

STGMA "news you can use" GOSPEL NOTES

STGMA founded 1999



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The Gift of Unexpected Good

I recently had the honor of singing and speaking at a Women's Conference on a gorgeous Saturday morning at a Christian Tea Room in Corsicana, TX. I had known for several months when it would be and never forgot to ask the Lord each day what he wanted me to talk about. There are so many topics and wonderful verses in the Bible but I wanted it to touch the hearts of those who attended such that they would know it came from Him and not me. The only person I knew was the sweet hostess who had invited me. No one else. While I had some thoughts here and there about what the topic would be, I had nothing concrete! Even the morning of the event, I was still seeking a solid confirmation from the Lord. As I woke up, I heard him say "Unexpected Good". I began to question what that meant and opened my Bible. "Where do I look for that, Lord?"

He gently prompted me that He brings calamity into our lives in order to bring about good that we couldn't have anticipated. So I landed on the story of Joseph in Genesis 37-50. His brothers were jealous and despised him. They kidnapped him and sold him into slavery just like an animal to the highest bidder. Do you think he just might have considered that unexpected and wondered why God allowed it to happen? Unexpected good. He was eventually resold to Potiphar who saw good in Joseph and placed him in a position to rule over the entire household. Potiphar's wife then falsely accused him when he declined her advances and Joseph was thrown into the king's prison. In prison, he found favor with the warden who put him in charge of the other prisoners and their daily routine. Before long, God moved him into a position that allowed him to prevent his same brothers from starving to death. He

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From the
President's Desk

Greetings,

By the time you're reading this, our 2017 STGMA Convention will be over. Whether or not it was a success or failure depends on why you did or did not attend and what you were looking for. Some will say: It was awesome! Others will say: not so much. But, the bottom line is this. The convention offered a time to reflect on each of our ministries. A time to fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. A time to pray with and for one another. A time to encourage one another and a time to be encouraged.

That brings me to this thought: "Are we looking for Jesus in all the wrong places." Every day we're given an opportunity to minister to someone, somewhere. Just because our ministry might be singing, doesn't mean we have to be singing in order to minister. If singing is all we do in our ministry, then we're not fulfilling our call from God. Singing is the avenue that the Lord has given us to use to introduce others to Jesus. If all we do is sing, then we're sadly missing one of the greatest opportunities we'll ever have to tell folks why we do what we do.

I have been singing since I was six years old. I have sung to both small and large crowds. I have sung from the back of a flatbed trailer to some of the largest stages in the country. But, for many of those years that's all I did was sing. But one day I was singing an old hymn while sitting at my piano and the Spirit came over me. I realized that the words of the song were telling a story about heaven and that if I knew this man named Jesus, I could go to this beautiful place. The song was Mansion Over the Hilltop. The words went like this: *I'm satisfied with just a cottage below; a little silver and a little gold. But in that city where the ransomed will shine; I want a gold one that's silver-lined. I've got a mansion just over the hilltop. In that bright land where we'll never grow old. And some day yonder we will never more wander; but walk on streets that are purest gold. Don't think me poor or deserted or lonely. I'm not discouraged I'm heaven bound. I'm but a pilgrim in search of the city. I want a mansion, a harp and a crown.*

It was then I realized that, first of all, I didn't have any of the things the song was talking about. In fact, I didn't have Jesus and therefore I couldn't understand why folks would get excited about singing such a song. It wasn't long until I came to know this man called Jesus. Now, I have something to sing about. Something to talk about. The words to the songs we sing tell a story and have a message for all those who listen. I was looking for Jesus in all the wrong places. He was right before my eyes. However, I was blind and couldn't see Him. My sin had hidden Him from me. We started singing a song recently that says: When we sing, we know what we're singing about. But, that was not always the case. Think about it...

Until next time...Be Blessed... *Floyd*

(continued from page 1)

could have let them die but instead he showed them mercy and told them that what they had meant for evil against him, God had meant it for good in order to save their lives and the lives of many other people. (Genesis 50:20) How could he have possibly imagined that all the bad things that happened to him; all the times that he could have felt like there was no hope, God was at work. God was in control. God was extending mercy. Out of unexpected trials came unexpected good.

Friends, you may be going through something right now that caught you off-guard. Know this: Nothing surprises God. Nothing just occurs to Him. He has a plan and we have a choice. His plan is perfect so the only room for error is on our part...should we decide not to follow His plan. Once you commit your heart and life to Christ, living holy before Him is your only desire. Serving Him with all your heart, mind, body and soul is your daily goal. As I told the group of sweet ladies before we shared lunch together...you may not understand your present trial but God does. Is your spouse sick? Does someone in your family not know Jesus and it's breaking your heart? Does your situation seem more than hopeless? Are you lonely, hurting or anxious about the future? Just remember that the Bible has many examples of how apparently unsalvageable disasters are just the first step in God's plan for bringing good to us...yet know without a shadow of a doubt that these trials are not arbitrary. God uses them for a specific purpose. Ultimately, I have found difficulties in my life help me realize my dissatisfaction with this sinful world so I refocus on the Lord or they harden me like steel in a fiery furnace by proving my faith. No matter the reason, God is faithful and I truly believe that each unexpected obstacle in my life didn't come to stay...it came to pass...and it will one day give way to unexpected good for me and to well-deserved glory to my Father in Heaven. Cling to the promise that God specializes in bring beauty out of ashes. Your difficulty is shaping you into the image of Christ. There is no better place to be than in His grip!

With love, Christine



DIRECTOR'S CORNER



Grandparents as Wise Confidants

The final role of Grandparents I want to touch on is that of wise confidants. In Biblical times, wisdom was associated with mature age (how strange...not with teenagers). The reason for this was simple: the more experience you have of real life, the better equipped you are to offer life-counsel. The older generation knew their world best. During the twentieth century, rapid technological changes reverse this – the older you were, the less in touch with the world you are likely to be. Grandparents' status fell from valuable members of the community whose insights were sought after to be out of touch has-beens with nothing left to contribute. Current research shows a positive reversal of this trend. Today's young adults are more willing to consult grandparents for advice than their parents were. In one study, 80 percent of teenagers indicated that they viewed their grandparents as confidants. They may not know how to solve your internet problem, but they will certainly know a thing or two about life and love, joy and sorrow, success and failure. How wonderful that the younger generation are once again starting to treat their elders as resources, reservoirs of wisdom. Grandparents bring blessings in many other roles they play too. They may be family historians, passing on valued traditions. Some are household negotiators, representing children's interests to parents. Others are playmates, still others are listening ears, and in a society ravaged with divorce, drugs, and other dis-functions, many have to take up responsibilities as caregivers or even surrogate parents. This I know: If you love and serve the Lord with all your heart, your life can continue to bear fruit in your grandchildren's lives. They are part of your legacy.



WELCOME!
NEW MEMBERS...

Bound for Glory

Wayne Sipes, John Herrick Ron Davis
and Larry Hamm from San Antonio, Texas

Phyllis Jameson

Associate Member from Schertz, Texas

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APPLICATION. COMPLETE IT WITH
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2017 Convention Photos

What a blessing to be part of this year's Annual Convention! The Lord was truly good to us all and the Spirit was so strong as each group ministered the gospel. It's always good for the soul to come together and hear testimonies of what God is doing in each ministry! It gets us "fired up" to go forth and continue serving and honoring Him. Some of the pictures are included in this issue and more will be in the next issue! What a mighty God we serve! If you weren't there... you need to make plans to be there next year.

SAVE THE DATE: APRIL 28, 2018

The Board of Directors and Officers appreciate everyone's participation...and the prayers of those unable to attend this year! It takes a lot of work for an event like this as well as planning our concert events throughout the year! We are doing our best to serve the Lord and provide opportunities for your ministry. We are on our knees in prayer for you...we've come too far to look back now! Press on, Soldiers!

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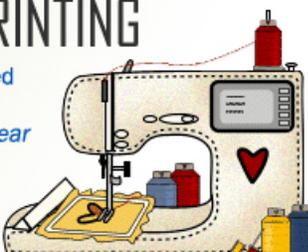


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2017 Convention Photos



Appointed by Grace
Quartet of STGMA
Officers
Jubil-Heirs
Blue Creek
The Arnharts
Jenna Oakley

More pictures in the
next issue...





MINISTRY MOMENTS



HisWORD

We met in the late winter of 2009 at First Baptist Church of Devine. Realizing we both had a formal music education, we quickly put together a gospel quartet called HiSTORY that lasted about six months until the loss of our bass to health concerns. Shortly after that the lead tenor also had to quit the group. After a short break, we realized that God still wanted us to sing together as a duet and we reformed as HisWORD and sang for Senior Citizen's Luncheons, in the memory ward of a rest home and for individuals in their homes who were terminally ill. Shortly after the release of our first album, High Praise, we were approached by John Holman with the idea of singing in the prison system to the inmates. God was definitely leading us in a direction we had not ever imagined. It has truly been the prison ministry that has been nothing short of amazing and where our heart truly is. Since then we have sung primarily at the Beeville prison, still sing for Senior Citizen's Luncheons and also at several churches in the area. We have also joined both STGMA and CBGMA and sung for many of their various events. This ministry has been among the most meaningful in our lives, and through it God has been opening doors in other churches and other opportunities to minister. Last Christmas we were the featured group for The Devine Area Artist Series. At the end of April, we will be the featured music for three evenings at a revival tent meeting at Hondo in the prison there. It was after our first prison service that Gary noticed how even though we had gone to church most of our lives, we had never really HAD church until we sang in prison. We had to go to prison to finally be free. It's phenomenal to watch God work in this. When you walk into the enemy's camp and prison is truly enemy territory, and you take the Word of God with you, amazing things are done by Him. We have been witness to over 50 men accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior at one time and those numbers seem to keep happening. That is truly the most satisfying outcome we could have ever hoped for. God has been praised and we have been blessed by Him greater than we ever deserve or imagined we could be.



Walter and Gary

Walter Sprague & Gary Boehmer

Let us hear from you...email your brief "Ministry Moment" to Christine.

Hi, friends!

Have you "LIKED" STGMA on Facebook yet? Are you "FOLLOWING" us? If so, have you shared any of the posts to your page so more people can find out about our events? We have changed the name this month to "South Texas Gospel Music Association" so it should be easier to find...but **WE NEED YOU!** Please go "LIKE" our page and it would be great if you could "SHARE" our concert posts when you see them. The Board appreciates everyone's efforts to help us get the word out about our Association, our events and invite folks to attend because gospel music is encouraging. It's especially uplifting when it conveys the Word of God to heal hearts, soothe wounded spirits and bring souls to a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. What does the word ministry (to minister) mean? To attend to the needs of someone else. It's not about us. We have nothing to offer. It's about Jesus and what He has to offer... salvation and eternal life in Heaven one day after a while. Praise God! **GO NOW...** "LIKE" and "SHARE"!!!

Blessings to each of you...
Christine Scott



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The South Texas Gospel Music Association, Inc. is a Christian Association Incorporated under the non-profit act and is qualified under Section 501 (C) (3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code and all contributions made to the STGMA, Inc. are tax deductible.

We are on the web...
www.stgma.org