

MY STYLE IS... GOD GIVEN™

by Laura Yarborough

When many think of the phrase "God Given" we think of the word "destiny" and a mixture of images of God in our world. Not too many would think of an innovative brand with purpose. Many would identify with the word "God" but few truly know the meaning of being God Given until, two brothers with one vision made God Given a well-known clothing company and design firm. The clothing was initially their main focus but design was always a part of the vision. The company's purpose is to save souls by spreading the gospel and build up ministries using image and style. God Given manages to create gear that inspires conversation about the Gospel. Along with conversation, God Given has been used as an ice breaker for evangelist and Holy Hip-Hop ministers alike. Just ask the many artists that God Given have worked with on their Holy Hip-hop projects, such as Richie Righteous, Lavorsior, Richard Dauphin, Seda, TJ Daprayingman, Dunimis, C.h.r.i.s and much more. We all know that Hip-hop and clothing have walked hand in hand for years, so it is only right that Hip-hop and God Given walk together by sharing a common thread of the Gospel message. For many years, Holy Hip-Hop has been in search for clothing that represents who they are as believers, so that when they hit the stage they have on the full armor of God. Ironically, that is God Given's foundational scripture. "Put on the full armor of God so that you can take stand against the devil's schemes" Ephesians 6:11. By using scriptural backing, they truly aspired to make God Given a lifestyle brand not a novelty company. They desired to build their company through the likes of God by working together as not just brothers, but honorable men of God.

However, that wasn't always the case. Robert Yarborough the CEO and Gerald Yarborough, Vice President of God Given both have very interesting testimonies. Prior to getting saved in 1997, they both were like a bad mixture of oil and water. I guess you could say they were on different pages. The two brothers did not have a relationship nor desired to have one. There was a lot of physical violence between the two and many attacks by the enemy that kept them distant, but it was God that stepped in to change their lives for the better. After many years of resentment, the Yarborough brothers got saved in two different churches, not even knowing it happened. They both decided to allow God to work on their hearts. With such great passion and drive

to spread the gospel, the two entrepreneurs put aside their differences and decided to choose God. As God prepared them for greatness, they became friends and began their collaboration on the ministry of God Given.

For years they both had a desire to draw and loved to dress, but never to do fashion. They were blessed with two talented and creative parents. Their dad, Robert Yarborough Sr., was a gifted musician, artist and photographer, along with their mother, Cynthia Yarborough once being a brilliant fashion designer; you'd have to think the apple didn't fall too far from the tree, but that was not their passion. They were more interested in drawing comic books, but that was just the beginning.

Robert started designing for two main stream urban lines. First, with the divisions and later moved on to work with FC Wear, where he began his full fashion training within a company that retailed four million dollars in sales. It was in 2000 at the Las Vegas fashion trade show MAGIC, where he had realized that he had a true niche' for fashion and received accolades from top designers in fashion for Fc Wear's collection; phenomenal designers such as Russell Simmons, Fubu brothers, Karl Kani and many more. Later that year, Robert walked away from that company with a desire to help people and a means to follow what God had placed in his heart; the vision of God Given.

At the tail end of 2000, for his obedience to God for leaving FC Wear, God blessed him with a job at Nickelodeon. Robert climbed the ranks quickly becoming the 1st African American art director at Nickelodeon Creative Resources, where he oversaw the entire apparel, home and accessories business, while working on such hit shows as SpongeBob SquarePants, Dora the Explorer, Blue's Clues, Avatar, the Backyardigans, Rugrats and Comedy Central programming. It was through his faith in God that his dreams became reality. As for the Vice President of God Given, also a St. John's University Alumni, his struggle to the top was somewhat different. After giving up his pursuit of a pharmaceutical career along with a five year scholarship, God had instructed him to follow his dream and passion of being an artist. In his sophomore year of college, he co-founded the L/E Clothing Company, one of the first innovative Christian urban clothing lines. Along

with being a fashionista in the Christian urban world, Gerald still desired to be an artist. It was during his senior year, when God blessed him with the opportunity to refine his designing abilities through an apprenticeship at Nickelodeon Creative Resources where he was later hired as a Senior designer in their Product Development Division, where he conceptualizes ideas for such clients as Kellogg's, Colgate, Fisher Price, THQ, American Greetings, LazyBoy, and Simmons Jewelry. As you can see, by putting God's business first, and focusing on what's really important, they both were blessed individually with awesome opportunities, but as one they were blessed with such a unique ministry.

As God Given strives to the top of the fashion and media industry, I am confident that this will not be the last time that you hear of this Christian clothing line. With such great success as the creative team behind Richie Righteous' ER Emergency Room, currently developing jewelry for Russell Simmons and the design group behind the Urban worship awards show- Kingdom Choice awards; the sky's the limit. God Given has already been blessed with the opportunity to be the 1st Christian clothing line to be featured in XXL magazine. Ironically, this opportunity came about through evangelism. Gerald was on a business trip with a co-worker, and in the midst of their travel they were listening to Richie Righteous' album entitled R.I.C.H. His co-worker started to ask questions and to make a long story short he led him to Christ. Within a matter of days, the saved co-worker felt the need to repay the Vice President for introducing him to Jesus and in return Gerald stated that "all I need to do is live right". Not satisfied with the reply, the two began to discuss the clothing line and with no hesitation, the co-worker offered to have

God Given featured in XXL magazine. Surprisingly, the co-worker's sister was the art director over at the magazine and with great appreciation, all God Given had to do is to provide shirt samples and before you knew it, they were featured. All I can say is "ain't God good". Along with their editorial success, they are currently working on a campaign called "I am God Given" in which they are gathering a 1000 videos of testimonies and people sharing their faith. All videos will be placed on dvds and given out at high schools in an act to reach souls. Along with the distribution of dvds, God Given has put together several fashion shows that have brought many to Christ with the age-old question "anyone wants to be a model for Christ?" But unlike fashion models, God is looking for those with all their imperfections. You have to ask yourself "are you ready to walk this walk?" Just when you think you've heard enough about their line and design firm. God Given is far from being finished with God's work. Just checkout their numerous websites: www.godgiveninc.com, www.godgivedesigngroup.com, and if that's not enough, feel free to contact them via email at info@godgiveninc.com or in the office at 718-527-2261; I am sure you will be pleased.

Overall, "what makes God Given so unique?" Is that they create garments that are biblically based to shine a new light on the gospel. Through their clothing ministry, Gerald and his brother, Robert, are devoted to endorsing the fact that Jesus is Lord, allowing God to use them to make a mark on the fashion and media industry. When you think of God Given think of more than just another urban clothing company. This Christian clothing line surpasses beyond just clothes; it is a lifestyle. Not just any lifestyle, but a lifestyle in which God intended.

