & New River  
Greater Vision  
The Martins  
Jeff & Sheri Easter

## **Christian Country Male Vocalist of the Year**

David Bryan  
Jason Crabb  
Jim Sheldon  
Guy Penrod  
Chuck Day

## **Paul Heil Broadcasting Award**

Gene Peacock  
Daniel Britt  
Bruce Edwards  
Greg Goodman  
Jonathan Edwards

## **Duet of the Year**

Aaron & Amanda Crabb  
Josh & Ashley Franks  
Wilburn & Wilburn  
Jim & Melissa Brady  
Reggie & Lady Love Smith

## **Favorite Industry Website**

Daywind.com  
Singingnews.com  
Absolutletygospel.com  
Gospelmusictoday.com  
Gospelgigs.com

## **Favorite Artist Website**

Boothbrothers.com  
Karenpeckandnewriver.com  
Jasoncrabb.com  
Brianfreeandassurance.com  
Gaither.com



# LIFE LOVE & LEGENDS

## "Remembering Homecoming Friend Stephen Hill"

BY LOU WILLS HILDRETH

Our Scoops editor Rhonda Frye and Publisher Rob Patz have traveled many miles the past few weeks covering strategic events in gospel music. We spent time together at the GMA Hall Of Fame Induction on August 14<sup>th</sup>, TBN, Hendersonville, Tennessee. Rob and Rhonda are well known in the industry and have certainly earned the friendship and respect given them. Our time together, greeting many of our colleagues, was special and helped heal the ache in my heart. I had made the trip a day early to attend the funeral of Stephen Hill, a LEGENDARY Gaither Homecoming artist, on August 13<sup>th</sup> at Grace Church Of The Nazarene, Nashville.

Stephen was a precious friend, and the funeral service was a celebration of his LIFE, his faith in God, his LOVE for his family, his talent and exuberance. Stephen died at age 55 of a massive heart attack while doing a "sound check" in preparation for his evening concert. This extraordinary 6'4" giant-of-a-man was a life-long professional musician, singer, songwriter, and ordained Baptist minister. In Nashville, he was the ultimate backup singer and is heard on countless recordings of popular artists. Our friendship began more than fifteen years ago when he joined us as a Gaither Homecoming Friend, upon Ben Speer's recommendation to Bill. At his funeral, the impact he made as a Gaither artist was evident as the choir loft was filled with dozens of Homecoming friends singing songs directed by Bill Gaither. Looking out from the choir, I could see Stephen's beautiful family on the front row of the church--his widow Kathy, daughters Melody and Miriam, and son Caleb. One of Stephen's closest friends and musical partners, Woody Wright, coordinated the service beautifully. At the close of the celebration, we were reminded once again of the talent



of the LEGENDARY Stephen Hill as his solos on the Gaither videos were being played on the big screen. He will be missed, but we will see him again, as promised by our Heavenly Father.

In closing, may I join Rob Patz & Rhonda Frye, Publisher and Editor of sgnScoops, in the invitation to Creekside Gospel Music Convention, October 29, 30, & 31, Smoky Mountain Convention Center, Pigeon Forge, TN.

My TV co-host of "Inside Gospel" JP Miller is helping coordinate my "Celebration Of 75 Years In Gospel Music" on Monday night, the 29<sup>th</sup>. Don't miss the Diamond Awards on the 30<sup>th</sup>!!!! Everybody is welcome--FREE admission. For more information, check the banner ad at the top of SGNScoops.com.

We will see many of you at the National Quartet Convention in Louisville, Kentucky, September 9<sup>th</sup> through 14<sup>th</sup>. God bless you!

Lou Wills Hildreth  
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Houston, TX 77277  
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Photo: Stephen Hill, guest of Lou Hildreth & JP Miller on "Inside Gospel" TV.



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# THE HEART OF AN OLYMPIAN

By Scott Rhoades

The venues are closed, the stadium doors locked, and the Olympic flame is extinguished. The city of London is back to relative normalcy and all that is left are memories and mementos of the 2012 Summer Olympic Games. It was an exciting time; two solid weeks of the world's best athletes pushing the limits of human endurance and setting new performance records all while striving for the gold and the opportunity to be named "The Best."

We cheered for our teams and celebrated their success. We winced at their misfortunes and even cried with them when they came up short. We were amazed how tenths of a point, a millisecond, and the stretch of a finger, foot, or head could separate a champion from the competitive pack. For some, the competition is over; for others, it is just the beginning as they set their sights towards 2016 and the city of Rio de Janeiro.

I've always enjoyed watching the Olympic Games. Summer or winter, it makes no difference; I'm always fascinated by the variety and types of sporting competition in which these athletes compete and I love cheering on the home team. But there is one aspect of the Olympics I enjoy more than anything – the stories of the athletes themselves!

The behind-the-scenes story of an Olympic athlete is one of the most inspirational adventures you'll ever know. It's the account of the novice and the underdog; it's about repetitive failures behind closed doors and in open competition; it's about discipline-bent coaches and life sacrifice. It's a tale of tears, aches, pains, injuries, and surgeries. It's the epic story of overcoming incredible odds by discovering the stamina and will to reach the top. It's a saga of persistence and action in spite of breakdown and rejection.

*Photo courtesy of the US Army and Tim Hipps*

Inspirational? You bet! But as millions of viewers tuned in to watch the Olympics, inspired by the performance and stories of these tremendous athletes, I started to ask myself what separated these relatively few Olympic athletes from those who want to be Olympic athletes? How many people really have the heart of an Olympian? Would they exercise the discipline, persistence and action required and complete the necessary steps to reach the top? How long would "inspiration" last? Who would dare to take the challenge and stick with it? Do I have the heart of an Olympian?

The inspiration from these stories is more than a call for us to challenge the physical body - it's a message to prepare our body, mind, spirit, and abilities and to set our sights high on whatever niche God calls us to fulfill. No wonder the Apostle Paul used the analogy of the athlete in his letters to the church. He watched the Olympians of his day and knew there was more to the process than merely showing up for a race with hopes of winning a medal. In 1 Corinthians 9:24 he encourages all of us to not only reach for the prize, but to *"run in such a way that you may obtain it."*

"Run in such a way?" Is there some big secret or strategy to win the prize? While all great coaches and athletes prepare in unique and individual ways, there are fundamental and underlying principles we should follow. In Hebrews 12:1 we are told *"...since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us."* Realize the task is not an easy one. It will require discipline, sacrifice, and total abandonment of self. You will risk experiencing your share of failure, rejection, pain, tears, and injuries that may require a bit of spiritual and emotional surgery. You will risk hitting the bottom and walk in dark and lonesome paths. You will risk leaving your comfort zone. You will risk feeling isolated, afraid, and alone. Do you have the heart of an Olympian? Do you have the heart of a true follower of Christ? Are you still inspired?

The great news is that God's endless love, mercy, and grace are at your disposal. While He wants you to recognize your lack of strength and ability and your total dependence on Him, this doesn't remove you from the picture. God has fearfully and wonderfully created you with the ability to overcome some pretty tough obstacles (Philippians 4:13). It requires your attention, your discipline, your persistence, and your action. Do you have the heart of a true follower of Christ? Do you have the heart of an Olympian? Prepare daily for the race, get in, and go for the gold!

*"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it" – 1 Corinthians 9:24 NKJV*

*"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." – Hebrews 12:1 NKJV*

*"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me". – Philippians 4:13 NKJV*



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# GMA HALL OF FAME



by Rhonda Frye

The Gospel Music Association Foundation welcomed new members to the Gospel Music Hall of Fame on Tuesday, August 14, 2012 at Trinity Music City, Hendersonville, Tennessee. This year's inductees included Ricky Skaggs, Aretha Franklin, The Hoppers, Love Song, Dallas Holm, and Rex Humbard. Many fans, friends, family members and peers gathered to celebrate the evening. There were several significant artists who paid tribute to this year's inductees: Dailey & Vincent, The Isaacs, Dottie Peoples, Michael W. Smith, the Talleys, Gordon Mote and Greg Long. Jason Crabb and Jaci Velasquez were the special hosts.

The night started with a red carpet stroll. As the inductees made their way dressed in their finest, they were greeted warmly by the press. The media frenzy didn't seem to rattle the nerves too much of the soon-to-be Hall of Famers-- they smiled and answered questions with grace and modesty.

The grown children of Dallas Holm had the honor of inducting their father into the Hall of Fame following a great performance of "Rise Again" with Gordon Mote. They testified that their dad was "Faithful to the Call!" The also explained how Dallas balanced a thriving music career with family. Dallas' son recalled his dad's words, "If I reach

the world and lose my family, I am a failure."

The Dallas Holm list of thank yous was long and sweet, but his wife was certainly at the top. He received a resounding applause as he explained how character was and is more important than success. "It's not about us, our talent, and our image. It's not about how many records we sell or awards we receive. It's all about honoring the name of Jesus, that's all that matters," he said. The crowd responded with loud cheers and a standing ovation as he called out the Fruits of the Spirit, naming them one by one.

The Talleys along with Gene McDonald took the stage singing the Hopper's "Shoutin' Time!" They also sang, "I've Come Too Far To Look Back." Before the Tally performance was over, the Hoppers joined them on stage singing the ever popular, "Jerusalem."

A delighted Jason Crabb honored the Hoppers by placing the prestigious medallions around their necks saying, "This is too cool!" Claude stepped to the podium and explained how it all started for him with a seven-dollar guitar! He claimed he used to listen to Ricky Skaggs and wanted to play bluegrass like him. "Little did I know then that we'd be inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame together," he said.



Claude continued to tell an abbreviated “Hopper story” starting with recognizing each of his brothers in attendance. He also recalled the old days of diesel costing 12 cents a gallon and the days of hat passing for love offerings! “They’d pass the hat for our offerings

was at the center of his ministry.

The tearful family of the late Rex Humbard accepted the honor on his behalf. “There were two things that caused him to be the way he was,” daughter, Elizabeth recalled, “a God-given love for lost souls and a love for Gospel Music.”



The Humbard family encouraged the audience to never underestimate the power of Gospel Music. “When you can sing a song with conviction, a soul can be eternally changed. NEVER underestimate the anointing God places on a song,” she said. The crowd responded enthusiastically.

Dailey & Vincent offered heartfelt appreciation and words of kindness regarding the next inductee, Ricky Skaggs. Gordon Mote accompanied Jason Crabb who sang an incredible, “Somebody’s Praying.” The Isaacs continued the tribute with an outstanding performance as well.

and sometimes they wouldn’t even get that hat back,” he joked. That wasn’t the only joke he made, Claude rolled on with the humor and the crowd rolled with him! On a much more serious note, Claude told the touching story of a Florida man that encountered Christ as a result of a specific Hopper song. “Gospel Music is LIFE Changing,” he proclaimed!

Connie took her turn to speak. “It’s not about us, music is a vehicle. HE is most important,” she explained. Dean added a few words of thanksgiving, and then the Hoppers took their seat to enjoy the rest of the ceremony.

The late Rex Humbard was next to be honored. Rex began his ministry in 1932 with his first radio program when he was just 13! During his ministry, he conducted tent crusades through the US and Canada. In many cities,



he purchased radio time and provided Gospel Music. In 1999, US News and World Report named Rex as one of the 25 shakers of the century due to his use of media to promote his message of hope and salvation. Gospel Music

Nearly overcome with emotion Ricky Skaggs said, “What a sweet night! I never thought anything like this would ever happen for me,” he said as the crowd applauded. “For the GMA to honor me like this is something I didn’t see coming... I am so thankful,” Skaggs continued. He offered words of gratitude for the other inductees and especially for his family, the Whites.

Ricky recalled memories of how Rex Humbard was influential in his life and went on to say his was the first



ministry that asked him to come alongside to perform. Back then, Ricky asked Rex, “Why me?” Rex answered, “Because you can draw a crowd. You sing, I’ll preach!”

Several times throughout his speech, Skaggs wiped tears obviously humbled and grateful to be honored. He concluded with these words. “I have won lots of awards; NOTHING means more to me than this one!”



The "Jesus Movement" era produced a group worthy



to be recognized and inducted into this year's GMA Hall of Fame! Love Song was next in line to receive the award! Michael W. Smith obliged to do the honors for personal reasons! In fact, he claims that he himself would not be in this industry without the influence of Love Song.

In the early 70's, Love Song expressed their new love and new found faith in Jesus with music. Their faith was indeed new when they started, about three weeks old! Their rock/pop style inspired a generation of young people and pretty much open the door for what's labeled "Contemporary Christian Music" today.

In the acceptance speech, Tommy Coomes, founding member said, "Music does something that the spoken

last Sunday, but you will remember a song. There's something about a message in music that touches us all."

The last, but certainly not the least, artist to earn a prestigious spot in the GMA Hall of Fame is also labeled as the Queen of Soul! The Queen of Soul she may be, but GMA recognized Aretha Franklin for her repertoire of Gospel hits!

Aretha's roots are deep in Gospel Music tracing all the way back to singing in the choir at her Father's church in Detroit! By the early 70's, Aretha released *AMAZING GRACE* which eventually became her biggest selling release of her career and highest selling gospel record of all time!

With numerous awards and accolades including 20 Grammys, Aretha Franklin was the first female to be inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

Although she wasn't in attendance in Hendersonville, Aretha Franklin shared thoughts of gratefulness on video. "It means an awful lot to me," she said on tape, "Of course, this is where I come from. My roots and my background are in gospel. My dad, the Reverend C.L. Franklin, pastored the New Bethel Baptist Church for 38 years. That is where I came from out of the junior choir so to receive this beautiful award means an awful lot to me. I will put it in a very, very special place. Thank you so much."

Putting the finishing touches on a fabulous ceremony, Dr. Bobby Jones, the choral group Kairos, Jason Crabb, Jaci Velasquez and Dottie Peoples performed an electrifying tribute to Aretha Franklin leaving the crowd on their feet cheering and clapping along.

Congratulations to each new member of the Gospel Music Association's Hall of Fame!



word does not. I would never, ever take anything away from the Word of God. It's all powerful. Every part of it will remain forever and not one thing will be missed, but there's something about the language of the soul in music that stays with us. You can't remember a sermon from



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Pierce,  
Darrell & Tojuana,  
Brenda Whitlock,  
Tim Ooten,  
Steven Doan,  
Tane' Miller,  
Danny Jones,  
Tank Tackett,  
Davis Family,  
Rhonda Mitchell Frye  
Danny Norman,  
Chariot,  
Tammy Jones-Robinette,  
Eyewitness,  
Gardners,  
Bill Dykes,  
I'll Fly Away Foundation,  
Gloria Larson,  
Phil Cross & Poet Voices  
Pauline Patterson  
Hoskins Family  
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# MICHAEL ENGLISH

*love finds a way...* **Some People Change**

By Laura Kennedy



*“Nothing humbles and breaks the heart of a sinner like mercy and love. Souls that converse much with sin and wrath, may be much terrified; but souls that converse much with grace and mercy, will be much humbled. ~ Thomas Brooks*

In one respect, time does not seem to define the career of multi-Dove Award and Grammy winner, Michael English. No single event of his four decades of singing then depicts him fully. Rather -as a whole collection- the continuum of time so yields. It is akin to the progression of innings in a baseball game; the fluid movement of the ball from pitcher to batter, to baseman and back again to home plate that reveal the great plays or the occasional and often inevitable strike outs.

Since rejoining the Gaither Vocal Band as lead vocalist in 2009, Michael has continued to touch hearts with a voice that is rich, soulful, and distinct. The eloquent list of adjectives often attached to his name could hold a special entry of their own in Webster’s Dictionary. It would absolutely be a worthwhile attempt to task it. As fellow GVB member, Wes Hampton offers; *“Michael, while an icon, is a tenderhearted man who has the ability to touch people through music like no other.”* He *“...is a phenomenal talent, and most distinguished of voices”* says Rick Strickland, and as Clayton Inman adds, *“Michael has left an indelible mark in*

*our industry with his unmistakable voice; one of the greatest our music has ever known.”* He is indeed, in a league of his own.

As simple forces create the swaying rhythm of a pendulum so are the castings of life. The constant is in the movement and the energy it evokes. Later this month, and with that same spirit, Michael English is set to release his next solo project, *SOME PEOPLE CHANGE*. Co-produced with long time friend Jay Demarcus, Michael enthusiastically reveals that the project is; “upbeat, meaningful, and fun.” Additionally Jay, who is a member of country’s mega-group Rascal Flatts, also produced Michael’s 1998 solo effort, *GOSPEL*. With genuine admiration, Michael says of him, “Jay knows me and lets me do what I do.” And with a chuckle, he adds, “If I was off pitch, he would let me know that too. We work well together.”

Within the collection of, *SOME PEOPLE CHANGE* are all selections of Michael’s choosing; a gesture he acknowledges that is close to his heart. “It has been four years since my last solo project and at my solo dates, I sing about 85% from *GOSPEL*. While I consider it my favorite recording, the need for something new was there.” Equally important to Michael’s choosing the songs for the project was the absence of theme. “Southern Gospel was the music of my childhood, and its sweet, soulful harmonies became the soundtrack of my life,” shares Michael. “They are the



kinds of songs I love and know then that I can reach people with.”



As I write, I take pause to listen [again] to one of the cuts from the new album. It will quickly be recognized as a favorite among the sincerest southern gospel music fans. With that delicious sound of slightest ‘pop’ that the good ole vinyl records have, I hear a Rusty Goodman song, the beginning strains of Howard and Vestal Goodman singing, “Wouldn’t Take Nothin’ for My Journey Now.” Ten seconds in enters a four beat count off into Michael’s retake on the beloved classic. It’s a blazing, throw your head back sound and, to add yet another adjective to him... He rocks it!

Can’t we *all* relate to the journey described in that song? What heartache and grief have you borne? And within those seemingly endless depths of sorrow, how much grace and mercy then too have you also been bestowed? Truly the writers of this song understood, “There is nothing in this world that will ever take the place of God’s love.”

Michael shared some really hard and painful times of his journey with me. He spoke with such conviction that I stopped taking notes. All at once, I ceased interviewing

and sat weeping, thankful for the moment of solitude on my end of the phone line. He was ministering with the harshest realities of his life. In part, he shared; “I. Am. Nothing. Without. God. I cannot speak like Mark Lowry. I cannot write like Gloria Gaither. I am just a singer. I am street smart. But even with all the crap I’ve done, and the people that I’ve hurt, I fought. And I fought. I have been at the bottom of it all –the literal most especially. I know the pain, the embarrassment, the exhaustion and the almost utter and overwhelming sense of defeat.” Drawing from one of his earliest loves of baseball, Michael continues, “Even when it looks like you are on your last chance with two outs, two strikes, and no balls remaining, you just cannot give up. Never, never give up.”

In Michael’s autobiography, *The Prodigal Comes Home*, there is much more of this candor. While the book is easily read, it was clearly anything but easily lived. Life is most assuredly fragile. And what is reality in one moment, in the quickness of one breath, can radically change. Radically. Yet, with the release of the book in 2007, Michael gave a visual aid to the power of God’s strength. It is known as truth. It is never wrong, never late, and is never in vain.

In an interview after its release, Michael testifies of *The Prodigal Comes Home*;

*“After I heard God’s [small, quiet] voice I said, “God, it would be a great testimony if I could be healed from this. God said, ‘It would be a greater testimony if you let me and you do it together.’ (literally lying in a pool of my own self) Lord, I know I heard your voice and I know you aren’t going to leave me here. And a minute became five minutes. Five minutes became an hour. An hour became a day; But when I heard His voice ask (again) of me, “Is this where you want it to end?” I knew that there was a work--still--for me to do. He (God) started it and He’s going to finish it.”*

And now recalling it, Michael emphatically adds; “Yes, Lord. I’m holding on. If I can’t stand, I’ll reach for His hand. When I’m too tired to reach up, I’ll reach out. I will continue to be holding even to the hem of His garment. I am not giving up on Jesus.”

How much worth does a gift from God have? Sadly the answer lies in the possibility of its loss. And that’s when fear rears its ugly head. In March, 2010, Michael English underwent surgery to repair two discs in his upper back. Using a less invasive route of surgery, doctors chose to go through the front of Michael’s neck. The more invasive would have been in his back, dangerously involving the possibility of paralysis. So, the lesser of the two methods was decided and through the front of his neck, the repair was made to the discs. With that over, Michael woke and blessedly, was able to speak. He could not, however, sing. Michael vividly recalls; “I was never more afraid than when



I lost my voice after my surgery.” Adding “I did not know if I would ever sing again.”

How do you face the realization that what you have



done for 40 or so of your 50 years in life might no longer be physically possible? How does yet another person make sense of decades of cancer inside their body that finally leaves them alive, but ravaged... different?

I do not know and thank you dear God that I am not responsible for such a response. I can attest, however, to healing. And healing takes time. For the first four to five months after that surgery, Michael still could not sing. He waited. After six months, he admits he was, “scared.” Bill (wisely) encouraged Michael to rejoin the Vocal Band. During a Thanksgiving taping of the Homecoming Friends, Michael did sing. He sang what he had and it was enough. “I look back at that video and I’m overcome with emotion and humbleness” he says.

Later that same year, Michael joined former Singing Americans members at the 2010 National Quartet Convention. Friends Clayton Inman and Rick Strickland joined him there with Rick singing tenor and Clayton to assist Michael on his signature, “I Bowed On My Knees (and Cried Holy)”. It was beautiful and poignant. Rick offers; *“I have been blessed to be able to sing with many great quartets. Singing with JD Sumner and The Stamps quartet was certainly a prestigious and classy act. However, my standing in the tenor spot beside Michael English, when we were part of the Singing Americans, was a high adrenaline experience - always. It was simply electrifying what*

*happened with this group of guys; Mike, Ed, Dewayne, and me. I believe that the fans felt what we did, and that all were blessed by the experience. Most of the credit belongs to Michael who has such a soulful spirit.”*

Doctors told Michael that whatever voice he had after a year would likely be all the voice he would have. Today, two years later, he has increased from 80 to about 90% of the range and stamina he had before the surgery. I say, just give Him time. God and you Michael, it is God and you. Healing is an all-encompassing rite and best served when we yield to it and welcome its presence.

Wes Hampton recalls first meeting Michael at the studio of Michael Sykes when working on his first GVB record in 2005. Michael produced Wes’s vocal on “Bread Upon the Water” and Wes shares; *“Michael has been a constant source of encouragement and wisdom to me. To sing alongside one who has had such a tremendous impact on me, as well as so many other singers, is priceless. He is an incredible producer. I treasure him as a lifelong friend and am honored to share the stage with him.”*

While researching for this article, I have become ‘seriously impressed’ at the span and breadth of Michael’s production abilities and to learn just how long he’s been doing so. At both the 1996 and 1997 Dove Awards, his co-production for The Martins album projects won Southern Gospel Album of the Year. Michael says of them, “To me, they are the perfect trio. The blend of their voices is



stunning.” Recently in North Carolina, The Martins joined Michael on stage for a one night only performance. In that setting, they were candid; sharing memories of childhood, trials, joys, and songs. It was such a pure moment for



them all, one that transcended the stage and was felt by everyone there. On that note, there will likely be more events featuring the friends together as they share, 'The Experience.'

While working on his 11<sup>th</sup> solo project, *SOME PEOPLE CHANGE*, the Gaither Vocal Band also has a new project that has just been completed. Michael was heavily involved with the production of it alongside Ben Isaacs and Bill Gaither. Michael shares; "I would alternately take some time

unknown, Michael most assuredly has his eye on the ball. He peacefully and confidently looks ahead, to the warm home life he has shared with Marcie, his wife of 10 years. At the close of one conversation with me, Michael was anticipating meeting daughter, Isabella, as her bus dropped her off from the first day of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade –most exciting times for sure! They are the days that hold goodness, purity and yes, the simplicity that we all crave in our hearts.

I offer this article as a sincere thanks to God for those



off from working on my album to work on the Vocal Band's and then come back and work on mine. And so it went." Both projects now completed; *PURE AND SIMPLE* from the GVB is currently in Pre-sale and *SOME PEOPLE CHANGE* from Michael English is available at Michael's website and at his solo dates starting the middle of this month. The release date for retail has not yet been determined.

With amusement I'm not sure I can tell you of which project Michael is more proud. In fact, the very first thing he wanted to share with me was how great *PURE AND SIMPLE* is, this incredibly anticipated album from the ever impressive Gaither Vocal Band. He said, "I know this article is about me but, it's a really good project." Believe me, that was more than okay. Recall with me that Michael joined the Gaither Vocal Band in 1985 and was with them until 1994. Those years, those relationships and those memories are still a part of him today. And their ministry continues. Michael is truly ecstatic with the quality and message of each album, "I am eager to sing each and every one of my songs on *SOME PEOPLE CHANGE* at my solo dates. I believe in each one of them that strongly."

who have made it through trials and tempests. With 'through it' being the key. Not unscathed. Michael is not. But to each with a story to tell of God's redeeming love, YOU are a beacon in the dense fog of despair and sadness. You are appreciated for this one amazing truth; you have the love of God written all over you. That is the sustaining light and countenance that a hurting world needs to know about, to experience, and to draw encouragement from.

"It is nearly impossible to have been where I've been ... To have lost it the way I did ... Then to be given a chance at living in peace and joy once again. No, I did not get a homerun in life. But, I did get a base hit. And I'm running the path before me with the hand of Jesus leading me all the way. My journey continues and my faith remains. Love has found me." ~ Michael English

For your copy of *SOME PEOPLE CHANGE*, visit Michael online at [www.michaelenglishmusic.com](http://www.michaelenglishmusic.com). Follow Michael on FaceBook at: [www.facebook.com/MichaelEnglishOfficial.com](http://www.facebook.com/MichaelEnglishOfficial.com) and on Twitter @menglish001

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# 42nd Annual Seminole Gospel Sing

By Rhonda Frye



The Seminole Music Park, located one mile south of Seminole, OK was the location of the largest Gospel Music Event in Oklahoma. The great folks at The Gospel Station Network and Seminole Gospel Singing Association hosted this Gospel Music extravaganza! Gospel Music lovers from far and near gathered late in the afternoon braving high temperatures to grab a seat close to the stage. Many well-known and well-loved artists as well as a few new faces graced the historical stage at Seminole. In fact, it was a great balance of familiar and new! I, along with Rob Patz made the journey to Oklahoma, and wow- We are sure glad we did! We couldn't have asked for a better weekend. We were certainly in our zone hanging out with our kind of people, loving the best music on planet earth!

On Thursday night, fans reveled in performances by Chris Hester, The Freemans, Gold City, The Dove Brothers and last year's talent contest winners, The Nix Family. Before I continue, I sincerely apologize that I don't have a detailed report of what each performer did on stage. During the performances, Rob and I had a steady flow of traffic at our table. We loved meeting new people, but catching every song title and word spoken from stage was pretty much impossible. I can say, overall, the crowd received each performer very well. Several times, shouts and rowdy applause broke out! Following each performance, a crowd of fans rushed the artist's table to buy product and pose for pictures. It was a blessing to observe their excitement as well as artists taking the time to pray with fans as needed.

An excited emcee, Duane Garren introduced Friday's performers with much enthusiasm just like the night before! Actually, before the concerts started each night, fans enjoyed a "pre-show" of music and announcements. Promoter, Randall Christy led the crowd in several congregational songs along with Mary Fay Jackson, host of Texas Country Gospel Music Television. With pleasure, Rob Patz and I shared all the great things that are happening with SGNSCOOPS Magazine and then I sang.

Friday's list of performers certainly blessed the crowd. There was literally appealing music for people of all ages and backgrounds. The Blackwood Brothers Quartet, The Williamsons, Kevin Spencer, Eric Hinson and Hinson Revival, Palmetto State Quartet and the Nelons "killed it!" Many times throughout the night, fans abandoned lawn chairs and stood with lifted hands in worship or sometimes just clapping along.

Saturday's events kicked off early! The annual talent competition presented new, upcoming and aspiring artists! Rob and I both served on the judge's panel and found it difficult to choose the winner! Everyone had so much to offer! This year's winner was April Davis, 2<sup>nd</sup> place- D.J. Lawley, 3<sup>rd</sup> place, Higher Praise.

Being that God answered many prayers and drenched the area with much needed rain, Saturday night's concert was moved indoors. Believe me; the rain didn't put a



damper on a thing! Fans carried chairs indoors and packed out the building!

Much like the other nights, there were announcements, congregational worship, prayer and then the crowd got a sample of the upcoming talent! The top 3 talent contest winners performed for the crowd and all were received well.



Saturday's all-star line-up sizzled! The performances of The LeFevre Quartet, Southern Sonlight, Charlotte Ritchie, Masters Voice, The Chuck Wagon Gang and Gordon Mote encouraged saints, prompted sinners, and glorified Christ in all that was said, sung and done! It was amazing!

Although the Seminole Sing came to an end Saturday night, for Rob and me- the weekend wasn't over! Promoter, Randall Christy wears many hats, including one of the "Pastor!" What a blessing it was to attend Union Valley Baptist Church. The people there were warm and friendly. We really loved worshiping with our new friends in Oklahoma. The Williamsons did an incredible job singing, I was privileged to sing as well. After the service, our friends gave us the "tour" of Union Valley. It was refreshing to catch the excitement of a fresh work and ministry that is taking place at the Gospel Station Network and Union Valley Baptist Church.

On Sunday evening, we had the Williamsons in concert all to ourselves! Well... there were a lot of other people there, but it was amazing to experience an entire evening of just the Williamsons. Lisa is a fantastic song-writer and each group member possesses unique power-house vocals. Make sure you read all about them in this issue of the SGN Scoops Magazine. Great people, great music and a great sound!

We express our sincere gratefulness for being a part of this exciting event and we're excited about next year! Thank you especially to Donnie & Lisa Williamson, Randall Christy and David & Sharla Fredrick for making us feel at home!

Yes... plans are already in the making for the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Seminole Gospel Sing, so mark your calendars NOW so you don't miss it. I recommend you get on the mailing list for next year's event info. All you have to do is **send your name, address and email** to [email@thegospelstation.com](mailto:email@thegospelstation.com) or PO BOX 1343, ADA OK 74821.



## What others say...

"I came to the Seminole Gospel Sing because I LOVE Southern Gospel Music! I... ABSOLUTELY.... LOVE... Southern Gospel Music. I love the Gospel Station to! I can't even

"It was exciting to be a part of this wonderful event! Going to the Seminole Gospel Sing has been on my list of events to go to ever since I got into Southern Gospel Music." ~Rob Patz, SGMRadio, SGNScoops Magazine



begin to give you a favorite part about this week, I love it all, I love every bit of it! I love the music...I love the artists... I love songs that praise God and lift you when you're down." ~Jerry Lynn Mullens, Gospel Station Network

"It has been a wonderful week listening to all of these great groups. We've just had a wonderful experience this week listening to the gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed the southern Gospel Music Format. It is such a blessing to be a part of this just to see people's lives touched, enhanced through Gospel Music. Our family is grateful to have been a part this weekend. We love it because our heart is in Southern Gospel Music and we thank God for enabling us to be a part of this." ~Paul Nix, the Nix Family

"It has been an exciting three days here at the Seminole Gospel Sing. God is doing so much through Southern Gospel Music and I'm encouraged. A lot of the viewers from the television program I host have come up to me and said how they've been blessed by the music here. The people here are excited, I think they're catching the vision of Southern Gospel Music. Thanks to Rhonda, SGNScoops Magazine, let's keep up the good work!" ~Mary Fay Jackson, Texas Country Gospel Music Television, Family Friendly Entertainment

"It has been a GREAT weekend here at the Seminole Gospel Sing! If you missed it, you missed a great blessing. We always have a great time at the Seminole Singing! It was great to have SGNScoops with us, we thank you for coming! I just want to encourage everyone to come out next year and be a part of this tradition of the Seminole Gospel Sing!" ~ Mark Huitt, Gospel Station Network

"I have enjoyed every night of the Seminole Sing. It has been the most wonderful and surprising thing you've ever known! Randall brings in great talent, but he features local talent too along with the big groups and I think this event is going to continue to grow into a BIG deal! I say.. Come every night, everybody, you never know what surprise you'll get! ~ Doreta-the amazing cookie lady!

"I always enjoy this concert! I drive 725 miles just to get here to this concert every year! I've come four years in a row from Colorado Springs, CO!" ~Harold Kimbrough

"When I was a child I looked forward to attending the Seminole Sing every year! I often dreamed about the day that I would share the stage with groups like The McKameys, The Nelons, Gold City, The Kingsmen and all the other great





groups that sang almost every year. This year, at the 42nd Annual Seminole Gospel Sing, my dreams became reality. We were so honored to be included in such a great lineup. We hope to be included in years to come!" ~ Lisa Williamson, The Williamsons

"Jesus was here!... I heard more than once at this year's Seminole Sing as gospel people from all over the region gathered for Oklahoma's largest outdoor gospel event at the Seminole Music Park ... We were blessed to be able to present not only some of the most well-known gospel performers but also some of the fresh up and coming artists in America. The very next week, TheGospelStation.com broadcast live from the Silver Dollar City Gospel Picnic where we met several listeners from all over the U.S. at one of the nation's largest Gospel events. GOSPEL PEOPLE ... thanks for being so genuine and dedicated to the message of Christ." ~ Randall Christy, promoter, Gospel Station Network, Union Valley Baptist Church

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## Greater Vision: An Increasing Perspective Part Two

By Lorraine Walker

Greater Vision has been an icon in the Gospel Music industry since 1990, pursuing excellence and working hard to make a difference in their world. Gerald Wolfe, Chris Allman and Rodney Griffin are each making their own mark and achieving success in their field through awards and nominations, charting songs and large concert venues. As one of the top male trios in what was once a quartet market, these men were part of wind of change that has altered the face of Southern Gospel. Through it all, they have achieved consistency, are known for integrity and are constantly gaining an improved perspective on what it means to live a strong Christian faith on the road and at home.

Last month, trio members discussed the activities associated with being a Christian artist and the necessity to remain consistent in a changing world. Yet in all the busyness and pressures of the industry both on and off stage, the personal touch remains important. Each member still makes time to visit with audience members before and after their program and to listen to each one. “People come up after every concert asking for prayer,” says Chris Allman. “Some are unspoken and then some are health [related]. You have relational-type requests and people just going through everything. We all do different things but we all go through the same stuff. And *we* are not exempt.”

Allman continues, “The thing is, we’re up on the stage and we’re living this life that some people

look at and say, ‘Okay, they’re ‘up there’. But we’re not, we’re people, and we’re doing what we love to do. We go through storms [just as other] people go through storms. I feel like we’re going through a time when the family is really under attack. A lot of folks are going through marital issues and our society has made it so easy just to just give up on the marriage and go elsewhere. I know a lot of people have gone through divorce and I’m sure it’s very painful and I pray for those folks. You know, it’s something I’m sure you never get over.”

“But then, I try to tell people I’ve been through heartaches in my own marriage,” continues Allman. “I’ve been married to a sweet, sweet woman now for 24 years, and I’m thankful for her. We’ve had our ups and we’ve had our way downs, and there were those times when we could have said, ‘let’s just give up and go our separate ways’. But first of all it doesn’t edify the Lord at all, and there’s more pain in splitting apart with the things you have to deal with. So just clinging to the Lord and clinging to each other, you work through those things and you allow God to bring restoration and healing.”

Allman pauses, then says, “I don’t know why I’ve steered it that way, or the Lord has, but anybody who might be going through something in your home - it’s so sad, some folks are just waiting for their kids to grow up, at that point they’re going to split up - God

can be edified through your marriage, through your relationship. So I would say if you're going through a hard time today, then just cling to the Lord, go back to that day whenever you said, 'Here are the things I'm going to vow to do and I'm going to stick to, and it will edify us and it will edify the Lord,' and just hang in there. God restores."

honeymoon's over' but I have found at 24 years [of marriage], the honeymoon for me is just beginning. I love my wife because there came a point in my life when I had to choose. Yes, she has differences, a lot of differences I didn't know about before we got married but I do too. There are things she's dealing with too, and I say she has to deal with a whole lot more than I



With a pastor's heart for families, Allman wants to see couples restored to a strong marriage relationship. He has four children, who he loves to talk about. "My oldest son is 25, Dustin, and I have a younger son who is 18, his name is Emery. My oldest daughter, she's 20 and her name is Jillian. Then is our little 10 year old, our little surprise, is Jules. We love them all and are very proud of them. My oldest son is a Youth Pastor at a church in Orange, Virginia. [Editor's note: Dustin and Amanda Allman were married earlier this year]. We just went on an Alaska cruise with Dr Charles Stanley, and Dustin came along and Amanda came along as well. He proposed to Amanda on the cruise. That was a special time. So, we're doing well."

Allman has some advice for his newly married son and daughter-in-law. "The day is going to come when the butterflies fly away and you're going to finally, really figure out who that girl is; this goes for anybody who is getting ready to get married. There comes a point in your life and in your marriage when you have to choose to love. A lot of people say, 'the

do. But, I would just tell him when the day comes and you have to choose, choose love."

The 'Choose Love' motto is exhibited by the personal touch shown by all the men in Greater Vision. It is another facet of the group that endears them to their audience. Just as they reach out to those that come to them with needs and pain, they pay close attention to fans who want an autograph, other artists who ask for advice and also members of the Christian media who request personal appearances, radio interviews and even just sound-bites.

Ken Grady of Gospel Music Today appreciates Greater Vision for this type of consideration of others. "We had all three members of Greater Vision as guests on the show this year," says Grady. "Of course, if you're looking for guests to talk about Southern Gospel music, who could be better than Gerald Wolfe, Rodney Griffin, and Chris Allman? What impressed me was that, for the few minutes they spent with us, I felt that we had their complete attention and that talking with us



was the most important thing they had to do. When [my wife] Jean sent out notes after the [National Quartet] Convention to thank them, as we do with all our guests, she received personal replies from all three guys. That's unusual, and I think that it reveals an attitude that is part of the reason for their long run of success in Southern Gospel music. They're at the top of their business, but they don't take their success for granted, and they take the time to pay attention to the details."

The trio certainly does not take their success for granted and a short discussion with each of the men exhibits their understanding of the role family has to play in their success. Rodney Griffin is a deeply devoted husband and father, who enjoys talking about



his children. "Reagan is 13, and Riley is 11. Regina and I have been married for 17 years. I feel so blessed to be their daddy and Regina's husband. [Regina and I] grew up 30 minutes apart and never met, not until

I was living in Tennessee and she came to a concert. Isn't that funny how the Lord works? We're sure we've passed each other on the main highway on the way to Somerset Kentucky, but we'd never met until she came out that night, April 28, 1994. We got engaged in July, which was very fast, and got married in December. I wouldn't suggest that but I was 28 at the time and that was a special time."

Griffin's wife and children are used to him being away from home as he travels with the group. He trusts that what they see of his faith-walk when he is with them will leave a lasting impression. "As a Gospel singer, you always fear that your kids will resent you being gone so much," Griffin shares. "So my prayer is always that they would appreciate what I do and hopefully see that there was a reason that Dad left every week and it wasn't just to pay the bills. He really had a passion to help people walk with the Lord. That's what I really want them to know and understand. I'm already training my oldest daughter to help me with the publishing! But as the years pass and I fade out of here hopefully she can continue what is begun."

"I hope that they appreciate what I'm doing now as they get older, as most kids do," Griffin continues. "Most of us don't really appreciate what our parents are doing until we get older. After [my] Dad got saved he was a pastor, and I didn't fully appreciate the rules and regulations we had. I didn't fully appreciate why he was gone so much, why the phone would ring and he'd be gone. We were supposed to be out doing something together and then he was gone. Not until I was grown did I appreciate it. I want my girls to appreciate the heart the Lord has given me for ministry."

Even singers God has called and given a heart for ministry can face moments of exhaustion and burn-out, trying to balance home and work responsibilities. Griffin says that Greater Vision tries to prevent this by keeping a firm hold on their touring dates. "We try to keep a healthy schedule," says Griffin. "Sure, we do 2-week trips, or 18-day trips, if we're out West or if we go overseas. You have to do those because to go to California you can't just do it in one weekend, you need to sing your way out, sing your way back. We do those, but we know that when we come home, we'll be home a few days and we can reset."

Griffin enjoys the occasional days off and scheduled vacation time. "I like to get out on the lake

and bass fish, and just do normal things. I love to get on my lawnmower, as we've got about three acres of grass. I love getting out there and not talking to anybody. I love our little country church we go to, I love [being with] my wife and my little girls. Whether I'm out on the road or whether I'm home, it's a joy. So that helps. I can't wait to leave and then I can't wait to get home. That sounds mysterious but it's really the truth. I'm just as excited to leave as I am to get home. Both of them are equally exciting. That keeps us from burning out—maintaining a healthy balance.”

Along with keeping a balance in work and



personal lives, Griffin stresses the importance of a strong spiritual life and regular personal devotions. “This year I’m doing something I’ve never done, I’m reading the Bible through,” says Griffin. “I have a Bible that has everything arranged in chronological order in which it was written. So you’ll be reading through a book for a few chapters and all of a sudden you’ll be reading another book. It’s kind of confusing and interesting at the same time. I’m so used to my Bible, with check marks and notes that help me remember things.”

Griffin continues, “I love reading Oswald Chambers and I love Glen Evans, ‘Daily with the King’. I also love Adrian Rogers. After his passing, when he went to heaven, his staff at Love Worth Finding put together a couple little books that are

‘Adrian-isms’. He was great at turning a phrase, and I find strength in those little phrases. Just a phrase or two, read them through, it’s amazing how they kind of set the course for your day. We’re not in church being fed, we’re not in Sunday School class, so we’d just dry up and wither as Christians if we didn’t set time aside to really think about the Lord and try to grow. It’s very important.”

Rodney Griffin recognizes the importance daily communication with the Lord in order to maintain a strong personal relationship with Christ. He has been in full-time Gospel music ministry for over 21 years and he himself admits that it’s rare for anyone to be in the same job for that length of time. “I guess it tells how happy I am,” Griffin smiles. “I tell people you have to be fulfilled. Sometimes I ask singers who don’t seem very happy, ‘Are you fulfilled?’ And they’ll say, ‘well, sometimes I am, sometimes I’m not’, or ‘If the crowd’s good, yes, but if the crowd’s not good, no’.”

“But fulfillment comes from knowing that at the end of the day I’ve done what I’m supposed to do that day,” says Griffin. “There’s no strings attached, no checklist of things, it’s just, ‘did I obey God today’. If I obey Him then I’m going to follow His orders set for the day, and if I follow His orders set for the day, I’m going to probably see some results of fruit that I can’t take any credit for but they’re sure exciting to watch. It makes you want to get up the next day and live for Him, just to see what He has in store again.”

Greater Vision members have learned that consistency is key to their industry success, and obedience is key to growing, living faith. They have decided to “Choose Love” and this motto has provided a positive lens through which to view their world. Their dedication to their music, their families and their Lord will continue to increase their perspective on the future. With such a mindset, fans and friends look forward to see what the next 22 years have in store for Greater Vision.

For more information:

Greater Vision <http://greatervisionmusic.com/> and <http://www.facebook.com/greatervisionmusic>  
Ken and Jean Grady, Gospel Music Today <http://www.gospelmusictoday.com/>





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# A Mathis Moment:

## “The most difficult person I’ve ever met!”

By John Mathis Jr.



I’ve probably met and encountered more people than the average person I guess. From a young age, as soon as I and my brothers were playing instruments, we started traveling, singing and evangelizing. I was even preaching by age 10 and always meeting new people. During high school, I was very active in playing basketball and school activities that took me to student conventions from Flagstaff, AZ to Indianapolis, IN and everywhere in between. I met a lot of folks through that time.

My family was also involved in our church organization at the time and would go to state conventions and general assemblies and I’d meet new people all the time by the dozens and hundreds. I was a pastor for about nine years and a worship pastor for about four years; I was always meeting new people. Throw in the music business with countless events over the years and yes, always meeting new people.

Add to that all the other jobs over the years and life events and now a few years of social media, I’ve met thousands and thousands of people and out of all those people there is still one that takes the cake in regard to the most difficult person I’ve ever met.

I’ve known this person for a long time and this person’s decisions have cost me more time, embarrassments, shame, consequences, and regrets than I can count. And you know what, I still have to see them EVERY DAY! Imagine that!!!

Have you figured out who I’m talking about yet? I’m talking about ME. I’m the most difficult person I’ve ever met! I have been my biggest challenge and created the

biggest obstacles in my life, not the people I’ve attended church with, not the people I’ve worked with, not some boss or supervisor, not a government, not a spouse, not my children... it’s been ME, ME, ME!

Matthew the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter starts out talking about judging others and with whatever judgment you judge, the same will be measure back to you. Along about verse 5, Jesus says to remove the plank or beam that is in your own eye before you begin to remove the splinter or speck in your brother’s eye.

I’ve realized over the years that Jesus was giving me a little hint. He was basically saying that what is wrong or misguided in someone else’s life is very, very tiny (just a splinter) compared to what I’m going to need to work on in my own life (a beam, a plank, a log, a very, very large piece of timber!) And He was saying that I personally will have my work cut out for me, managing my own thoughts, managing my tongue (my words), managing my emotions, actions and reactions. That my personal responsibility for how I live my life was greater, first and foremost, than that of managing someone else’s! Trust me, it’s been a big job and the more I’ve realized that the less I’ve had time to worry about managing someone else’s.

In essence, I have a full time management job of managing “John Mathis.” I am actually the owner of a small business: “John Mathis Incorporated!” And just like a business, I have to get up and go to work every day on making sure “John Mathis” runs smoothly. I’m fully responsible for all my choices and decisions and the consequences they bring. There has not been one “yes” or “no” that I did not have the chance to say one or the other.



Every choice has been mine to make! And every choice has been mine to live with!

It's ironic that most of us get up and manage something every day of our lives. We manage a position we're given by an employer or manage a household full of children. We all manage something, yet sometimes we forget the biggest thing we have to manage is ourselves. Just like any business, we want it to grow, to change, to become better, and to advance. Those things do not happen without constant oversight and direction.

What's the best part of this!? God knew this all along! If you take a close look at many of the scriptures, they're written to us in personal manner. "Love the Lord YOUR God with all YOUR heart" does not start with "Tell the guy next to you." Nor does it say, "Go tell your neighbor to love his neighbor like he does himself." Much of it was written for personal application and managing those moments in life where we need a guide to follow. It's kind of like the "company" comes with a "company manual." A manual that will guide a person to having love, joy and peace in everyday life!

Yes, I fully admit I AM the most difficult person I've ever met and I'm pretty certain that I'll hold that distinction until the day I take my last breath. But I'm up for the challenge! I answered the call to be a disciple, literally "a student of the discipline." Working so closely with myself I've learned a lot about me, my quirks, my flaws, my weaknesses and I know that there is an application and foundation for each one of those things to change me to a better ME.

Secondly we're called to make new disciples, others who wish to become students of the discipline also. By the way, have you ever noticed when someone has a successful business, others want to know how they did it so they can start one of their own?

Alright, time to go; I have a company to run!

John Mathis

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[www.pebn.org](http://www.pebn.org)

[www.johnmathisjr.com](http://www.johnmathisjr.com)

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*Photo courtesy of Zach Klein*

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# *The Williamsons: Revival Winds from Tornado Alley*

**By Lorraine Walker**

From the State of Oklahoma in the middle of Tornado Alley come the refreshing sounds of The Williamsons. This mixed quartet is creating its own storm-wind of revival with charting songs and a Dove Award nomination. The beautiful alto voice of Lisa Williamson highlights the group's traditional Gospel music with country overtones, along with a joyful attitude that permeates every song. Though the name may be new to some, The Williamsons have a long history in Southern Gospel.

The Williamsons in their current form began in 1998 as The Homesteaders, taken from the slogan of Oklahoma, The 'Sooner' or 'Homesteader' State. The group soon realized that there were secular groups with similar names and this created marketing issues. The quartet returned to the original family name of The Williamsons, a group begun by Donnie Williamson's parents in the late 1960's.

Donnie Williamson is the patriarch of the group and he describes the revisions The Williamsons have undergone since they hit the road in 1998. "The group has had a few changes over the years, mostly from growing pains," says Williamson. "We quickly began

to get busier than some of the original members could keep up with and maintain their jobs. My sister Tennie, who was an original member, had to leave because of health and family reasons." The current line up consists of Donnie Williamson, his wife Lisa, bass singer Darin Hebert, and David Folenius who is the newest member with a tenure of two years with the group.

"We met Darin while he was still in high school," continues Williamson. Hebert at the time was billed as 'the lowest teenage bass singer in Gospel Music', according to his biography. "He couldn't sing much, but he had tremendous passion. I knew he would be one of the finest some day and he proved me right. Our former lead singer had to move back to Tennessee and we received a call from David Folenius, with whom we share a mutual friend. He heard we needed a new lead singer and he contacted us. We are so glad he did." Folenius sang with regional groups since the age of 15 and worked with The Stamps Quartet, probably the most legendary name on his resume, before joining The Williamsons.

The Williamsons have a tight sound with a



good blend and songs that showcase Gospel harmonies. Their latest project is entitled *SAVED*, produced by the group with assistance from Roger Talley. “We love singing the Gospel message,” Williamson shares. “Perhaps the song from this project that receives the best response from our audiences is one written by my wife titled ‘Hosanna’. It tells of how Jesus rode into Jerusalem and was greeted with shouts of Hosanna but then reminds us of how drastically things changed just a few days later. The high point of the song is when it tells us how He rose from the grave and will one day come again. Once more all His children will greet Him



with shouts of ‘Hosanna.’ It is a powerful song with a powerful message. People get excited when reminded of the resurrection and second coming of our King!”

Donnie’s wife Lisa Williamson came from a musical family, and is known for her vocal ability and her prolific songwriting. Lisa has written for many groups, and her song entitled ‘I’m Ready To Go’ as performed by The Kingsmen, reached number six on the Singing News national chart. Fellow alto and legendary Gospel artist Debra Talley is a fan of the group and of Lisa’s vocals in particular. Talley says, “The Williamsons have been good friends to the Talleys and we always enjoy being in concert with them. Lisa Williamson is one of my favorite singers. You can tell she loves what she does. She has the ability to bring tenderness when the lyric calls for it, and when it’s time to bring the power, she delivers. Her humble spirit is what draws people to her. She’s the real deal.” Talley

adds, “Oh, the guys are good too. Donnie and the guys have a great heart for souls.”

Gospel songwriter and comedian Dawn Doss, president of the Central Virginia Angel Hearts (CVAH) organization, agrees with Talley that The Williamsons are the real deal. She has promoted this group often and is a huge fan. “I love The Williamsons!” says Doss. “They first came to work with us at the 5th Annual Warren Smoot Memorial Benefit concert in August 2005, and quickly became a local fan favorite. They have a way of incorporating many musical styles into their program without straying too far from a strong Southern Gospel sound. They are a mixed quartet but their overall blend still lends itself to convention-style music, in the style of the early Weatherfords and Speers.”

Doss describes the group: “Donnie Williamson is a great emcee and manager, and will sit at the piano on occasion to change up the program, so it’s not all about overshadowing tracks. Lisa Williamson is one of the best female singers I have ever heard, and a gifted writer. I have always thought her voice was extremely well suited to the industry sound that makes Southern Gospel unique. Darin Hebert is a great young talent, whose deep bass notes round out the rich harmony of the group. David Folenius has a strong vocal approach that compliments the presence of the Williamsons, yet his flare and finesse are not show-stealing or self-serving.”

“They love the Lord, but don’t go about with false modesty or gooey spirituality,” continues Doss. “They live what they sing, and desire to see souls find the Lord, but they are real and down to earth, approachable and grateful for where the Lord has brought them. They are also very generous and willing to sacrifice when necessary to be where the Lord leads them.”

Doss decided to include the group in the CVAH concert series after a recommendation from Southern Gospel artist Rick Busby. The Williamsons left their mark in Virginia through Doss’s organization and this opened the door for the group to appear in the Carolinas as well. From the Southern states across the nation to places like Missouri, the group’s popularity is growing.

D.A. Callaway of Silver Dollar City events in Branson, Missouri, is one of the growing number of

fans. “The Williamsons have been featured at Silver Dollar City’s Southern Gospel Picnic,” says Callaway. “They are quite professional in appearance and performance. This group has a clear respect for tradition and I admire that. Each member has merit vocally, but

door.’ Awkward!”

Awkward moments abound in the Gospel music industry, but so do times of blessing, growth and change. Traveling with his own group since 1998,



I must say that Lisa’s alto singing is on a par with the world’s best.” Callaway continues, “The Williamsons are sincere and humble. They are simply likeable, onstage and off, and you can’t beat that.”

Likable and sincere, The Williamsons have friends across the country who are ready to provide whatever the group might need when they are in town. In one instance, an invitation to Sunday dinner also helped to keep the group humble. “We were in Waldron, Arkansas and were going to sing at the Freedom Free Will Baptist Church,” Donnie shares. “We had a friend there who we called Sis and were going to spend a little time at her house before going to the church. I hadn’t been there in a long time but remembered about where she lived. We pulled up and I knocked on the door. A man answered and invited us in. I didn’t recognize him but I didn’t think much of it as I figured he was a friend of Sis. We exchanged small talk for a minute and I finally asked if they had anything to eat because I was starving. He said, very nicely, ‘Well, son, I don’t believe I know who you are!’ I said, ‘Oh, I’m sorry. We are friends of Sis Ward.’ He replied, ‘She lives next

and prior to that with his parents’ group, Donnie Williamson has seen a lot of changes in the industry. “I think perhaps the most significant change has come with the digital age,” says Williamson. “There are so many things we can do now with digital equipment, recording, social networking, etc. It is almost unbelievable how many people we can reach, pretty much instantly. It is changing the way we market everything, even the Gospel. SGN Scoops is a prime example of that. Groups can now be exposed to thousands without going through the normal channels if they are sharp enough and work hard enough.”

“Another major change I have seen is the evolution of music styles in our churches. I am really glad to see the musical part of our church services being more of a worship experience. But I am saddened when I hear from a worship pastor that they no longer use Gospel music in their church. My feeling is that we should share the Gospel message through whatever means are available. However, I must say I am seeing Gospel music creep back into places where it has been absent far too long.”



Donnie Williamson says his current favorite song is “The Love of God”, a reflection of the older music that is sometimes left out of today’s church repertoire. “I think it is one of the best written songs of the older generation. Interestingly, the words to the first verse were found written on the wall of a mental institution. In a day when we are so often looking for a catchy hook line, it is refreshing to hear a song that talks about God’s love for us in a profound way. Having said all that I’m also a big fan of my wife’s writing, songs like: ‘I’m Ready to Go’, ‘He’s Leading Me’, ‘Hosanna’, and our latest radio release ‘What I Could Have Been.’

With solid original songs, strong vocalists and great harmony, The Williamsons appear to have a bright future in Gospel music. Their goals, however, include more than chart-topping songs. “Without sounding hokey, my goal is to see more lives changed than ever

during our trip. [Also], we are visiting with a dear friend about joining us and assisting with promotions. He has been a long-time pastor and my desire is for him to be *our* pastor.”

“It is really hard to travel across the country, sing your heart out, and stay fed yourself,” says Donnie Williamson. “When one is doing what we do it takes a special effort to keep that closeness with Him and to keep in His Word. My desire is for each of us to be so full of the love of God that it can’t help but spill over onto others.”

Audiences of The Williamsons have the pleasure of experiencing the ‘spill over’ of God’s love from these ministers of God in their concerts and recorded music. As group members strive to keep a close, personal relationship with the God of the Universe, mighty things will continue to happen in their lives



before,” says Williamson. “We saw thousands come to Christ in the past year and want to see more this year.”

As group manager, Williamson has set many goals for the group, including increased audiences, larger venues and the addition of technology to their stage presentations. As well, there are specific spiritual goals he would like each member to strive for in the coming months. “I would like to see each of us have a closer personal relationship with God. We established a pattern of appointing one person to be in charge of praying for the meetings in the upcoming week and then that person would lead the group in a devotional

and the lives of those they touch. This will continue the wind-storm of revival from the Tornado Alley of Oklahoma to the world.

For More Information:

The Williamsons <http://www.williamsonsmusic.com/>

Debra Talley, The Talleys <http://www.talleytrio.com/>

Dawn Doss, Songwriter <http://www.centralvaangelhearts.com/>

DA Callaway, Silver Dollar City Events <http://www.silverdollarcity.com/>



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# New Music for September

by Sandi Duncan Clark

September...NQC! It's finally here! The National Quartet Convention is one of the largest, most rewarding concerts of the year for Southern Gospel artists and fans and IT'S FINALLY HERE! Welcome, everyone! And...if YOU'RE HERE, come see us at the SGNSCOOPS booth!

If you ARE here, you'll have the opportunity to purchase some of the new music we are looking at this month! Be sure to go give these artists an opportunity to win your support, love and respect!



## THE RAMBOS GREATEST HITS

Rambo McGuire Records  
Compilation Recording, Various Producers

My entire day was spent with the Rambos! If you recall Dottie, Reba and Buck and the recordings we enjoyed throughout the 1960s with all the wonderful songs Dottie wrote, you will agree, this was a perfect way to spend a rainy, cloudy Saturday! Please note that I did NOT say dreary day because with this music, this could not be a dreary day!

THE RAMBOS GREATEST HITS is a combination

CD and DVD of many of their most requested songs and take it from me; you will be rejoicing and singing along! First, the CD: Twenty previously recorded songs, with wonderful music and arrangements that featured this mighty trio.

“We Shall Behold Him,” “The Holy Hills of Heaven Call Me,” “New Shoes” and “Too Much To Gain To Lose” are only a few of the songs we remember from the Rambos. The Rambos became a household word in the 1960s, and recorded more than thirty albums. The songs on this recording were many of the radio hits for the family group.

This is more than 90 minutes of sheer Gospel music enjoyment. Have you ever vacuumed to the rhythm of “New Shoes,” or mopped your kitchen floor to “If That Isn’t Love?” Okay, so that’s not my normal way of doing housework either, but by the time I finished, I was in a totally new state of mind!

The other blessing in this package is a DVD with ten of the Rambos top hit songs, taped at various times and locations throughout their career. What a trip down memory lane! I loved seeing the clothes and the hair! I can’t believe we all wore our hair so BIG...even the men! The bonus feature on this DVD is a home video made by Mark Lowry with the Rambos at home. Mark’s note stated they had not sung together in ten years. Dony McGuire plays piano with Buck, Reba and Dottie singing, gathered ‘round the piano. Mark sits in the floor, prompting any words they might have forgotten. I absolutely love it!

Thank you to my dear friend who supplied this

recording for our review, and thank you to Reba and Dony who have put this together for our blessings. Thank you, Mark for sharing your video with the world! You may obtain a copy of this treasure by contacting 615-673-2657, or by visiting the web site at [www.rambomcguire.com](http://www.rambomcguire.com).



LOVE WON  
The Talleys  
Horizon Records  
Producer: Roger Talley

Some form of the Talleys has blessed us with their music since 1984, with various family combinations and great music. This latest recording was completed following Lauren's marriage to Brian Alvey last summer. Brian joined the group in late fall, adding a new vocal dimension to the Talley's sound. Brian also plays several instruments and writes some dynamic songs, three of which are included on the album; "We Want To Thank You," "Make Way For The Master," and one of my favorites, "That's Why I Love Him So." The latter is noted as a 'bonus cut' on LOVE WON and is a song that he co-wrote with Gary Casto when Brian was with Tribute Quartet.

From beginning to end, LOVE WON is a winner! Every song touches one's heart in a unique way, beginning with "We Want To Thank You." After a hectic week of work, family appointments and other issues, it was a blessing to relax with the Talleys and allow God to minister to my soul. Thanksgiving is always the best way to get in tune with the Father!

Debra Talley has been one of my favorite singers forever and her vocals here are flawless. I love her delivery on "Love Covers It All." This is one of several songs written or co-written by Kenna Turner West.

Kenna also collaborated with Belinda Cox and Jason Cox on "Love Won." The piano and orchestra intro is unbelievable, and Lauren is featured on this powerful song! Debra and Lauren both are featured on another song that truly ministered to me; "Great Love He Gave." Wow...what a compelling ending on this song!

Diane Wilkinson's "The Church Will Overcome," with a blues arrangement and Daryl Williams' "Surely" with a traditional Southern Gospel arrangement will have you patting your feet and clapping along. There is definitely something on this recording that will appeal to every fan of Gospel music. Whether it is in concert at your church or on the stage of one of the many venues of Southern Gospel, you will appreciate the Talleys and their ability to share their love for the Lord through the music they present.

You may contact the Talleys at [www.thetalleys.com](http://www.thetalleys.com) to enjoy the thirteen songs on LOVE WON or look for them at the National Quartet Convention!



IT'S IN THE SAVIOR'S HANDS  
The Inspirations  
Horizon Records  
Producers: Martin Cook, Jeff Collins

The Inspirations Quartet is one of the most respected, fan-cherished quartets in the business today, and has been so since the early 1960s. The history of Southern Gospel music could never be written without a feature on the Inspirations. Under the leadership of Martin Cook, the group has withstood personnel changes, industry challenges and the many tests that the world and the economy lay at our feet, when we serve the Lord. The group has maintained a solid following throughout the years, with integrity and a signature sound. Their song selection is always based on sound scriptural teachings.



Over the years, the Inspirations have had great radio success with songs written by Sandi Knight and Squire Parsons. Both writers have contributed to the song list on this recording and the group treated each song with great talent and respect. Squire wrote the title song, "It's In The Savior's Hands," which has done well for the quartet on Southern Gospel radio and their remake of "In The Twinkle of An Eye," written by Sandy, has a great steel guitar lead-in.

Sandy also wrote "Stir The Wind," and "So Simple, So Profound;" the latter being one of my picks from this recording. I love the song, the arrangement and the quartet's royal treatment of it. The message is powerful and a simple guitar music track allows the quartet to deliver the wisdom and sincerity of the message without being overpowered with the music and... deliver they do!

Martin Cook has put together six men who love the Lord and love the music they sing. While the arrangements on this recording are a little more updated, the sound and style remains the same. This is the reason that thousands of fans flock to the annual concerts the Inspirations promote in the Smokey Mountains, at Inspiration Park near their home in Bryson City, North Carolina.

You may have your copy of IT'S IN THE SAVIOR'S HANDS by contacting the Inspirations at 828-497-2060 or [www.theinspirations.com](http://www.theinspirations.com).



### TRIBUTE FROM THE HEART

The Hinshaw Family Trio

Independent

Producers: Robin Hinshaw, Sandy Hinshaw, Debbie Hinshaw Farmer

Having preciousely experienced the Hinshaw Family; Mom, Connie, Dad, Floyd, with their daughters Robin, Sandy and Debbie, a few months back, I was pleased to have this recording. It continues the talented music presentation from the Hinshaw family through the trio vocals of the three Hinshaw sisters, Robin, Sandy and Debbie. Family harmony and blend is so enjoyable and the ladies' song selection showcases their talent.

The Hinshaw sisters have dedicated this recording to their parents who introduced them to Gospel music, and taught them to sing. It is a tribute to their love for music and their Christian heritage. They began singing together at a very young age, and this recording is proof of their efforts to provide quality music for their listeners. There are twelve songs here, all of which are well known to any fan of church or Gospel music.

Beginning with "In Times Like These," Robin, Sandy and Debbie are a pleasure to enjoy. Strong lead vocals from Robin are complimented by Sandy's alto and Debbie's tenor. They move on to "He Giveth More Grace," "He's All I Need," and "This Is Just What Heaven Means To Me," which are only a sampling of the church music the ladies recorded on this project.

While I do have a favorite, I must say that this entire project is worth the many rewinds I punched today. You may have your personal copy by contacting The Hinshaw Family Trio at [www.thehinshawfamilync.com](http://www.thehinshawfamilync.com)

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# Victoria Shirey

## FAITH IN THE MIDST OF THE STORM

*By Sandi Duncan Clark*



When it comes to serving God, Victoria Shirey has years of experience under her belt even at the young age of 23. From the time she was a little girl, God, the church and singing played major roles in her life. That foundation has sustained her throughout her young life.

Victoria Shirey is the daughter of Wayne and Darlene Shirey, and for most of her life, the family has traveled extensively across the United States as The Shireys, a Southern Gospel singing group. Victoria currently lives in Hendersonville, Tennessee, and works at Homeland Inspiration Group, where she is a Producer, does background vocals and web design for the record company. Every weekend she makes the seven hour trek home to Columbia, South Carolina to meet the bus for the group's weekend concert dates.

While Victoria sings the high part in the family group, she contributes much more to the ministry. Victoria sings, writes and arranges much of the Shireys' music. She also plays piano and bass guitar. "I've always loved to write, and that started when I was very

young," Victoria shared her story. "As a family, we have recorded a number of my songs, and other groups have recorded some of them. As for as my playing, I enjoy just sitting down to the piano and playing my favorite music and writing, as well as playing in our concerts," she stated.

Victoria's younger sister Rachael also sings with the family, while her brother, Chris Taylor and his wife, Jenny, have a youth oriented music ministry based in North Carolina. The entire family has dedicated their life to serving God through music.

Through the years, Victoria Shirey will tell you, as a family, even in a music ministry for the Lord, you still have the same trials that affect everyone. "When one focuses on the ministry and truly dedicates what they do to the cause of Christ, it does not exempt one from troubles," Victoria recently told us. "It only means that God is with us and directs those things for our good and for His Glory."

Victoria recently published a book titled FAITH IN THE MIDST OF THE STORMS. This book expounds on the lessons she has learned while serving God and being faithful with her talent. As previously stated, Victoria enjoys expressing her thoughts through writing, and the book is a collection of her thoughts through her years of Christian service.

me through, and the things He has brought me to. He reminded me that He did those things because He loves His children and that I should tell what He has done for me, to offer help and comfort to others who need encouragement.”

“I wrote my thoughts and the answers God taught me from His word. The book was released on June 29<sup>th</sup>, and I’ve had some really neat responses from people who have read it,” Victoria remarked.

A chapter in FAITH IN THE MIDST OF THE STORMS shares Victoria’s struggle with depression. According to her testimony, “Following the breakup of a relationship, I became depressed because I truly felt that we had been destined to be husband and wife,” she shared. “But due to not having an honest relationship, I broke off the association. I suffered from that, and became not only depressed, but oppressed. Through it all, God taught me not to trust my own choices and delights, but that if we trust Him, He has our best interest at heart. In Jeremiah 29:11, He said ‘I know the plans I have for you...’ I prayed continually for God to heal my heart and mind, and give me His peace. Through faith, it was almost as if God flipped a switch and the depression was gone!” Victoria states.

Another part of Victoria’s book tells the story of her faith in believing God for a mate. “After God’s healing from the depression, I promised Him that I would trust Him for a companion, and I continued to serve the Lord in our family’s music ministry. I continued writing music, and working in the studio and that, along with the average 280 dates that we sing each year absorbed my time.”

On an off-weekend for The Shireys, Victoria’s brother and sister-in-law and their youth ministry had plans for a youth rally weekend in Virginia. “Chris called me and said he needed me to help out with the music. At first, on an off-weekend, I didn’t want to make the trip, but when Chris said that Rachael was coming, I agreed to come along,” Victoria picked up the story. “I learned that Chris had made



“Often as I testified to what the Lord has done in my life, someone would mention that I should share it in a book, and as I prayed over that, the Lord impressed me to do so,” Victoria declared. “I never thought I’d write a book, but the Lord prompted me with all the wonderful things He has done for me; the things He has brought



some changes in his band and had a new bass player, Aaron Bowlin. That weekend as we ministered in the youth services, we enjoyed each other's company, and exchanged phone numbers, but went our separate ways. A month or so later, we connected again by phone. We shared our love for the Lord, and music and what God had called us to do; on that first night we talked for two hours. When we hung up, we made plans to meet again another time and decided to stay in touch by phone."

Aaron is a youth pastor in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, and eventually the two young people did meet and after getting to know each other, through the Lord's direction, they fell in love. They continue to see each other and have plans for marriage in the future! "This is just how God does things," Victoria exclaimed! "We both had asked God to show us the person we were to marry, and through this experience, God fulfilled His promise!"

Along with the book, Victoria has been working on another project. "I wanted to do a new solo album, and I now have it well underway," she announced! "The title of the new project is 'Who I Am Today,' and I was blessed to have some of my friends join me on some of the songs; Joseph Habedank, Kim Hopper, Bill Shivers, Steven Cooper and Wesley Smith. It's almost ready for release, and I'm excited to have the fans hear it."

Another avenue of Victoria's ministry is her ability to encourage and connect with others through her speaking engagements. "Believe it or not, I was very shy when I was growing up, but through the years and God's gifts of healing, the talent He has given me and the life-lessons He has taught me have unlocked my tongue and I'm able to share His grace and mercy," she confirmed. "I have been able to share my testimony and experiences with thousands of people across the country, and have been touched as I watched people make decisions for Christ and be uplifted through God's anointing on my ministry. To me, that's what it's all about."

The future holds much for Victoria Shirey, and she's ready and willing to accept what God has in store. Her testimony through her music, her speaking and her book is that God loves us wants us to be happy. He will answer our prayers, and all He desires from us is our love, devotion and praise. For more information visit: <http://www.victoriashireyministries.com/>

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# TaRanda Greene

## In South Carolina

By Angela Griffin

TaRanda Greene brought the house down at First North Baptist Church in Spartanburg, SC! From the moment we arrived excitement filled the air, in anticipation of TaRanda singing “New Jerusalem” with the First North choir; led by Josh Epton. The performance brought the audience to their feet!

Josh shared, “I was driving down the road listening to a CD of the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir. Anyone that

knows me knows if I’m in the car I am probably listening to a Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir CD. A song started to play...”New Jerusalem”...it literally moved me to tears! I had to pull over to the side of the road. I wept for about five minutes. The song impacted my life greatly that day. I made it to my office at the church and began my quest to find the soloist on the compilation. The artist touched me so greatly through her deliverance of the song. She had painted a beautiful picture of what Heaven will be like in that “New Jerusalem.” I began to read the CD cover and found to my surprise it was none other than the incredible, TaRanda Greene. I walked out of my office to my secretary’s desk, and said, “I want you to contact and schedule TaRanda Greene.” Josh shared how his experience with TaRanda’s song impacted his commute. He told his secretary that he would also like for the First North choir to sing “New Jerusalem” with her. On Sunday August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012 that dream became a reality. What a night it turned out to be. No mistaking that the power of the almighty God filled that auditorium.

What Josh didn’t know, is that song had a very special meaning for TaRanda as well. TaRanda’s late husband, Tony Greene, was very ill on the day TaRanda flew to New York to record “New Jerusalem” with the Brooklyn Tabernacle choir. He didn’t tell her because he knew she would cancel the trip. As TaRanda flew to New York, Tony was headed to the hospital.

While at the church, TaRanda received a call from her sister-in-law asking how Tony was doing. Not knowing that her husband had been taken to the hospital, TaRanda said “He’s fine.” Things quickly changed when her sister-in-law asked “Is he still at the hospital?” TaRanda answered by saying “I didn’t know he was at the hospital.” TaRanda began to make calls and spoke with her other sister-in-law, Kim Hopper. Kim told her that the doctors had given Tony a shot for an infection in his body, but the shot caused him to go into anaphylactic shock. Kim assured TaRanda that the doctors had it



under control. By this time TaRanda was very much in tears. Tony's message to TaRanda was "Daisy (that's what he called her) you stay up there and record that song, it is going to touch lives and bless people."



Members of the church began to gather around TaRanda, praying over her and for Tony. Fear had gripped her in the thought that she might lose Tony. As she began to record the song, thinking about him, she started to sing about that heavenly place called New Jerusalem and it resonated through the recording. TaRanda made it through the first verse and chorus. She was very emotional and stopped the recording. TaRanda headed to the airport to catch a plane back to North Carolina to be by her husband's side. What was meant to be the "rough" tracks that TaRanda had recorded that day, actually made it to the compilation and the rest was recorded upon her return to the live show.

TaRanda started the concert off at First North by fulfilling Josh's request with the choir backing her up on "New Jerusalem." Everyone was on their feet, tears flowing, hands raised and people cheering as the song ended. A little bit of heaven swept over the congregation. All I can say is that it brought the house down!

TaRanda kicked off her solo portion of the night with "Joy to the World." It reminded us all that it doesn't have to be Christmas to sing *"Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room, and Heaven and nature sing"*. I love this line... ***"He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove***

***the glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love"***. May we all repeat the sounding joy that he is King of Kings and Lord of Lords in our daily walk with Christ! The congregation was once again on their feet.

It was a "Brooklyn" night as TaRanda sang "Oh the Cross." Her heartfelt performance of "Oh the Cross" was impeccable. I don't believe there was a dry eye in the congregation, as they rose to their feet once more. The second verse starts with the lyrics... *"Day after day as I live my life; I find heartache, trouble, battles to fight. When fear tries to grip me and I feel alone, My Jesus is with me."* As the song ended, TaRanda began to give her testimony about her life with her husband, Tony.

TaRanda began to share how she fell in love with Tony Greene of "The Greenes" and married very early in life. "I was his Daisy and he was my Duke. Six months into our marriage, Tony was diagnosed with kidney failure. That was a blow for such a young couple. We were told we would never have children, but we have two beautiful little girls Belle and Josie." She shared how the day came that Tony needed a kidney and she was a perfect match. She said "That's why I'm a little skinnier on this side." The audience erupted in laughter. Then she shared that Tony lost his battle and that her husband is now in that New Jerusalem. After her great loss she became depressed. She found herself not wanting to get out of bed. She shared that her







whole life was wrapped up in her husband... her family, her career, her everything and she loved it! "It was like I didn't have an identity when I lost my husband, my best friend," TaRanda explained. After an eight month daily struggle with depression, TaRanda cried out to God for help and guidance in her life and said, "This isn't me." TaRanda shared how she'd been taking three different medications for her depression... one to help her sleep, one to help her wake up, and one just to make it through the day. Today she is completely off all meds, happy and living life to the fullest.

TaRanda also filled another request by First North ... "Oh Holy Night." The orchestra along with the over 200 voice choir backing her up was yet another highlight of the evening. TaRanda finished the concert by singing "The Hallelujah Chorus" as only TaRanda can do. It was incredible! It brought the house down once again and the congregation to their feet. As TaRanda left the stage, the congregation was still

standing, hands raised, and people cheering wanting more.

Just before closing, the First North all male quartet brought TaRanda back to the stage to sing "Jesus Hold My Hand" with them. They just had fun singing this old classic that is loved by all. It was a night to remember. Hearts were blessed by the ministry and testimony of TaRanda.

Keep up with all the latest in TaRanda's ministry by visiting her website at [www.tarandamusic.com](http://www.tarandamusic.com)

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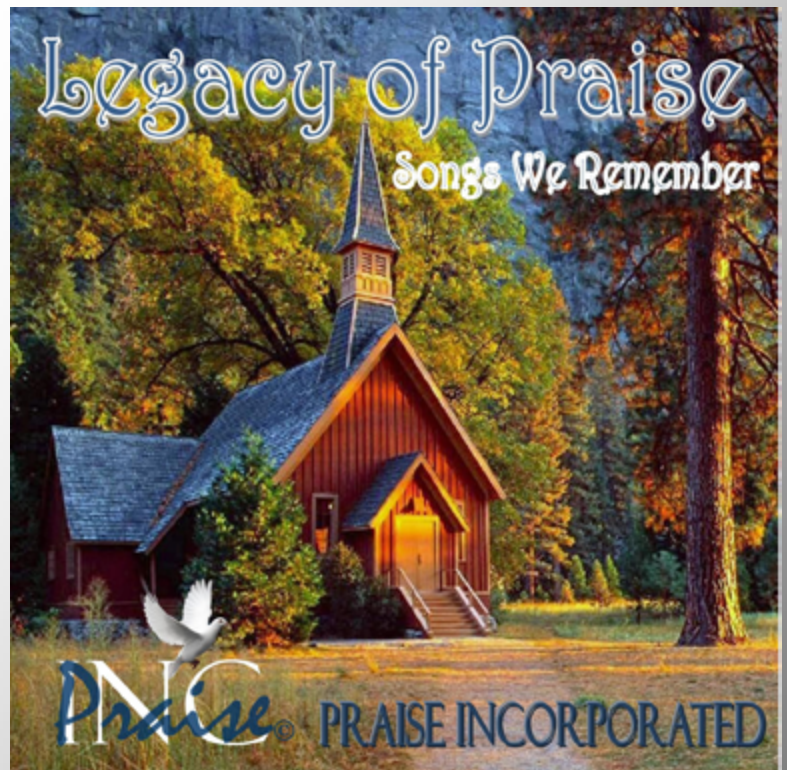
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# HE GIVES HIS BELOVED SLEEP

By Laurette Willis



*“It is vain for you to rise up early, to take rest late, to eat the bread of [anxious] toil—for **He gives [blessings] to His beloved in sleep**” (Psalm 127:2, Amp.).*

Are you receiving the full measure of God’s blessings for you in your sleep? How many hours do you sleep on average per night—and are you receiving *restful* sleep?

Research shows that those who sleep less than 7 hours a night tend to have a higher BMI (body mass index), which is a method for determining body fat. It appears that certain hormone levels change when you don’t sleep enough, causing a greater accumulation of fat. This also will affect your metabolism.

Sleeping less than 6 hours per night can dramatically affect insulin levels, leading to fat storage. This can also place your body into a pre-diabetic state.

## How Much Sleep Do We Need?

Many medical experts agree that most of us need between 6 and 8 hours of sleep every night. This amount can vary depending on your body, circumstances, illness, stress, etc.

It’s also important to remember that you cannot ‘catch up’ on sleep. So you can’t deprive yourself of sleep all week and expect to catch up on the weekend. Doctors at the University of California at San Diego have found that losing a few hours of sleep not only makes you feel tired during the following day, but also can affect the immune system, possibly impairing the body’s ability to fight infection. Since immunity diminishes with tiredness, your body is unable to defend itself against bacteria, microbes and viruses, and cannot cope with the build-up of harmful substances in the body.

## Too Blessed to Stress?

Stress has an impact upon sleep. According to the American Medical Association, stress is responsible for more than 85% of all illness and disease.

It seems the majority of causes of stress that we face on a day-to-day basis are the true culprits, even though they are not as extreme as major life stressors such as the passing of a loved one, or other loss. The day-to-day causes of stress are those daily, minor irritations such as traffic jams, misplacing car keys, and minor arguments with family or coworkers.

The frustration caused by these daily inconveniences tends to cause the most stress, because of their frequency, and can therefore undermine our health.

Not only can stress lead to lack of sleep, but sleep deprivation itself is an additional cause of stress. That's kind of like a dog chasing its own tail—cute in a cartoon, not so cute when it's our own life experience.

### Help for Adrenal Glands

The adrenal glands sit atop the kidneys and are chiefly responsible for releasing hormones in response to stress (such as cortisol, epinephrine (adrenaline) and norepinephrine).

If your adrenal glands are overworked, you will have a tendency to have problems falling asleep. If your adrenals are depleted, you will find yourself waking up during the night. This is why it's so important to support your adrenal function.

Vitamins like C, E and all the B vitamins (especially pantothenic acid and B6) have crucial roles in the production and actions of stress hormones. Magnesium provides necessary energy for your adrenals — and every cell in your body — to function properly. Calcium and several trace minerals, like zinc, manganese, selenium, and iodine, provide calming effects in the body. These minerals can help relieve the stress associated with adrenal fatigue and imbalance, which will ultimately restore normal cortisol output.

**Adrenal Draining:** Drinks containing caffeine, alcohol and Gatorade.

**Adrenal Restoring:** Ginseng (in the morning), herbal teas (chamomile, valerian, passion flower); vegetable juice (with sea salt), V-8.

### To Optimize Your Sleep

1. Don't bring technology into your bedroom! Leave the iPad, laptop, television, etc. in another room.
2. Ensure complete darkness. Even a small amount of light can affect melatonin and serotonin production, which can disrupt your sleep cycle.
3. Cool your heels. The room temperature is extremely important to good sleep. Studies show that room temperatures at or below 70 degrees are best.
4. Read passages from the Bible about resting in the Lord and trusting in Him before bedtime. Pray and thank the Lord in advance for restful sleep and for giving you "blessings...in sleep" as Psalm 127 tells us.

His Word is true. He gives His beloved sleep. Give Him your day in the morning and give Him the results of your day at night. According to 1 Peter 5:6-7 it is an act of humility to cast your cares on the Lord because He cares for you – it's His job, not yours.

Ahhh—now don't you feel better with the weight of the world off your shoulders? Relax...and sleep.

*Christian Fitness Expert Laurette Willis is the Director of PraiseMoves Fitness Ministry (<http://PraiseMoves.com> and on Facebook <http://facebook.com/Praise-MovesFan>). Get your free fitness kit at <http://Christian-FitnessKit.com> and something brand new: [www.MI-Adance.com](http://www.MI-Adance.com) – MIRA! is Christian Fitness with a Latin Beat! Hallelujah!!! ©2012*



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# FOCUS ON THE YOUNG

## *Cassie* Shaffer-Hymes

by Victoria Shirey

This month I decided to write about a friend of mine, who is a very talented young lady with a big testimony. She travels with her family as the Shaffer Band. Here's the scoop on Cassie Shaffer-Hymes.

**Victoria:** What's new with the Shaffer Band?

**Cassie:** We just released our debut **Willow Creek Records Nashville** Album, **GRATEFUL** on July 31, 2012, produced by industry veteran, Terry Thompson.

**Victoria:** When did you start singing?

**Cassie:** I started singing at the age of 4!

**Victoria:** Big news! I just found out you're expecting a new addition to your family! What's the baby going to be, and when are you due?

**Cassie:** Yes, we are so excited to be expecting our first child! We are having a little boy, and my due date is September 6th, just around the corner!

**Victoria:** A few years back, you went through a battle with cancer. Tell us about that.

**Cassie:** Back in 2007, I found out that my husband and I were expecting a baby that ended up in a miscarriage! Later on we learned that I had actually had a Molar Pregnancy that led to cancer called choriocarcinoma! I was horrified when my doctor told me the news! I started questioning "Why God, why me?" I had to have 33 rounds of chemo, and one of the hardest things that I have ever had to go through was the loss of all of my hair as a young



lady! I was at a low in my life! But I learned from that experience that God holds true to his promises that we find in His Word! One promise is He will never leave us nor forsake us, but that doesn't always mean that life is going to be a bed of roses and we are exempt from trials! However, I'm thankful to say that God healed me, and I just celebrated back in March of this year, 4 years of being cancer free! God is Good! You can hear my full testimony and my testimony song "Believe" on our website at [www.shafferband.com](http://www.shafferband.com)

**Victoria:** What's it like traveling with your family? Who are all of the group members?

**Cassie:** Well...um...it can have it's good and bad days! Haha! No, I feel blessed to have the opportunity to travel and sing with my family! Sometimes we can get a little snippy with one another, but for the most part we have a blast! The Group consists of my parents, Dave and Trish Shaffer and my husband, Mike Hymes and myself!

**Victoria:** What's your favorite song that you guys sing?

**Cassie:** I would say a song entitled, "Shackles!" It's an up-beat song that we have been singing for several years, and it's probably one of our most requested songs! The young and old really seem to like it!

**Victoria:** Where's your favorite place to eat out on the road?

**Cassie:** I love love love Olive Garden!!

**Victoria:** What's been your funniest moment while traveling?

**Cassie:** We have experienced a lot of those moments, but probably when we sang at a Christmas dinner a few years ago. They served communion and started with us because we were at the head of the table! Well there was only one cup so we thought that it was the "common cup"! So we thought that everyone was going to drink from that cup, which thankfully, we were first because we probably wouldn't have participated otherwise! Well, Dad was the first to take a drink, then Mom, then myself, and then my

husband, Mike! Next thing I know Mike passes it on to the lady sitting beside him, and what does she do? She dips her bread in the cup! My mom blurted out, "Oh my gosh, we were supposed to dip and not sip!!!" She started laughing. Then I got tickled, and dad was kicking us under the table saying, "Be quiet!!!" Needless to say, we were so embarrassed, and we never were invited back! From now on, we will ask for directions if none given! haha

**Victoria:** Where do you see yourself ten years from now?

**Cassie:** Honestly, I still see myself traveling, singing, and raising a family! Who knows, we will have to see what God has in store!

**Victoria:** What's been your most rewarding moment on the road?

**Cassie:** You know, I can't pin point just one thing that sticks out because there are so many things that God has done in our ministry! However, I will say that I think the times when I am weary physically and spiritually, and you wonder if you're making a difference, then someone comes up after a concert and tells you how a song or something you said has encouraged them to go on another day, or brought them through a trial, or even brought them to salvation. You can't put a price on that! That's when I feel most rewarded!

**Victoria:** Where would people go to find out where Shaffer Band is going to be in concert and how to book you, if they'd like?

**Cassie:** You can go to our website at [www.shafferband.com](http://www.shafferband.com) Also, you can find us on our facebook page under Shaffer Band!

Thank you, Cassie for giving us the opportunity to learn more about you! If the Shaffer Band is ever in your area, I urge you to go see them. They are anointed and just as real off stage as they are on stage. You will be blessed!



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A photograph of three men in dark suits and blue shirts, smiling outdoors. The man on the left is bald with a red beard. The man in the middle has short brown hair. The man on the right has dark hair and glasses. They are standing in front of a white building and green trees.

# All About Omega!

By Angela Griffin

In October 2008 a group of college guys gathered around the piano at Brewton-Parker College to sing the music they all loved, Southern Gospel. After transferring to various colleges to complete their education, Dustin Simmons and Doug Pittman felt the call to pursue their musical careers and formed the group “Omega.” Dustin shares, “I think for us, it started as preservation. We all loved the music we grew up on and wanted to preserve it. It started that way and we are still mindful of that. We just want to use our ministry to the greatest lengths we can, in whatever way we can.” Omega has one mission; to show the love and compassion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to as many people as possible.

Although the group is deeply rooted in the traditions of Southern Gospel music, their harmonies and musical arrangements are unique. “We bridge the gap between the young and seniors,” Dustin explains. “The elders can relate to our arrangements of the old hymns of the church, while the younger generation relates to the songs with a newer edge. When you come to hear

Omega, it is a worship service, not a concert. We try to keep everything in the center of God’s will. We just want to see souls saved and lives changed. We are just so thankful for the vehicle God has placed with our lives to share the Gospel,” he continues.

Omega was awarded the 2012 “Daybreak Artist of the Year” award by the fans of the South Eastern Gospel Music Conference. Dustin was nominated Songwriter of the Year and Doug Pittman was nominated for Young Artist of the Year.

“Giver of Amazing Grace” on Omega’s latest compilation “*The Favorites*” climbed to #18 on the Christian Voice charts! Dustin shares, “We were very excited about that. We are currently selecting songs for an upcoming project. Plans are being made to record with Activate Records in spring of 2013.”

Dustin Simmons is the lead vocalist and a founding member of Omega. Dustin has been singing for more than 20 years. “It’s exciting to travel to different places, meet wonderful people and spread the word of God,” Dustin offers. “I love to sing Southern Gospel because of it’s spiritually and theological depth that you don’t

get with contemporary music. I need meat in my spiritual walk and Southern Gospel gives me that.”

Another founding member is tenor, Doug Pittman. “You will recognize him by his crazy hair,” Dustin tells! Doug is twenty six years young, has his own vocal studio, designs premier websites and writes songs. “He was going crazy reading the blogs people were writing about him after last year’s NQC. He couldn’t believe people were comparing him to David Phelps,” Dustin continues. What an honor.

The newest member of Omega is Cody McCreary of Elberton, GA. Dustin tells about Cody: “Cody brought a spark of energy to our group. His personality is just off the chart! I’m guessing that Cody knew everybody before the week’s end at Gospel Music Fan Fair in Pigeon Forge, TN. We were privileged to sing five times that week. Cody doesn’t meet a stranger and becomes friends with everyone he comes in contact with. Cody interacting with our fans that sow into our ministry has just been a blessing to us. He is light hearted and is always in a good mood not to mention that he is a great and upcoming baritone in the industry. This is his first fulltime group, but he sings like he has been in the business for years. We’re really glad to have him.”

The group has seen many changes over the past three years, but God has always been faithful. Great things are happening in the ministry of Omega. “We are booking some great dates for 2013 and look forward to being at the “Singing in the Smokey’s next year. We are booking new conferences so be sure to visit our website at [www.omegaministries3.com](http://www.omegaministries3.com) for a complete overview of our ministry and check out our future tour dates,” he closes.



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# "This Time Next Year....."

By Charlie Sexton

The National Quartet Convention in Louisville, Kentucky is always so many things to so many people. To the adoring fans, it's a place to get to see all their favorite artists 'up close and personal'. To the hardcore gospel music enthusiast, it is a showcase of the 'best of the best' in the industry. To the weekend warrior, it is a place to rub shoulders with the very elite, with hopes of one day being included in that exclusive, and somewhat elusive 'circle' of friends. To the industry professional, it is where new business deals are explored; prospective opportunities are unearthed, and many important decisions about their career are determined. Then, there are some who simply want to leave with a renewed, refreshed spirit. Yes, the NQC is all of this, and more.

But each year, without fail, there's always at least one wide-eyed person who comes to NQC for the first time with their heart set on taking in every spectacular moment. Their lifelong dream has been to sing Southern Gospel Music professionally. From the moment they step foot into the hallowed halls of the Kentucky Expo Center, they determine in their heart that "By this time next year, I'll be on that Main Stage..."

Such was the case, several years ago, when the Convention was still being held at the Municipal Auditorium in Nashville, Tennessee. I was playing piano at my home church, and had been traveling part-time with "The Saxons", a wonderful singing family from the Gainesville, Georgia area. I had attended NQC faithfully for several years, and could hardly wait for September to roll around each year. I typically went alone, this particular year, however, I had encouraged a friend to go along. He was a great singer, and had his own little part-time family singing group. We had worked together in years past at several metro Atlanta churches as pianist and Minister of Music. Having brought in almost every major group to one church or the other, we were both pretty well known to all of them. My friend had always aspired to sing professionally, but it just had never happened.

Of course, we got to the venerable old auditorium in plenty of time to cruise the basement and take in all the booth displays. We even got to fellowship with some of our favorite personalities like Connie Hopper, Joel & LaBreeska Hemphill and the Gold City guys. Eventually, though, we went upstairs to the concert. I especially wanted him to hear some new friends of mine, The Wilburns.

As we made our way up to the arena, I realized that they were already on stage, and were just about to perform their new mega-hit, "God's Promised Land." As they began to sing, God's presence filled that auditorium. Let me tell you, it got out of the banks for a few minutes. People were crying, shouting, running the aisles, swaying in the Spirit, and as Gerald Wolfe would say, "pitchin' babies from the balconies"! An old-time campmeeting atmosphere rolled through while this wonderful family shared about all that Heaven holds for us.

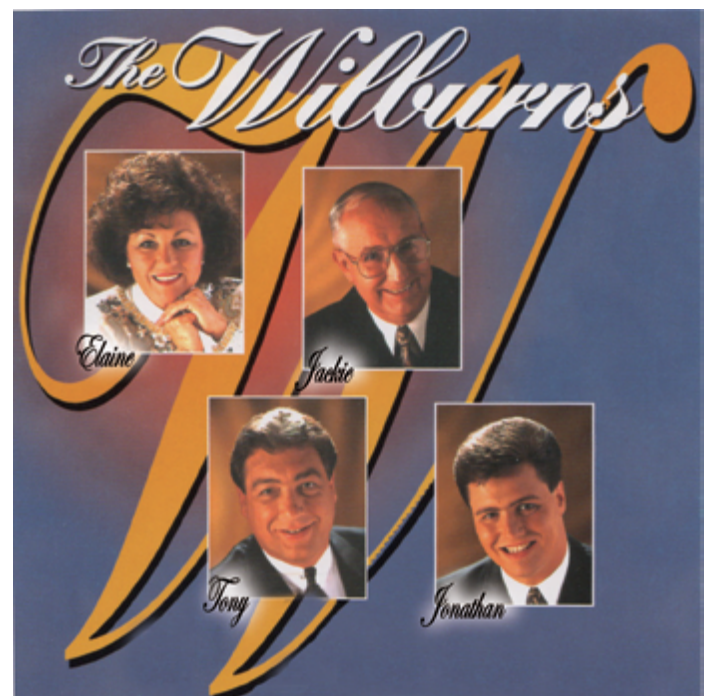
I looked over at my buddy, and he had big old tears in his eyes. Just as I was about to speak to him, those all too familiar words fell from his lips, "This time next year, I'll be on that Main Stage."

After The Wilburns had left the stage, I literally dragged him down the ramp to their booth so he could meet them. I introduced him first to Jackie and Elaine. I turned to introduce him to Jonathan Wilburn and Tony Gore, but someone else had already engrossed them in a deep conversation, so we just stepped back for a moment. Jonathan was the first to see us standing there. Before I could make my formal introductions, my friend looked straight in Jon's eyes and pointed his finger in Tony Gore's back and said, "I want that boy's job!" You could cut the awkwardness with a meat cleaver. We just stood there, looking at each other. I finally mustered up

the words, "Umm. Jonathan, this is my friend... er... um... Tony Peace."

They shook hands, and as we quickly turned to go, Peace put his hands over his eyes and said, "Why did I just say that? That boy probably thinks I'm crazy!!" I concurred.

We went back and forth - upstairs and down - for the rest of the night, enjoying the singing, and seeing many more of our mutual friends. Each time we'd pass near The Wilburns table, Tony would look over at me, and just shake his head as if to say, "I can't believe that I said that!" I'd just smile back, and on we'd go.



I had The Wilburns booked for the following Friday night at my church. Little did I know when they arrived that Tony Gore had just announced his plans to organize "Majesty." Immediately after Jonathan told me the news, I ran to the church office and called Tony Peace. I said, "I don't know what's going on, but you had better be on the front row tonight when The Wilburns take the stage. Gore is leaving, and I think you are the man for the job!" Afterwards, we all went to my house for dinner and a time of fellowship. That night, a dream came true for my friend.

A year later, I stood in a shadowed tunnel of Freedom Hall in Louisville, Kentucky and watched many of my heroes take the stage - Tony Peace included. Little did I know that I was soon to start my own journey as a professional musician with the successful group "Liberty." As I walked toward the exhibit hall, I smiled widely as I caught myself thinking, "This time next year. This time next year..."



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# The Scoop On The NEW GUY: Dustin Doyle

By Rhonda Frye



In July's edition of SGN Scoops Magazine, Angela Griffin shared the latest happenings in the ministry of Beyond The Ashes. In this interview, founding member, Anthony Facello also shared his heart and his vision. He spoke of identifying with the prayer of Jabez as he exposed the desires of his heart. Anthony's greatest desire is for God to enlarge the territory of Beyond The Ashes.

"I want God to always enlarge our territory", Anthony explained. "I don't mean that in a boastful way, I don't mean that I want Him to make us popular; I don't mean it like that. We just whole heartily say, 'God, enlarge our territory, give us more people to minister to, give us more people with whom to share the greatest story ever told!' That's what our heart is as a whole. We want to go places and just show people Jesus. We want to show people realness!"

Anthony also openly shared a few ups and downs that Beyond the Ashes has experienced as a group since its formation. Since we published this article, the guys experienced another "bump in the road" so to speak. Just because God is faithful to His word, you know there is a BUT GOD coming! With the departure of lead singer, Casey Rivers, Beyond the Ashes faced an obstacle, but God, as always, had a plan! The plan-as always proved to have everyone's best interest at heart and in this case, His plan involved a new guy- Dustin Doyle!

Although Casey is sorely missed, Anthony embraced the

changes in the ministry. "We are very excited about this new chapter for Beyond The Ashes. We have been blessed to have awesome talent and individuals as a part of BTA through the years and Dustin is no exception. God has outdone Himself with Dustin's talent and heart."

Road and office manager, Rob Estep adds, "The very first time I got to hear Anthony, Kellan, and Dustin sing together, I found myself sitting on the edge of my seat, anticipating every note that was being sung. Dustin has very quickly become a part of the Beyond the Ashes family, as we don't look at this as just a job or just a group, it's a family ministry! Dustin truly has a very caring and big heart and I hope everyone else gets to see that!"

Recently, SGN Scoops enjoyed a conversation with Dustin Doyle, and we're excited to introduce Beyond The Ashes' new guy to you! Dustin is originally from Chalybeate, KY and now lives in McKenzie, Tennessee. He came to BTA with a list of qualifications including a Music Production degree from Bethel University. Dustin married his college sweetheart, Aubrey about a year ago.

Dustin explains his background in SG Music: "Southern Gospel is something that I grew up with. It was the main type of music my father listened to, so I grew up listening to the Cathedrals, the Imperials, and the Gaither Vocal Band. My brother sang professionally with a group called, "Perfect Heart" in the late 90's shortly before the disbanded. Growing up watching my older brother on



stages like the Quartet Convention and Grand Ole Opry, I guess by default I sort of pursued what I was most comfortable with."

During his college years, Dustin experienced quartet life! At Bethel, Dustin traveled with the school quartet under the direction of Matthew Holt. "Once Matthew took over, I joined and basically had my school paid for by singing in this group," Dustin explains. "The goal of the quartet was



to travel around like any other quartet does, but we were doing it to promote this program and the university. It was a recruiting tool and it was a very successful thing--something that is still going on."

With musical talent, experience and a Music Production degree in hand, Dustin was equipped to begin a career. Although he had several opportunities, nothing "felt right" until he met Beyond The Ashes. He says the one thing that separated this group from the rest was the strong sense of realness he sensed around the guys. Doyle shares: "From the audition on they were the most REAL guys I've ever met. They didn't make any bones about the fact that yes... they were all about ministry, but they weren't perfect and they've made mistakes like everyone else. They were coming at it from the standpoint of understanding God's grace and forgiveness just as well as most people and that's why they do what they do. These guys were just so real, so gracious I just felt so comfortable with them from the very beginning."

Even at the audition, a special bond between the guys had begun. "When you're pursuing a mission together with others, there is a bond that takes place where you don't have to get together in the beginning and say... ok guys, let's get along...and we need to love each other," Doyle explains. "It's just as you pursue this mission from God a bond takes place and love happens when you don't even try for it."

Since joining, Dustin received a crash course in BTA lyrics and is doing very well! Learning new songs in a short amount of time can be overwhelming, but group member Kellan Monroe has taken Dustin in under his wing. "The first weekend was a little rough," Dustin admits, "but thankfully Kellan was right there behind me feeding me lines!" He went on to say that if he gets the least bit tripped up, Kellan is always there just in time to bail him out. "It's much appreciated," he adds!

Dustin is a "people person" and admits he's a "talker!" Naturally, he loves spending time hanging out with friends. He says he enjoys spending time with his wife, family and friends indulging in quality conversation more than anything else. Dustin also is a huge super hero movie buff and is anxiously awaiting the new Superman movie set to release next June.

Although music is Dustin's full-time profession, he still considers music a hobby too! His primary instrument is guitar, but plays the piano and bass guitar. "I can even fake playing the drums enough to make you think I know how to play," he jokes!

Dustin enjoys songwriting as well. He has written a few worship songs, but says he mostly writes "lovie-dovie" type songs inspired by his beautiful wife. Dustin deeply respects good Southern Gospel songwriters and says: "I really appreciate good Southern Gospel songwriters because to really write a powerful song or powerful ballad, it seems like it has to be inspired straight from God. When He decides to do that for me, I'll certainly write them down, but so far, He hasn't hit me with that yet!"

The scoop is... Dustin Doyle is dripping in personality! He is talented, experienced and educated too. The best part of the scoop is, he is growing spiritually! When asked what the Lord is currently teaching him, Dustin replied: "A lot of times I try to justify my relationship with God by the things I do. For example I would say, I'm in church regularly and I play in the worship band, so my relationship with God is good... Or... I sing full time with a trio, so my relationship with God is good. More than anything, He's teaching me to stay in the Word and always be totally reliant on Him and not get distracted by the things I do! When I was singing with the quartet in college, I would



find myself doing things that were not glorifying to God, but trying to justify it by saying... well, I'm on the road every weekend singing for Him, that's enough. That was totally the wrong way to look at it! Right now, I'm on a mountain top. It's easy to praise God on a mountain top but I know a valley is coming because it is unavoidable. The main thing I think He's teaching me is just to stay focused

on the mission because there really are lost and hurting people out there."

Dustin has been working hard in the studio! Beyond the Ashes expects to release new music this fall. Keep up with Dustin and the ministry of Beyond the Ashes at [beyondtheashesonline.com](http://beyondtheashesonline.com).

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# St. Jude Benefit Concert Review - Gainesville, GA

By Charlie Sexton

Craig Pierce was only 10 years old in 1983 when he succumbed to a fatal case of acute myeloid leukemia. His loving parents, Stanley and Peggy were, of course, heartbroken at the death of their beloved child, but because of their love for the Lord, they covenanted together to make a difference in the lives of other families who would walk in similar paths. During Craig's battle, the Pierce family spent many a dark day in Memphis, Tennessee at the famous St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, founded by actor Danny Thomas. This revered facility, operating on a budget of over 1.5 million dollars a day, never charges their patients or their families. They rely totally on the generosity of private and corporate benefactors.



During the past 14 years, the Pierces have played host to the very elite of Southern Gospel music, and have raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for St. Jude's at the legendary Georgia Mountain Center in Gainesville,

Georgia. They do not charge an admission fee, but rely heavily on private and local business sponsorships to cover the expenses of the concert, so that 100% of the



offering can go directly to the hospital. This year was no exception.

The Pierces have an impressive support team of local folks who help them with all aspects of promoting an event of this magnitude, including many from their home church, Montgomery Memorial Baptist Church. Not only that, but each year, a group of hospital employees and past patients come from all over the Southeast to support this wonderful event.

Since the concert venue was being sold off to Brenau College, and would be closing to the public in a few months, it was decided to pull out all the stops, and



have a two-night event this year. Friday, August 3, was Bluegrass Night, and featured The Marksmen, The Watkins Family, Eighth Day and headliners, Jeff & Sheri Easter. Then, Saturday August 4, evening, the line up



Free Chapel, a mega church located only a few miles from the Mountain Center. That news was met with hearty applause, as was the announcement that nearly \$30,000 had been received in the combined offerings this year. Mr. Pierce related that traditionally, he always receives an additional two or three thousand dollars in the mail in the weeks following the singing.

It's evident that God is using a tragic event in the lives of two humble, unassuming folks like Stan-



included The Whisnants, The Nelons, Gold City and Karen Peck & New River. Each night, prior to the offering, Stanley; event emcee, Gerald Sweatman; tenor, Chuck Pettyjohn; and pianist, Charlie Sexton performed as "Easternbound".

Due to the closing of the arena, many questioned if the singing would carry on. Mr. Pierce was pleased to announce that arrangements had been made with Pastor Jenetzen Franklin to have the singing at



ley & Peggy Pierce to do great and mighty things for a worthy cause. For more information about next year's lineup, contact Stanley at (770) 540-9085 or visit [tnt-gospelmusic.com](http://tnt-gospelmusic.com) for more information.





# CHRISTIAN DAVIS

## “WORN AROUND THE EDGES”

By Sandi Duncan Clark

Growing up in a Christian home, with godly parents who shared the love of God and taught the ways of the Lord is a wonderful heritage. With that influence and upbringing, it is no wonder that Christian Davis has followed the Lord, first in salvation, then serving God with a wonderful God-given talent. At the age of three, Christian began singing and has never stopped!

“I grew up loving Southern Gospel music due to the Christian influences in my life,” Christian informed us. “I didn’t listen to the music my friends would listen to...I listened to The Kingsmen, Gold City and Tim Riley blowing the glass out of the windows with low notes. I attended many Southern Gospel concerts, as well as lots of early Sunday mornings with my Dad at the radio station for his Southern Gospel radio program.”

Christian tells us, “My voice started changing when I was between 11 and 13. I was already a huge Southern Gospel bass singer fan so this change really excited me. I wanted to be a bass singer!”

Christian’s dream was to be a bass singer with a Southern Gospel quartet, and his first venture toward that goal was singing bass with the Sounds of Liberty,

while attending Liberty University. Christian was instrumental in convincing Dr. Jerry Falwell, pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church, to form the Old Time Gospel Hour Quartet, with whom Christian sang bass, fulfilling his dream.

In 2003, Christian left the Old Time Gospel Hour Quartet to form his own group. During the following years, he was privileged to sing with some of his heroes. “I’ve had the opportunity to sing with some of my favorite performers in Southern Gospel music and lived my dream. Then almost three years ago, God opened a new chapter for me,” Christian revealed.

That chapter was an offer from Jamie Dailey and Darrin Vincent to join the Bluegrass group, Dailey and Vincent, singing bass and playing the guitar. Christian thoughtfully stated, “Bluegrass was a whole different genre of music. I had never really paid that much attention to it and that was strictly because of my upbringing in Southern Gospel music. Being the bass vocalist for one of Bluegrass music’s top groups today has definitely made me a new fan of my newly found genre. At first it was scary for me. I was adjusting to a new industry, a new style of music, and I didn’t even know how to hold a guitar. The guys taught me how to

hold AND play the guitar.”

When asked how the Dailey and Vincent offer came about, Christian shared, “Well, true story, I actually met Jamie and Darrin through Facebook! Jamie had sent me a message telling me who he was, what they were looking for and what they were doing. Bill Gaither and Mark Lowry actually told them about me. I contacted them, and after much prayer and studying up on the group, it didn’t take Sophia, my wife, and I long to realize God was taking us in a new direction. I’m now in my third year with them and so far it has been unbelievable and an incredible learning experience.”



Sophia and Christian have three children; Shelby, Richard and Anneliese, and since Dailey and Vincent’s tour dates take Christian away from home about 200 days a year. Sophia takes care of the kids, the home, plus owns and operates her own booking agency, Adoration Agency. “She’s a true example of a real ‘Superwoman.’ She does everything with love and compassion and that’s what I love most about her.”

And we asked Christian who takes out the trash and who mows the lawn? “Well our son, Richard mows the grass and takes out the trash, but when I’m home, I help out!” Christian laughed.

Sophia shared her thoughts with us, “I stay pretty busy with the Adoration Agency doing booking at all times. I still manage to keep up with the booking, the kids and everything else while he is away. Anneliese turned four in June and we are looking to start preschool next month. Wow! How time flies!”

Sophia continued, “However, once she starts school,

the extra “alone time” will allow me to balance the business and to assist in planning for two weddings this year. My step-daughter, Stephanie is getting married in June and Shelby is getting married in September, 2013.



We are looking forward to Richard starting college this fall at MTSU; Shelby graduates from UNC Chapel Hill this December and we’re holding on to every memory we can as it seems to come and go so fast.”

She finished, “I should add ...I had an awesome blessing to raise my ex-husband’s children because we had full custody of his children from age 4 and 7. With that said, I consider them as mine. Stephanie is now 24 and Tiffany is 27! I’m very thankful for our blended family and the ministry God has allowed us to work in throughout our journey.”

When asked about date night, Sophia replied with a beautiful smile, “Any time I have alone with Christian is treasured!”



Christian recently released a new solo project titled, *WORN AROUND THE EDGES*. He revealed, “I took the country approach with this new album. Songs on the CD include new and old songs from some of the



best songwriters of today, and even a great church hymn. Jamie Dailey and Darrin Vincent join me on the



old Tennessee Ernie Ford song, ‘Sixteen Tons’, and I’m really excited about every song on the recording.” Christian sounds much like Ford on this song.

Each song has a positive message and everyone can relate to the story in each ballad. I definitely have favorites; “That’s A Lot Of Prayin’,” “Hittin’ The Road,” “Every Scar” and “Raise Him Up.” To be honest, every song has a distinctive effect on the listener, but “I Need Thee Every Hour” is very special. A child opens the song with a prayer, which sets the pace for a real blessing.

The musicians are fantastic professional studio musicians who know the Nashville style and have arranged these songs to compliment Christian’s approach and vocal range. The background vocalists and the choir provide a solid foundation for the songs.

Sophia does Christian’s booking for his personal solo dates. “She works with some really good artists,” he said, “and then when I have an off day with Dailey & Vincent she always manages to find a place where I can share my story with a church or concert.”

Christian commented, “One thing I really appreciate so much about Jamie Dailey and Darrin Vincent is they don’t compromise their faith in Jesus Christ. Although D&V is primarily Bluegrass, we also do quite a bit of Gospel music in our program. Regardless of what kind of venue we play in, Dailey & Vincent always gives the audience Jesus. He’s the reason we play and sing.”

“One song they have allowed me to bring into the group and into Bluegrass music is the great old Bill Gaither classic song, ‘Thanks To Calvary.’ This song has touched the hearts and lives of so many people within the Bluegrass industry just as it has in the Gospel industry,” Christian told. “To see the reaction of the crowd; to see the tears from someone who has had a personal experience with the meaning behind the song; but most of all to see a soul saved through the message within the song, has completely overwhelmed me.”

Christian testifies, “I get numerous emails every week telling me personal stories of what that song meant to them or just people telling me thanks for taking a stand for Jesus.”

One of Christian’s biggest thrills is the way Dailey and Vincent has been received when they travel to concert dates in Europe. “We don’t just do Bluegrass Festivals in Europe; we do Country Festivals, and I’m always amazed at how close the fans pay attention to the lyrics in our songs. When we sing a Gospel song, you can see them focusing on the song a little more closely.”

To coin a phrase from one of Jeff and Sheri Easter songs, “*Life is good and gettin’ better!*” This seems to apply for Christian and Sophia and their family. From the current run with Dailey and Vincent, and a new solo project for Christian, to the full-time Adoration Agency and taking care of the home and children for Sophia, along with one graduating college, one starting college, planning two weddings...AND a beautiful four year old...yes, “*Life is good and gettin’ better!*” AND...both Christian and Sophia are feeling a lot of excitement and a little “Worn Around The Edges!”



I highly recommend a personal copy of Christian’s new recording, and you may contact his office to get your copy. Check his website at [www.christiandavisonline.com](http://www.christiandavisonline.com), or better yet, visit a concert with Dailey and Vincent and meet Christian and the group in person. You will be blessed!



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# A Media Minute

## Featuring: Bruce Edwards

by Rob Patz

If you know me, you know I love media! I enjoy talking with my friends who share the same passion. Recently, I had the opportunity to catch up with on-air personality and music director at 770 AM Southern Gospel WCGW, Bruce Edwards. Here is this month's Media Minute!

**Rob:** Was radio part of your life growing up?

**Bruce:** I listened to all the great DJs of the 60's and 70.s worked at a high school radio station in 1976, senior year, always wanted to be a DJ.

**Rob:** How did you get your start in radio?

**Bruce:** I graduated from broadcasting school in 1977, and had a job five days later. I was announcer at a top 40 radio station, and after 34 years still active.

**Rob:** With NQC just around the corner, what are your biggest challenges of broadcasting live all week?

**Bruce:** I really enjoy NQC radio! It's really fun to interview over 50 artist in 5 days and produce 30 hours of live radio. The biggest challenge, however is keeping the excitement fresh for all 5 days.

**Rob:** You have had a great career in radio tell us one or two of your favorite memories.

**Bruce:** I have had lots of great moments in 34 years of broadcasting. Here are a couple of highlights: I had an interview with University of Kentucky's basketball coach

Rick Pitino, after their 104-103 overtime loss to Duke in 1992. I've interviewed various musical artists in Country and Rock and Roll and I've also spent quality time with members of the Grand Ole Opry.



**Rob:** What do you do to keep your show sounding fresh each day?

**Bruce:** It's always a thrill waking up every day not knowing who I might have the opportunity to talk to or reach someone who needs a blessing from the air-waves. Every day is a gift, so I keep it fresh like it could be my last day on air or last day top side.

**Rob:** Where do you see Christian radio going in the next 5 years?

**Bruce:** Wow, that's a tough one! For Christian radio to survive, it needs to be local if possible. We need news, weather, traffic updates and time checks. Those are the things that give the listener everything they need to get to work and to get home after a stressful day. Add to that great music and an uplifting voice that speaks to that person one -on- one. Christian radio survives on quality. If it's not there, the listener will find another station on the dial.

**Rob:** What advice would you give someone who is thinking about getting into radio?

**Bruce:** Find another career. I'm serious! Radio today is so much different than the 70's 80's and 90's and is all computer generated. I'm thankful for a company that still believes in live on-air talent.

**Rob:** Beside radio, what else does Bruce Edwards enjoy doing?

**Bruce:** I enjoy spending time with my three grandchildren! I love relaxing by the pool with them and also hearing them say, "Pa Pa, let's take a walk, or let's go get ice-cream!" Family very special to me.

**Rob:** Tell our readers what your top 20 songs this month are at WCGW.

**Bruce:** Absolutely!

- 1.) Mighty Big God- Karen Peck & New River
- 2.) Stepping Stones- Browders
- 3.) The Part Where You Come In- Brian Free & Assurance
- 4.) Ask Me Why- Legacy Five
- 5.) Almost Home- Truimphant Quartet
- 6.) I Want To Know- Mark Trammell Quartet
- 7.) Child I Know The Plans- Chris Hester
- 8.) You Give Me Hope- Sweetwater Revival
- 9.) Loving Shepherd, Gracious God- Kingsmen
- 10.) I Won't Trade My Crown- Down East Boys
- 11.) Dying To Live- Steve Warren
- 12.) Separation of Church and State- Big0 Mo
- 13.) Whenever We Pray- Beyond the Ashes
- 14.) If There Ever Was A Time- Crabb Family



- 15.) Talk About Dying- Inspirations
- 16.) He Leads Me Each Step Of The Way- Bowling Family
- 17.) Homecoming Day- Tribute Quartet
- 18.) Why Can't We?- Isaacs
- 19.) Hold Me Up- Gordon Mote
- 20.) Please Forgive Me- Gaither Vocal Band







# The Shelter in the Storm

By Jennifer Campbell

This summer, my community was ravaged with an unprecedented storm. Tropical Storm Debby dropped over 20 inches of rain in a matter of hours, causing massive flooding and destruction. Hundreds of homes and vehicles were destroyed and countless people lost everything they owned. To complicate matters even more, over 100 sink-holes have opened up in Suwannee County alone. It is being declared as a "500 year event." Gratefully, no lives have been lost in our county, save the many livestock and pets that were swept away in the storm. Even so, it is a disaster that has rattled everyone to their very core.

I am sure many people are asking themselves, "why?" and "how?" Personally, I have been asking some of the same questions. My long-haired miniature Dachshund, Lucy, along with my two pygmy goats, Charlotte and Savannah, were taken by the flood. I know many others have lost so much more, but still I wonder, "Why?" Why did God allow my animals to be swept away? I also wonder, "How?" Our backyard became a huge lake, something which we do not have on our property. The water came within inches of flooding my dad's workshop and our home as well. Looking at the photographs, I cannot quite comprehend how the water was approximately five feet high toward the back of our property, yet did not make its way into the house. If the water had flowed level, I am pretty sure this would have been the case. Still, several friends of mine were not so fortunate and woke up to several feet of water

in their homes. Over a month later, they are still trying to make sense of it all.

In life, there are many things we may never be able to comprehend. Sometimes, these events will cause us to question our family and friends, question our beliefs, and even question God. But it is also in these moments when we can often find a rainbow amid the clouds. For me, the rainbow amid this particular storm is the realization that God caused the water to do something incomprehensible to my mind, thus preventing it from coming in our home. Losing my pets was devastating, but it could have been so much worse. Not only could we have personally lost everything, but human lives could have been lost in our county as well. In life, there will be storms that ravage our communities, our homes, and our lives. But God always has our back. He always has a perfect plan and He will bring us through every storm.

I can't help but think about Noah and how he must have felt, building that Ark. Everyone laughed at him and thought he was a lunatic for working on such an enormous vessel. There had been no rain in sight for a very long time, so the idea of an Ark to save his family from a flood was a little farfetched, to say the least. Yet, he knew what God had called him to do. I am sure there were times he doubted God and became discouraged, wondering if he should continue. Then when it was time to gather two of

every animal, I am sure it was a monumental task, leading lions, bears, giraffes, elephants, and other animals onto this boat. Still, he and his family continued to trust God, with every board and every nail and with each and every animal, two by two. Because of Noah's faith in God, he and his family were saved, along with each pair of animals God had created.

What about you? Are you facing a storm in your own life? Maybe it is not a natural disaster such as a hurricane, tornado, or earthquake. Perhaps it is an emotional, physical, or financial storm. You may be going through a divorce or battling depression. There may be someone in your family fighting for their life in Intensive Care. Or someone you know could be suffering from the effects of Alzheimer's, cancer, or some other disease. Whatever you are facing, I want to encourage you right this very moment. Do not be afraid. Call on the name that is above every other name: Jesus. He loves you more than you could ever imagine. No matter what you are going through, Jesus will calm your fears, He will guide your footsteps, and He will be your Friend that sticks closer than any brother. Jesus will be your Shelter in the storm.

*Photo courtesy of David M. Goehring*





# A Grand Adventure

by Jennifer Campbell



As I sit here looking at photographs from my summer vacation, I am reminded of picturesque places we explored, amazing sights we saw, and delightful destinations that I hope to see again. Above all, I am overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude, both to my dad and to my Heavenly Father, for the amazing adventure that I was blessed to enjoy. While I wish you could have experienced our entire journey firsthand, I pray you enjoy traveling vicariously through my story. So, pack your bags, grab your passport, and join me as we travel across Europe. It's going to be one grand adventure!

One experience that was extraordinary special was our visit to Ephesus in Turkey. As I stepped off of the bus, the hairs on the back of my neck curled with excitement as I thought about the fact that the Apostle John and Mary had walked on those streets and that the Apostle Paul preached in the theater there. At the same time, it saddened me to know that they ran him out because they did not believe that there was one true God, shouting, great is the god of Artemis. Standing in the theater, my dad and I both proudly proclaimed, "Great is the God of the Apostle Paul!" This day is one that I will always remember, as it was not only exciting to see a new country, but it had a spiritual meaning to my dad and me as well.

Of all of the places we were blessed to explore, one of my favorites was Santorini, Greece. The brilliant blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea crashing against the bottoms of towering cliffs

create a sight to behold. Following a picturesque ride on a tender and then a cable car, we were soon at the top of the cliff where we picked up our rental car for the day. We drove across the island to Perissa Beach, a beach that has volcanic black sand. The water was so refreshing and the three and a half hours spent here were paradise. We stopped at a local bakery on the way back to town and shared some baklava and apple spice cake. Between the time spent swimming in the crystal clear water and the satisfaction for my sweet tooth, I felt as if I was on cloud nine.

Perhaps my most cherished stop of all was that of Zermatt, Switzerland. Here, we stayed in a chalet hotel with a balcony overlooking the Matterhorn. I was in awe of the beauty that was ours to behold. We had picnics on the balcony and I sat there, glued to the mountain vista as a child might





be glued to a television set airing a marathon of their favorite program. The goats being herded through the streets in the mornings and evenings just added to the atmosphere. A cable car ride, fondue, and apple strudel rounded out our Swiss experience. But still, everything else paled in comparison to the beauty of the magnificent Matterhorn.



We encountered so many incredible sights, from the ancient ruins of Olympia where the Olympic torch is lit to the city of Pompeii where structures still stand, even after enduring a massive volcanic eruption. We stood on the Acropolis in Athens, rode a gondola in Venice, and saw the Leaning Tower of Pisa. We walked the wall in Dubrovnik, enjoyed the sights in Paris, and even set foot on the continent of Africa with a visit to Tunisia. While it was a wonderful opportunity to see archeological sites like the Acropolis or Colosseum, my dad and I agreed that we do not need to see them again. But when it comes to places like Perissa Beach or the Matterhorn, we could keep returning, time after time, and they would never grow old. The things that God has created for us to enjoy have a timeless beauty. They capture our attention, not for a moment, but for a lifetime. And even greater than our summer adventure, all those who have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ will be going on a grand adventure one day that makes all vacations here on earth pale in comparison. One day, our grand adventure will not start on a bus, a train, or a plane. Instead, the true Grand Adventure will begin when a trumpet sounds. Won't you join me on the ultimate Grand Adventure?

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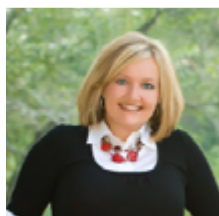


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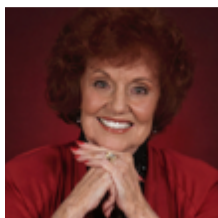
## SGN SCOOPS



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](http://SGMRadio.com). In 2009, Rob Patz acquired [SGNScoops.com](http://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](mailto:rob@sgnscoops.com).



Rhonda Frye is an ordained minister serving as the Associate and Worship Pastor at Rock Pointe Church in Fort Oglethorpe, GA. She is a recording artist, songwriter, preschool music teacher and sings with family trio, "Rhonda Frye & RiverSide." Rhonda is from Ringgold, GA and is supported by her husband and their 3 children. To learn more about Rhonda Frye Music Ministries, visit: <http://rhondafrye.com>



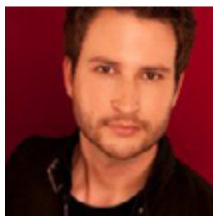
Lou Wills Hildreth appears on the Gaither Homecoming Videos, and is a founding member of Texas First Family Of Gospel Music, the "Singing Wills Family." She helped pioneer Christian television as host of "Wills Family Inspirational TV." After moving to Nashville in the sixties, she was the first woman to own an artist management agency. Lou is an inductee of the Texas Gospel Music Hall Of Fame, GMA Gospel Music Hall Of Fame, SGMA Hall Of Fame at Dollywood, and the Christian Music Hall Of Fame. She is a recipient of an Honorary Doctorate Of Sacred Music from Louisiana Baptist University. Recently, Gaither Homecoming Magazine named Lou in the "Hall Of Honor" series, and the Southern Gospel Music Guild gave her a "Lifetime Achievement Award." Lou is celebrating a 65th wedding anniversary in 2011 with Howard, and they live in Houston near son Dr. David Hildreth and daughter Kathryn Mumaw, and 4 grandchildren. Visit Lou at: <http://louhildreth.com>



Victoria Shirey first took the stage at 3 years old. Strong vocal abilities and harmonies are a God given talent that started in her at a very young age. Along with writing for SGN Scoops, she designs websites, is a Producer and Background Vocalist for Homeland Records out of Gallatin, TN and is a part-time cruise director for Paradise Tours & Travel. Victoria writes and arranges most of The Shirey's music as well. Most importantly, she loves the Lord with all of her heart and makes it her goal to let the love of God shine through her. Visit victoria at: <http://theshireysministries.com>



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



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



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

# Contributors

## SGN SCOOPS



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



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

43 years, his father was a national evangelist. John has spent a number of years as an evangelist, pastor, worship director and public speaker. Currently, John works with Mansion Entertainment in the aspects of media promotions, publishing and recording while continuing to write, manage his own music catalog and occasionally speak. [www.themansionentertainment.com](http://www.themansionentertainment.com)  
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[www.johnmathisjr.com](http://www.johnmathisjr.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, spreading the message that there is joy around the bend. She serves as a group leader for

Women of Faith, designs websites, and writes an inspirational blog at <http://jenniferjoycampbell.blogspot.com> Learn more about Jennifer at <http://jennifercampbell.net>



Rob Estep is a vital part of the ministry of the popular group, BEYOND THE ASHES. Currently serving as the Office and Road Manager, his wealth of experience in office management skills makes him a true asset to the group. His expertise of handling daily operations and road responsibilities go unsurpassed in quality. Rob has worked full time alongside of Anthony Facello for the past two years. Rob's Music Pastor Father exposed him to all genres of music growing up, therefore since childhood; he has had a rich love for Southern Gospel Music. Rob studied business at Columbus State Community College, is a HUGE Buckeye Football fan, and is single- but open to dating when the right one comes along. Email Rob at: [robestep@sgnscoops.com](mailto:robestep@sgnscoops.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](mailto:lorraine@sgnscoops.com)



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



# Contributors

## SGN SCOOPS



Denise Salchow grew up singing southern gospel music with her family group and continues to have a passion for the music and ministry.

Denise works with the video production team for SGNscoops and is the artist coordinator for The Diamond

Awards. Born and still making her home in Springfield, MO she works as an elementary school secretary and is the proud mom of two wonderful daughters, Colby & Kate.



Laura Kennedy. Music moves me.

Christ's loves inspires me. Mixing the two together in the beautiful array of the message of the gospel through Southern Gospel music is the purest of joys to me. Raised in Charlotte, North Carolina around the 5th Sunday night

sings at church; that hand clappin', foot stompin', spirit flowing rhythm of harmony stirs me to moments of Heaven on Earth. Believing it is still about the music, God has given me a heart for writing and a platform to learn from my heroes as well as sharing their ministry to expand their touch to others. Listen with your heart and hear the gentle, yet assured voice of our Father speaking to your heart, and be blessed!



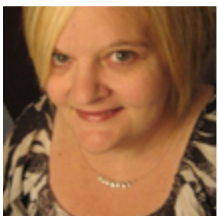
Scott Rhoades has a passion for writing, and enjoys sharing his experiences and interests through publication and speaking in public forums. After completing graduate work in 2006, he began to pursue freelance writing and continued public speaking. In 2009, he took to

the airwaves, joining the staff of WMUG in Indiana, Pennsylvania where he is the Program Host for Sunday Morning Light.

The owner of Ivory Hill Studios, he is the co-author of Legacy of Love: Memories from Ivory Hill - a collection of stories and poems highlighting the history of the Rhoades family and the small coal-mining town of Nanty-Glo, Pennsylvania. Scott is also a songwriter, publishing his first song, I'm Under His Wings, with Asheville Music Publishing/Chris White Music in 2010.

Website: [www.ivoryhillstudios.org](http://www.ivoryhillstudios.org)

Blog: <http://ivoryhillstudios.wordpress.com/>



Joan Walker grew up with music in the house and first heard Southern Gospel in her early teens. With almost a quirky (some may say 'weird') need to make sure words are spelled correctly and the apostrophes are in the right place, she

enjoys proofreading the articles for the SGN Scoops magazine each month...and looks beyond the letters and commas to the wonderful words each writer has written. Joan counts it as a blessing in her life to be part of SGN Scoops!



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

online at <http://peteschwager.com>



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

aspects to make the real masterpiece! Most of Staci's days are filled with preparing homeschool lessons for her kids, couponing, gardening, tending to her chicken flock and spending as much time on the beautiful, country land God has blessed them with. She also has a couponing blog with one of her best friends at <http://Craftycoupongirlz.com>



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

presentations. An avid historian, Charlie has over 5000 vinyl Southern Gospel recordings, cassette tapes and compact discs, as well as vintage memorabilia. He is an accomplished pianist, having toured with several well-known groups like Liberty and New Desire. As a sound and recording engineer, Charlie was nominated in 2008 for an Emmy® Award for his work on a featured documentary on Kennesaw State University's Men's Basketball team. Charlie and his girlfriend, singer Linda Foster, have worked with singers, musicians, promoters and pastors over the years promoting Southern Gospel Music. Email: [chsexton@mindspring.com](mailto:chsexton@mindspring.com) [www.sweetcreekpromotions.com](http://www.sweetcreekpromotions.com)