

# ENCORE

GOSPEL ENTERTAINMENT  
MAGAZINE

Exclusive Interview

## MARVIN SAPP

Makes Gospel

Music History

Baltimore Ravens Wide Receiver

## MARK CLAYTON

Starts a New

Movement for Christ

IN THE

## SPOTLIGHT

Jamie Holly

Sam Sneed

Half Mile Home

Rob j

God Given

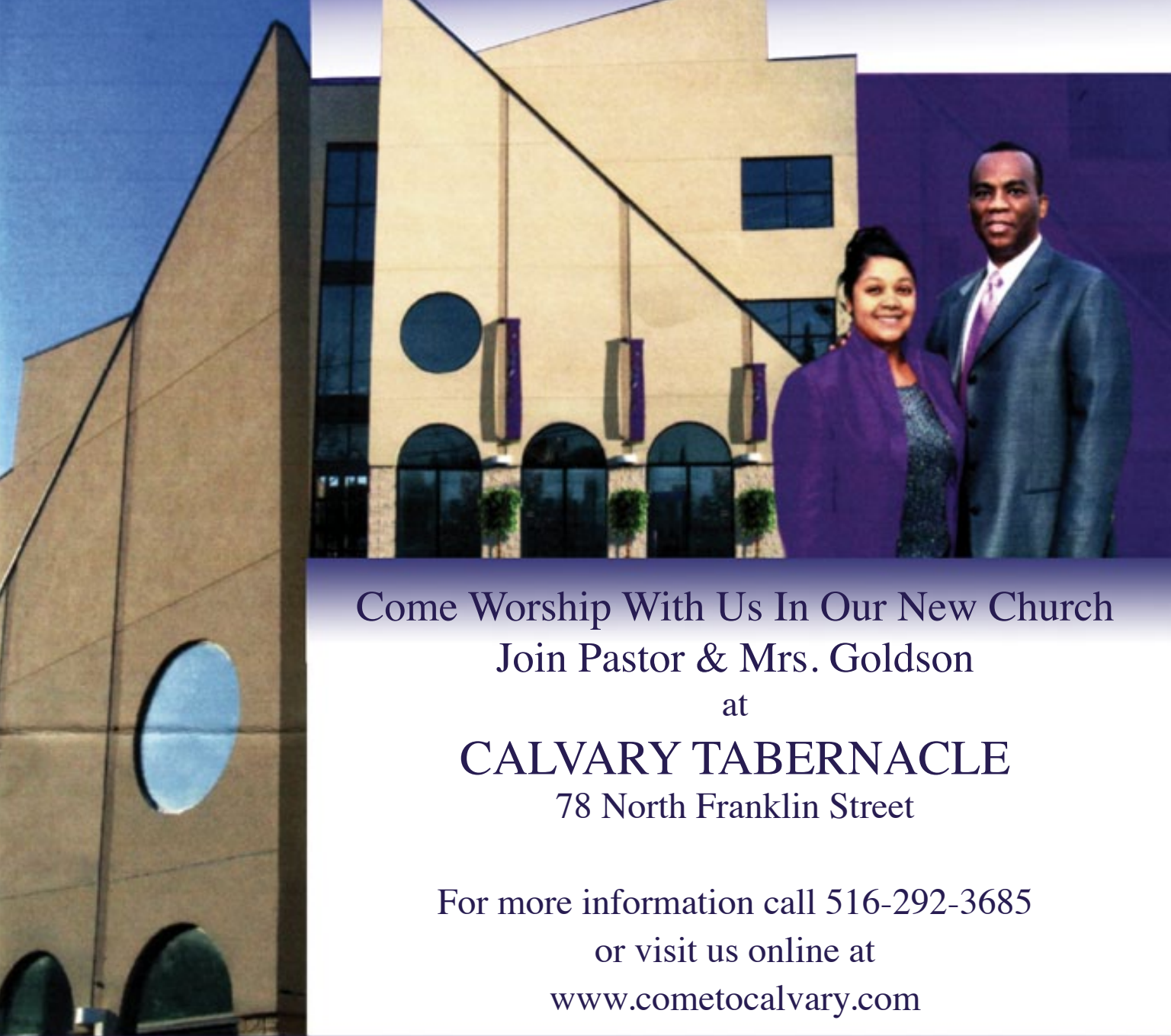
Author

Dr. Cheryl Wilson

Maurette Brown Clark

PLUS

Kelly Price



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# THE GOSPEL XPERIENCE

YOU'LL NEVER BE THE SAME

## COMING SOON

*Gospel music is known for its strong rhythms and elaborated refrains, which incorporate elements of spirituals, blues, and jazz. Even though it may be hard to find in music stores and not given enough outlets on mainstream television, Gospel Music has a very deep and rich history. This American art form influences almost all genres, from R&B to Rock 'n' Roll. Many musical legends like Aretha Franklin, Sam Cooke, and James Brown, have roots in this genre.*

*In the first half of the 20th century Gospel was developed as a musical genre in America. Known as "the father of gospel music", Thomas Dorsey wrote "Take My Hand, Precious Lord" in 1930. This is one of the most frequently recorded Gospel hymns in history. His powerful combination of sacred and secular styles created a revolution in music. Thomas Dorsey took the Gospel sound from churches into the marketplace. A new genre was born that would change the face of the industry.*

The Gospel Xperience is a documentary based on the evolution of Gospel Music and the impact it has in the World today. In undertaking this task I wanted to lay a foundation for this documentary as I began the pre-production phase. In our travels to different events in the industry we interviewed artists to get their insight, we call this section - The Gospel Xperience: Perspectives. Read page 26 for Maurette Brown Clarks insight.

# The INTRO

First we give honor to God who has allowed us once again to complete another issue. We also want to thank those who have supported us through the years. This is our first issue of the year and we are very excited about it.

This issue features an interview with Marvin Sapp, who has recently made Gospel Music history. We also feature an interview with NFL player Mark Clayton from the Baltimore Ravens, a feature on the top Gospel performers of the decade, etc...

We are truly believing God for and anticipating another great year. Anytime the enemy tries to come up against your vision/ministry prepare for a blessing. Last month our site <http://www.totalprayze.com> was actually hacked into. I have to admit this was very upsetting, I questioned why would somebody try to destroy this site? Nevertheless we are back up and ready to do God's will. One thing I've noticed through the years is that everytime we get ready to publish another magazine all kinds of issues and situations arise, it never fails. It's kind of crazy, but no matter what, we will always put our faith and trust in God and stay committed to our mission which is to inspire, uplift and empower the Gospel community. So I present to some and introduce to others, Encore Gospel Entertainment Magazine.

*David M. Wallace*

Under the direction of Founder and President David M. Wallace; who is one of the nations top Graphic Artists, Total Prayze Entertainment Group is creating a new path in the Gospel entertainment world through marketing and advertising, multimedia production, event promotion, clothing, etc...

This cutting edge company consists of 3 other divisions:

**Creative Dimension Studio** - Our Multimedia & Graphic Design Studio. For more info visit <http://www.totalprayze.com/creativimension>

**Total Eclipse Productions** - Concert/TV/Film Development & Production Studio. For more info visit <http://www.totalprayze.com/totaleclipse>

**Kingdom Works Software** - Christian Software & Application Development. For more info visit <http://www.totalprayze.com/kingdomworks>

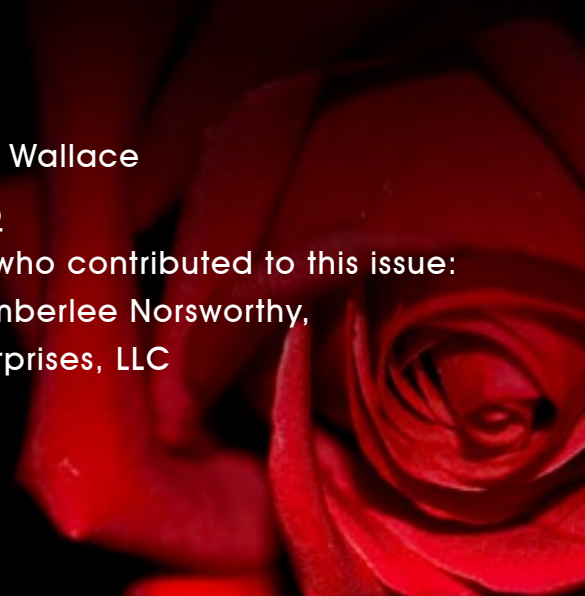
All Graphic Design by David M. Wallace

## SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to give special recognition to those who contributed to this issue:

How Sweet The Sound, Malaika Batson, Kimberlee Norsworthy,

Andrea R. Williams - Tehillah Enterprises, LLC





# ARISE

Gospel Video Morning Show

## COMING SOON

Wake-Up to Videos from Your Favorite  
Gospel & Christian Artists

“The main reason for creating this show is to give people a jump start during the week. After Sunday service is over, we all have to go back to our daily routines and deal with all kind of situations, as we prepare for another work week, now you can Arise with a song in your heart, not only will you be encouraged, you will be prepared for the day”

- *David M. Wallace, Creator*

A clip of Arise Gospel Video Morning Show can be viewed online at  
GETV (Gospel Entertainment Television) - <http://www.getv1.com>

# Scripture Reading

In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

- Proverbs 3:6

...the Passover, on the first day of the month, they roasted the lamb on the fire as prescribed, and also cooked the sacred meal in pots, cauldrons and pans, then brought them quickly to all the common people. 14 Afterward they prepared the Passover for the priests, the sons of Aaron, were busy offering holocausts and the fatty portions until night; therefore the Levites prepared for themselves and for the priests, the sons of Aaron. 15 The singers, the sons of Asaph, were at their posts as prescribed by David; Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun, the king's seer. 16 Thus the gatekeepers were at every gate; there was no need for them to leave their stations, for their brethren, the Levites, prepared for them. 17 The entire service of the LORD was celebrated that day so that the Passover could be offered, and the holocausts offered on the altar of the LORD, as King Josiah had commanded. 17 The Israelites who were present on that occasion kept the Passover for seven days. 18\* No such Passover had been observed in Israel since the time of the prophet Samuel, nor had any king of Israel kept a Passover like that of Josiah, the priests and Levites, all of Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 19 It was in the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign that this Passover was observed.

1\* The people of Judah kept the Passover for seven days in the month of Abib, as the LORD commanded, in Jerusalem in his father's house.

IV: END OF THE BOOK OF JEREMIAH

**Jehoahaz.** 2 Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. 3 The king of Egypt deposed him in Jerusalem and set on the land one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. 4 Then the king of Egypt made his brother Eliakim king of Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiaquim. Neco took his brother Jehoahaz away and brought him to Egypt.

6 Num 7: 1-83  
13 Num 12: 81  
147 2 Reg 23: 225  
23 18: 587

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TOTAL ECLIPSE PRODUCTIONS *PRESENTS*

# GODSEND

IN YOUR DARKEST HOUR THERE IS HOPE

created by David M. Wallace

Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby  
some have entertained angels unawares.

- *Hebrews 13:2*



# COMING SOON!

IN THE

# SPOTLIGHT

Jamie Holly

Sam Sneed

Half Mile Home

Rob J

# Jamie Holly

Jammie Jolly, a dynamic and talented singer/songwriter/musician and native of Jacksonville, Florida, has brought his many years of experience to the table that is Gospel Music. Coming from a complete, lifelong background of Gospel, he was able to take hold of his relationship with Christ, and his Gospel style at a young age. Jammie has taken many of his personal experiences with the Lord and wishes to share them with the world. This fast-rising man of God gives credit to HIM alone for the new doors that are opening up with his music. Jammie has a long line of musical experience from which he draws many of his strengths. His musical and faithful background comes from his humble church beginnings in Florida. After serving our country honorably in the Navy, Jammie continued in his pursuit of music. Many haven't heard his name, and in fact, there are those who are typically shocked to hear the voice that he's able to propel in music. As a member of the vocal group VOR (Voice of Reason), Jammie's experience as a performer took him to another level of performance. VOR began showcasing their acapella-inspired style alongside other local groups in and around the Tampa area, and further lent their talents to various civic, college and charity events. Their talents led them to their first Album self titled VOR.

However, by the grace of God, Jammie was brought back to his Gospel roots. Since 1996, Jammie has made NYC his home. His surrendering to the Lord's Will has brought him back to his square one - but this time.....being fully clothed in the armor of God! Jammie is a member of the International Christian Center located in Staten Island. He began seeking the Lord to inspire his song writing, and the Lord responded – bringing the hearts of committed people into Jammie's life. He began working with equally anointed and talented musicians, composers and engineers. Each member brings their own dynamic to Jammie's upcoming project: SO STRONG! It's an amazing thing to see what the Lord has done in such short amount of time. From humble beginnings in his home studio to the production of his first CD, Jammie realizes the blessing that the Lord has bestowed on him, and acknowledges that, "With God, all things are possible". His style has been influenced by Gospel, inspirational, Jazz and funk, Motown, blues and the best of urban pop. His ability to infuse these genres into his own style is what makes him unique. A soft-spoken person, Jammie knows that he is truly blessed – many plaques of honor and recognition adorn his walls, but those things are of no value when the work of God is concerned. A generous soul by nature, Jammie is happy when others have what he has – the joy of the Lord. This is his goal through music, and it means a lot - especially in this day and age where "stars" forget where they came from. Jammie is truly an up-and-coming, rising star and will give back to his community. Jammie is in the process of working on several new projects that involve some very talented people in his church. He has made plans to work on a tour that will include his brother, the Dr. Reverend Kevin Jolly and the minister of music, Jerome Jolly. Both of his brothers are also very talented young men who are involved with ministry.

It is Jammie's prayer that he will continue to create music that will touch the world. He believes that God has called him for such a time as this to reach the poor, and the disheartened. With God's grace and provision, he has plans of starting up several organizations that will enable him to do so.

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# Sam Sneed

feature by Jennifer Summer from The Humble Observer

Humble resident Sam Sneed was always interested in music and poetry. He started rapping at a young age but with the musical influences of Kirk Franklin and Mary Mary, Sneed decided to start his own style of gospel rap.

For the past 10 years, Sneed has worked to fund his own gospel rap CD and start his own record label company, Holy Ghost Records.

“I grew up listening to music and always had an interest in creating my own type. When I first started in the music business, gospel rap did not exist,” Sneed said.

He recently released his first CD, “The Choice Is Yourz,” produced by Tate Music Group, which features several different gospel rap songs about praise, life and other spiritual topics. He held a CD signing release party in Humble in September.

Sneed compares his music to the styles and inspirations of Jay-Z and Mos Def mixed with the inspirations of prominent gospel music stars like The Truth.

A main goal for Sneed and Holy Ghost Records is to give a stage and opportunity for up-and-coming artists around the community and give them the chance to take it to the next level.

“It took me 10 years to get here and I plan to have more CDs in the future but I also want to help other artists out in the community who are trying to make it; it is a lot of work,” Sneed said.

Additionally, Sneed is working on a gospel stage play and a movie manuscript. He also credits a majority of his inspiration for all of the avenues he is exploring to his church, New Light Christian Center Church.

He also plans to open a teen Christian center where teens from around the community can hang out and share in fellowship.

“It is important for me to share the gospel but also show people who listen to my music and message that you can live for Jesus Christ and still have a fun-filled life,” Sneed said. Sam Sneed is putting a new twist on gospel hip-hop in his debut album, “The Choice iz Yourz”. With an undeniable passion for God shown through a unique lyrical message, Sneed is taking the Gospel message beyond church walls and into the streets.

Produced by Tate Music Group, “The Choice iz Yourz” includes 12 original songs. The album is currently available nationwide at the iTunes Store, CDBaby.com, or directly from TateMusicGroup.com.

Sneed takes his musical cues from artists like Jay-Z and Mos Def, but the message of his hip-hop is pure gospel. He has opened for Shirley Caesar, the Mississippi Mass Choir, and the Cortez Family, as well as working with Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and the NAACP.

Hima “Sam” Sneed Jr. was born in Conroe, Texas, and now lives in the Houston metro area. He is the proud father of three little girls - Destiny and her twin sisters Shardae and Sharri’a. The Sneed family attends New Light Christian Center Church in Houston.

Sneed’s Electronic Press Kit, including music samples and contact information, can be accessed here: <http://www.tatemusicgroup.com/epk/?id=8359>. For more information, please contact Chris Rutherford, Marketing Representative, at (888) 361-9473 or send an email to [crutherford@tatepublishing.com](mailto:crutherford@tatepublishing.com).



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281-652-7535

# Half Mile Home

*"You have Kirk Franklin, you have Mary Mary, you have all these groups and they have their own different styles just trying to reach this new generation. I think everyone's doing a tremendous job, whether its Shirley Ceaser, Fred Adkins, everybody needs to keep doing what they're doing." - Half Mile Home*

It's no secret that the state of Ohio has deep roots in Black music. Groups such as the Ohio Players, Roger Troutman & Zapp, Tracy Chapman, Babyface, The O'Jays, James Ingram, Macy Gray, Lakeside, and The Deele have all made their indelible mark on the genres of funk and soul. The city of Akron itself has contributed both the incomparable Howard Hewitt and James Ingram to the canon of R&B legends. But five distinguished gentlemen from the city are determined to cement Akron as the epicenter of a gospel explosion with their effervescent new sound. Deaken, Lil' Bull a.k.a. Buttons, Q, Ty Traxx, and Weezie are Half Mile Home. Their individual and collective journeys down the tempestuous highways of the music industry have led them to a predestined intersection of truth, strength, and unshakeable faith.



Empowered with an incessant drive to shed light and spread love across a diverse spectrum of audiences, Half Mile Home have fortified their traditional delivery with a unique Hip-Hop/ R&B aesthetic. Yet in actuality, these categories alone do little to truly encapsulate Half Home's powerful sound. "It's very difficult to put us into any certain box," says the group's songwriter, Buttons. "I would just say it's God music. Instead of Rhythm & Blues, it's Rhythm & Light. We most definitely have rhythm, and we're trying to show our light. We're making sure we show people that there's a possibility to continue to let your light shine through Christ Christ. We're trying to do that on a daily basis."

The nascent incarnation of Half Mile Home began in the church. Yet while they owe their musical predilection and know how to their involvement in the church, the group eventually their sights on perceivably greener pastures. "All of us are pastor's kids. But we started to embark on the R&B tip," says producer and keyboardist Ty Traxx. In the early 90s, the group landed a recording contract with Dick Griffey's legendary Solar Records under the name 1-900. Handling the production for 1-900's debut album was none other than Jodeci svengali Devanté Swing and his Swing Mob production team. In turn, Weezie garnered the position of bassist in Jodeci's live and studio band.

Though the Griffey and Devanté associations seemed like hallmarks of imminent success, it would prove to be a dream deferred. Solar Records unexpectedly shuttered its doors, leaving the group without a home. The mid 90s saw the Deaken, Buttons, Ty Traxx, and Weezie entering the second phase of their careers, marked by the changing of their name to After The Rain. At the same time, Buttons sought out opportunities outside of the group. "I was signed to Raphael Saadiq's label Pookie Records as a solo artist," says Buttons. But as fate would have it, Buttons would also soon secure a position as a staff songwriter at the production company of songwriting genius and Ohio luminary, Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds.

"It was a way for me to make ends meet while I waited for them to clear their roster enough to put an album out on me," he concedes. "But nothing ever came of that. So after that, I decided that it was time to get serious with the group." Their optimism peaked yet again with the negotiation of a recording contract with Columbia Records. However, as the tectonic plates within the major label system began to suddenly shift, After The Rain soon found themselves back at square one.

# Half Mile Home continued

With the heavy burden of unfulfilled promises began on their back, the group pensively evaluated their resume of unrequited passion and broken covenants. It was evident that that they were about to enter a remarkable phase in their careers. And akin to their past evolutions, this phase also came with a name change. “The name came about during the transition from R&B to gospel,” explains guitarist Deaken (who is also the younger brother of international opera star Lawrence Brownlee) “We were coming back to town after being on the road. We were a little drained, but we kind of had an inkling of which way our career was headed. As we were driving down the highway and getting closer to Akron, Buttons pointed out a road sign that said we were a half a mile away from home. And it fit us so perfectly. It spoke to our transition.”

2004 marked the first step in the direction of their transition. That year, the group released their debut gospel effort entitled *The Movement* on esteemed Southern stalwart Malaco Records. In 2006, they welcomed the addition of a fifth member in the form of Dru Hill alumni-turned-gospel artist Woody Rock. However, the winds of change would blow in Half Mile Home’s direction once again. 2009 saw the bowing out of Woody Rock and simultaneous the addition of Hip-Hop/ spoken word artist Q. “Q had a solo project out that we liked,” says Ty Traxx. “He had a buzz on his name in Ohio and people would always talk about how dope he was. So he was the first person that popped into my mind when we decided to look for a replacement for Woody Rock.”

While the church has been know for its adversarial relationship with Hip-Hop, Q is confident that Hip-Hop’s sincere voice has earned it a place within the inspirational music community. “I know that the audience for it may not be as large,” he admits. “But I know that there is an ear out there for it. That’s where my spoken word comes into play. Poetry has always been a big part of my life. I think that the truth has paved the way and opened the door for that voice.”

After months in the recording studio, Half Mile Home has emerged with a vibrant collection of songs for their latest gospel release, *Change My Lyfe*. Produced by Ty Traxx, bassist Weezie, and Buttons, *Change My Lyfe* is brimming with words of encouragement and indisputable musical sustenance. Church fans can hear traditional gospel fervor in “Won’t Let Him Go,” while the buoyant lead single “This Far,” already charting on gospel and urban radio begins with an irresistible marching band drum line, transitioning into an up-tempo R&B hook for hip hop and soul music lovers. Half Mile Home has indeed come back to the middle with a profound sense of purpose.

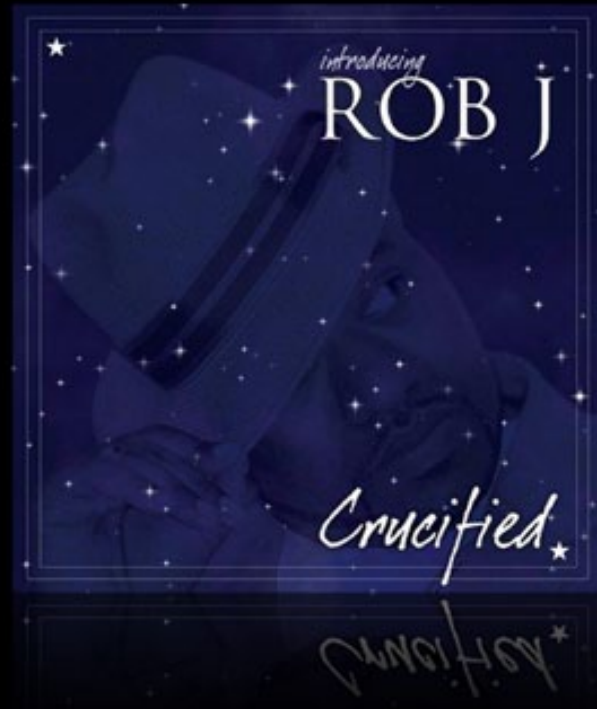
“On this particular album, we had a purpose,” says Ty Traxx. “Our intention when we were creating this album was to have something that could minister to all people: the saved as well as the unsaved. When we were writing the basis of the songs, we talked about creating music that everybody could relate to.” With a vast palate of gospel, utilizing additional accents of Hip-Hop and soul, Half Mile Home has truly crafted a sonic masterpiece with something for everyone. “We cover every aspect,” says Q. “And with God leading us, we’ve been able to successfully put that together with *Change My Lyfe*.”

Past experiences in tow, the group has inked a deal with Universal Records through IMG Recordings for their own *God Made Millionaire* Entertainment label. “Universal is expecting this project to be a big project,” beams Ty Traxx. “We have the full support of Universal Records right now. By us having our own deal, we have total control over the Christian side of things. That’s how our deal is structured.” This free reign over their newly formed label allows the group to fully flex their varied collective talents, in and out of the studio. “We are completely self contained as a group and a business,” boasts Weezie. “We do everything: we handle our own graphics, web design, recording, mixing, and mastering. We do it all.”

Reflecting on their tenure in the world of R&B, Half Mile Home have no regrets about their decision to reroute their talents with the ultimate purpose of serving the lord. “While we were doing R&B, we thought we were having a good time,” says Deaken, “but we were actually being deceived. It’s a game of deception. Everything on television is glamorous. But behind the scenes, you see real life. But it’s just a big game of deception. It never worked out like it was supposed to. We ended up right back where we started from.” Ty Traxx agrees wholeheartedly: “R&B just wasn’t where we felt we needed to be. We knew that we were supposed to be doing something different. And we came back to doing it for the glory of God, and we’re here to stay.”

# Rob J

ROB j (pronounced Rob-Jay) is a gospel singer, songwriter, and producer. His new flavor of Gospel music blends Pop, Hip-Hop, R&B, Christian, and Gospel. Rob j began singing at an early age in his grandfather's church. He pursued a professional career outside of Christian music in 2002, but returned in 2004 to his first musical love which is gospel music. ROB j released his 2007 Gospel CD entitled "Inner Call" featuring a gospel dance song titled "Get Your Praise On". This song has been performed in many places such as Michigan, Chicago, New York, Mississippi, and all over the United States, and every time the song "Get Your Praise On" gets people crunk for Jesus. The CD became a big hit with Christian music fans. ROB j was voted 2008 artist of the year by Boss Lady Promotions. Voted Runner-up to Christian Exposure televised music competition. Appeared and performed on Bobby Jones Gospel show on the Word Network with Trinity 5:7--gathering rave reviews from Dr. Bobby Jones, and opening for Gospel Great Dottie Peoples May of 2009. ROB j released a new CD on Tate Music Group entitled Introducing "ROB j Crucified" in 2009. The CD has been getting rave reviews from music fans and industry greats. ROB j was nominated for a Stellar Award in 2009 for the best Rap/Hip Hop Gospel CD of the Year for Introducing "ROB j Crucified.



Rob j has the following upcoming shows scheduled:

On April 26, 2010, 5:00 pm, Rob J will be live in concert. You can enjoy "A Night of Elegance" with ROB j, and an elegant dinner prepared by Executive Chef Stef, Asiatic Acoustics Mobile Dinner Theatre, 4731 GALLERY. Cost: \$25.00.

On May 16, 2010, 5:00 pm, ROB j will perform live at the Gospel Southernairs Anniversary, Mt. Morris, Michigan

On June 19, 2010 5:00 pm Rob j will host and MC The CHRISTIAN JAM 2010 at Calvary United Methodist Church, Flusing Rd, Flint, Michigan! This is the hottest Christian Rap show of the summer!

To be featured in **The Spotlight** please email HI-RES Photos and bios to [dve@totalprayze.com](mailto:dve@totalprayze.com)

\*Please make sure your photos are high-quality. You will be notified if your submission has been accepted and in which issue it will appear (each issue features 4 artists).



## Marvin Sapp's HERE I AM is Highest Debuting Gospel Release Ever on Billboard's Top 200 Chart!

- Debuts #2 on Billboard Top 200
- Debuts #1 on Billboard Gospel
- Debuts #1 on Billboard R&B Chart
- Debuts #1 on Billboard Top Christian /Gospel Chart

New York, NY -- Marvin Sapp's new CD & DVD HERE I AM has debuted at the top of 6 Billboard sales charts and marks the first time in the 54-year history of the Billboard Top 200 chart that a Gospel release has landed in its #2 position. This is the biggest first week release from a Gospel artist since the release of God's Property in 1997, and is also the highest digital first week ever for a Gospel release.

James "Jazzy" Jordan, EVP Verity Gospel Music Group says: "This history-making release week is special in many ways. It's a celebration of Marvin Sapp's ear for music and heart for people, both which consistently lead him to songs that the masses want and need to hear. It is also a great day for Gospel music. To have a release that impacts the mainstream as well as Christian and Gospel charts at such a magnitude, is a benefit to the entire Gospel music genre and really is a shining moment for the entire music industry."

Tom Carrabba, EVP/GM JIVE Label Group adds: "Marvin enjoyed an incredible run with his record-breaking last album, and he continues to raise the bar with 'Here I Am.' His debut this week demonstrates that good music transcends categorization, and it is rewarding to see Marvin's hard work and dedication pay off."

Marvin Sapp says: "I am tremendously honored and extremely excited today! All I wanted to do on this CD was pour out what God poured into me, and sing the songs that He told me I needed to sing. I am grateful for the opportunity to minister in song and I hope this is just the beginning of where this CD is going."

Thousands of fans came out to see Marvin Sapp during release week appearances in Chicago at The Music Experience and in Atlanta at Stonecrest Mall. Additionally, March 18 was proclaimed Marvin Sapp Day in Dekalb County. Larry Johnson, Commissioner of Dekalb County District 3, surprised Sapp with the proclamation during his Stonecrest Mall appearance.

HERE I AM, the follow-up to Sapp's 2007 breakout project Thirsty, was recorded live in Grand Rapids, Michigan and is a shining example of the gift of music that resides in Marvin Sapp and has received glowing reviews from media including USA Today and The Washington Post.

The CD's first single, "The Best In Me," is currently #1 at Gospel radio and #20 with a bullet at urban radio. According to Billboard, it has already surpassed the 2008 peak of Sapp's seminal "Never Would Have Made It." "The Best In Me" also recently achieved the largest position jump (#78 - #14 Hot R&B/Hot Songs Chart) in 18 years by a gospel track, as well as the largest jump in four years among all genres.



# Marvin

“When I started in this industry in a group called Commission, we were urban contemporary and we were ostracized, articles have been written about us in a negative fashion. We have paved the way for a lot of artists now.”

## Sapp Interview

**Encore:** On your last recording you had the powerful song "Never Would Have Made It", do you feel any pressure to have to raise the bar to come up with something else that is as powerful?

**Marvin:** None whatsoever because what made it more than a song was emotion and all of us has had those never would have made it moments.

**Encore:** Did you expect such an overwhelming impact?

**Marvin:** Never, it was a surprising thing, to have been on the charts at 49 weeks at #1, multiple awards, you just don't expect it and then when it does happen you just thank God for it. You understand that there are seasons, seasons change, you can be hot today and not tomorrow and you just enjoy the ride while you are riding it.

**Encore:** Can you give us some insight on the sound and style of the new album?

**Marvin:** It is about finding a niche and I know that my audience enjoys the type of music that I sing, like "Thirsty" and things of that nature. We try to stay on the same thing and try to make it a bigger production of course with strings and sound and try to give them more of what they enjoy and more of what ministers to them. There are some wonderful songs that we have, one is called "Comfort Zone" another is called "Wait".

**Encore:** We are doing a documentary on Gospel Music called "Gospel Experience", what do you think about the evolution of Gospel Music.

**Marvin:** I have been in this industry now for 20 years, when I started we were doing LP's, we shifted from LP's to cassette to now we are doing CD's. When I started in this industry in a group called Commission, we were urban contemporary and we were ostracized, articles have been written about us in a negative fashion. We have paved the way for a lot of artists now.

## URBAN



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## FEATURED SHIRTS



## MCT STORE



Hope MyChristianT ChristianT S

MyChristianT (MCT), a non-traditional Christian clothing line founded by NFL Wide Receiver Mark Clayton hits the market through its online storefront at [www.MyChristianT.com](http://www.MyChristianT.com). Created with a purpose to inspire, challenge and change lives; MyChristianT is beyond the average clothing line. It is here to set a new standard in the fashion world by displaying the Word of God through apparel, in faith that it will not only be a ministering tool to the un-saved but also a daily reminder of God's grace to the believers.

Although MyChristianT is here to sell Christian Clothing, MCT is NOT here to sell GOD. It is a ministerial outlet with the primary focus of not only spreading the Gospel throughout the world but also assisting today's youth and young adults in reaching their God given purpose by providing spiritual, creative and educational opportunities through the company's non-profit branch MCT Ministries. Some of MCT Ministries programs include the College Scholarship Fund, Missionary Rewards Program, Performing Arts League and the Outreach Activities Group. MCT believes such opportunities will not only be instrumental in helping people on their journey but will also create a divine movement of Christ followers and Christ-like leaders.

MyChristianT have designed a variety of trendy collections that all youth and young adults (both men and women) of all backgrounds can wear while looking and feeling comfortable, stylish, and meaningful. MCT is a cross between Ed Hardy, Affliction and Aeropostale but definitely carries its own identity and purpose.



Baltimore Ravens Wide Receiver  
**Mark Clayton**

## Starts a New Movement for Christ

**Encore:** How did My ChristianT come about?

**Mark Clayton:** It started when I entered the NFL. It was small at the time. A couple of years went by and t-shirts started to grow on me and at the same time the connection to the young adults and the youth as well. Last year I had a conversation with one of my team mates (Jeremy Butler) he was telling him about the dream I had about starting a young adult outreach and it's starting with t-shirts and then growing out to an entire network, and from that network being able to do christian concerts, conventions, mission trips and retreats and having this all under one umbrella. So he gave me the connection of who to hook up with to get the business started.

**Encore:** Do you feel that it is difficult for christian clothing lines to compete with the likes of Sean John, etc.?

**Mark Clayton:** I don't think it is difficult, I don't look at it as a competition. It's just giving us (Christians) the ability to be versatile in our clothing. Not only can we wear what is fashionable, but I can put on something that is on the same level as far as quality and at the same time it can speak to my identity and my relationship with Christ.

**Encore:** Do you see it growing from t-shirts to becoming a full clothing line?

**Mark Clayton:** I see it going from t-shirts to hoodies and hats. I never thought about jeans or anything like that, just focusing on upper clothing, but who knows how far it could go.

**Encore:** What is the main purpose of MCT?

**Mark Clayton:** The main purpose is for someone who has already committed their life to Christ, to be able to walk the lifestyle and be fashionable with it and for someone who does not know Christ to know their freedom is in Him. It is about taking your personality and giving Him glory.

**Encore:** What gospel artist and preachers do you listen to?

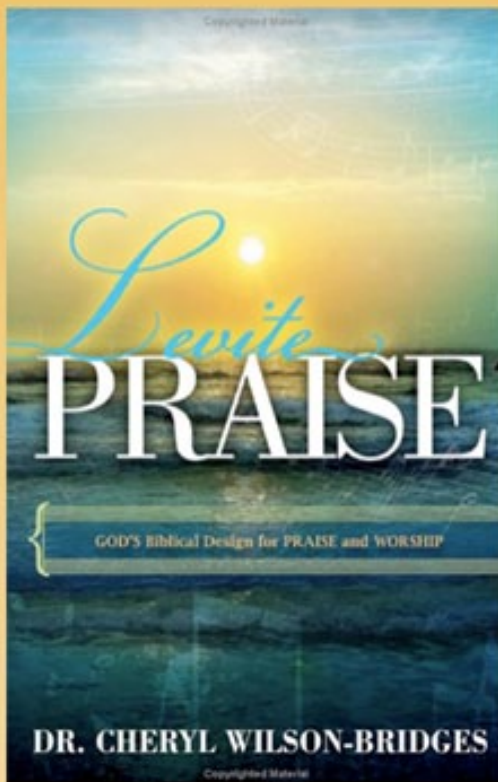
**Mark Clayton:** I like Kirk Franklin, Israel & New Breed, Toby Mack, I have a long list of artists. As far as pastors that have really been inspirational in my life they are Bishop Walter Scott, Jamal Bryant and recently Pastor Ed Young, he is really inspirational with his creativity and leadership.

**Encore:** Did you always know you would play in the NFL?

**Mark Clayton:** No, to be honest I didn't. I wanted to be an Architectural Engineer and I thought I would be in the military like my uncles. Things just got shifted, ended up playing varsity football in my junior year, which is rare. From there scholarship opportunities opened up. I wasn't even planning on going to college but when the opportunities opened up everything else just fell into place.

**Encore:** Do your teammates give up a hard time about your faith or are they encouraging?

**Mark Clayton:** We actually have a really good unit, as far as guys who really love Jesus and work at their relationship with Him. We have a solid group and we hold each other down. It is really amazing to be in an environment like that. It's great to have people that you can be transparent with and know that you are praying for each other.



## Author Dr. Cheryl Wilson Bridges Receives Glowing Reviews On Debut Writing "Levite Praise"

### Praise & Worship Expert Shares A Biblical Revelation From God's Point Of View

Dr. Cheryl Wilson-Bridges is a worship leader who understands God's purpose in praise. By recently penning her first book entitled *Levite Praise: God's Biblical Design for Praise and Worship*, published by Creation House, a publishing arm of Strang Communications, Dr. Wilson-Bridges not only delighted in sharing what she learned about praise and worship through her experience as Minister of Music of The Community Praise Center in Alexandria, VA, but also through her studies while receiving the Master of Arts in Practical Theology and Worship Renewal from Regent University. Although the book covers a very familiar and popular topic, it looks at the subject from fresh eyes - God's perspective - something that makes this book on praise and worship uniquely different.

For the lover of God who desires to draw closer to the Lord, "Levite Praise" is the answer. The author believes that each and every reader will be blessed by what God has to say about His desire for worship. "I want all who read *Levite Praise* to get a better understanding of the praise power that will be given to you when you offer worship God's way," says Wilson-Bridges. "I would like you to feel God's presence overflowing in your heart and mind as you uncover the gems of scripture that outline the sacred structure of praise and worship music. When you take the time to dig deep and digest the principles and premises in each chapter, you will witness knowledge unfolding that will enrich your personal and corporate worship experiences and transform your life."

John Wheeler Boyd, Chairman of the Music Department at Southwestern Adventist University and reviewer for Best Practices in Adventist Ministry says about *Levite Praise*, "If one read only the first chapter, one's time would be well spent. However, there is much more. In the third section of the book, Wilson-Bridges draws the parallels between the ministry of the Levites and the ministry of the worship leaders today. She includes twenty-one premises of Levite praise. If you desire worship to focus on the majesty and worthiness of God and not merely on the foibles of the sinner's daily troubles, then you need to read and contemplate deeply this worthy book." Hallerin Hilton Hill, Author and Radio & TV Host, says about *Levite Praise*, "Clarity brings power. This book gives those called to the Levite ministry the clarity they need to serve with excellence, humility, and purpose. Dr. Wilson-Bridges calls the called to walk in the true 'power' of their calling. Read this. Learn this. Live this."

Not only is she the recipient of the 2009 Outstanding Minister of Music Award by the Guild of Adventist Musicians, but she's also a Bible Scholar and Leadership Expert, with a Doctorate degree in Strategic Leadership, also from Regent University. As many know, leadership is vital to success, both inside and outside the church and music arenas. This area of expertise adds a spiritual leadership dimension to worship music that is essential. A former member of the gospel girl group, Reconciled, who opened up for gospel icons such as The Clark Sisters, Take 6, Richard Smallwood, BeBe & CeCe Winans and Daryl Coley, Dr. Cheryl Wilson-Bridges is a lecturer and seminar facilitator on praise and worship. She has led workshops on praise and worship at Capitol Hill Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church in Washington, D.C., Kingsboro Temple SDA Church in Brooklyn, NY, Pleasant Street SDA Church in Worcester, MA, Croydon SDA Church in London, England, A Higher Calling Music & Worship Conference in London, England, the North England Conference Music Weekend, the United Christian Artists Association and many others.

For more information on Dr. Cheryl Wilson-Bridges, please go to [www.levitepraise.com](http://www.levitepraise.com).

# Group/Duo Producer Choir Artist of the DECADE

As the year 2009 ended we did a feature on the top music acts of the decade on our facebook page. We wanted to celebrate our industries top performers. Due to the response received on that feature we have decided to include a portion of it in this issue for our readers. We are focusing on the group/dou, choir, producer and artist of the decade.

We at Encore Gospel Entertainment Magazine chose these artists based on such factors as award recognition, popularity, influence and longevity.



# Group/Duo of the DECADE

When it comes to urban gospel superstars Mary Mary, everything is done on a big scale. All of their pursuits-musical, spiritual, or otherwise-are larger-than-life: not a single thing is left to chance. For them, there's simply no room for halfway, half-done, half-baked efforts. No matter the venture, the bar is always sky-high. Absolutely everything must be handled with an utmost sense of excellence.

In December 2009, Mary Mary's critically acclaimed album, *The Sound*, was named the year's Top Gospel Album by *Billboard* magazine. The gospel-duo was also named Top R&B/Hip-Hop Artist, Duo/Group and Top Gospel Artist by the industry guide. Earlier that month, Mary Mary, received a 2009 Grammy® Award nomination for the record-breaking single, "God In Me," in the Best Gospel Song category. Last year, the duo took home a Grammy® Award (its second overall) for the hit single, "Get Up," in the Best Gospel Performance category and a 2009 American Music Award for Favorite Artist, Contemporary Inspirational.

At the Stellar Awards the high-profile sister act Mary Mary picked up four awards, including song of the year for their high-octane hit "God In Me."

SOURCE Columbia Records

Mary Mary



# Choir of the DECADE

With 13 albums and 20 years of recording behind them, Hezekiah Walker & Love Fellowship Crusade have grown from a group of exuberant Brooklyn teenagers into one of gospel's most acclaimed ensembles. Walker has had numerous top-5 singles including "Lift Him Up," which peaked at #3 in 2006; and "Faithful Is Our God," which held the # 2 position in 2007.

At the 2010 Stellar Awards, Walker and Love Fellowship took home awards as artist of the year, as well as for CD, choir, contemporary CD and contemporary choir of the Year.

A close-up portrait of Hezekiah Walker, a man with a beard and sunglasses, wearing a dark suit jacket over a green and white checkered shirt. The background is a dark, textured wall.

Hezekiah Walker &  
The Love Fellowship Crusade Choir

# Producer of the DECADE

Grammy-winning producer, composer and recording artist Donald Lawrence is one of the most influential figures in modern gospel music. After a stint as music director for soul legend Stephanie Mills, Lawrence made a splash in the gospel world by reshaping the regional Tri-City Singers in the 1990s and transforming them into an internationally acclaimed choir. As a producer, Lawrence has collaborated with artists as diverse as Mary J. Blige and jazz pianist Ramsey Lewis, Hezekiah Walker and the legendary Clark Sisters.

## DONALD LAWRENCE PRODUCER CREDITS:

2008 Hezekiah Walker's Souled Out/Zomba Gospel  
2007 Clark Sisters' Live... One Last Time/EMI  
2006 Coko's Grateful /Light Records  
2003 Mary J. Blige's Love & Life/Geffen

2001 Kelly Price's One Family Christmas/Def Jam  
1999 Bishop T.D. Jakes' Sacred Love Songs/Island  
1997 Karen Clark-Sheard's Finally Karen/Island  
1991 Stephanie Mills' Christmas/MCA

A photograph of Donald Lawrence sitting on a stool in a recording studio. He is wearing a dark suit jacket over a red and white striped shirt and a patterned tie. He is holding a book in his left hand and a cigar in his right hand. The background shows the studio's control room with various equipment and cables.

Donald Lawrence

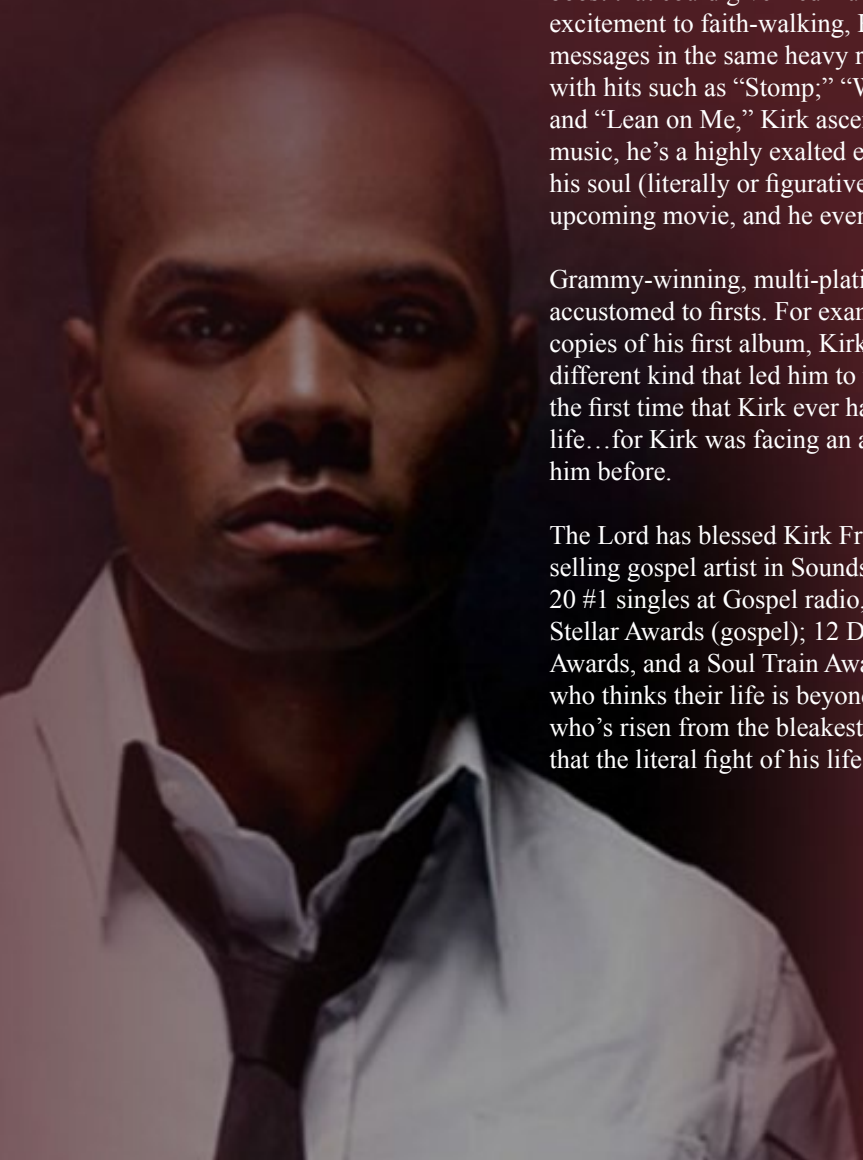
# Artist of the DECADE

## Kirk Franklin

Before the arrival of Kirk Franklin in 1993, contemporary gospel music leaned toward inspirational quiet storm – ‘positive’ messages alluding to Jesus and a righteous walk of faith set to lightly groovin’ tracks that appealed primarily to adults. Upon the arrival of Kirk Franklin, the music and the culture of contemporary Christianity got an energy boost that could give Red Bull a run for its money! Injecting a vigorous and youthful excitement to faith-walking, Kirk Franklin made it cool to be Christian, placing Godly messages in the same heavy rotation as other urban pop music. Over the last 14 years with hits such as “Stomp;” “Whatcha Lookin’ For;” “Looking for You;” “Revolution;” and “Lean on Me,” Kirk ascended to the upper echelons of gospel and pop. Beyond the music, he’s a highly exalted example of a man who achieved success without selling his soul (literally or figuratively) or his integrity. His messages now inhabit books, an upcoming movie, and he even hosts his own BET talent search program, “Sunday Best.”

Grammy-winning, multi-platinum, crossover gospel king Kirk Franklin is a man accustomed to firsts. For example, he was the first gospel artist to sell over a million copies of his first album, Kirk Franklin & The Family. However, it was the first of a different kind that led him to title his 11th and latest CD The Fight of My Life. It marked the first time that Kirk ever had so much trouble bringing his divinely inspired songs to life...for Kirk was facing an artistic drought the likes of which had never plagued him before.

The Lord has blessed Kirk Franklin to be not only a commercial success – the biggest selling gospel artist in Soundscan history with over 12 million albums sold and over 20 #1 singles at Gospel radio, plus 5 Grammy Awards; an American Music Award; 34 Stellar Awards (gospel); 12 Dove Awards (CCM); 4 NAACP Awards; 2 BET Music Awards, and a Soul Train Award on his mantle – he is a hero and example to anyone who thinks their life is beyond redemption. To hear his testimony is to hear that of a man who’s risen from the bleakest streets to the highest heights. Deeper still, he understands that the literal fight of his life is a battle done daily.





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THE  
GOSPEL X PERIENCE

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YOU'LL NEVER BE THE SAME

# PERSPECTIVES

I think that everybody is just trying to make music that speaks to peoples hearts. It doesn't matter how old you are or what you do for a living, I think we are just making music that will speak to their hearts and their walk.

- *Maurette Brown Clark*



# GOD



# GIVEN

TRUST IN US BECAUSE WE TRUST IN HIM.

## My style is God Given

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: <http://www.godgiveninc.com>, [www.godgiveninc.com](http://www.godgiveninc.com), <http://www.godgivedesigngroup.com>, [www.godgivedesigngroup.com](http://www.godgivedesigngroup.com) and if that's not enough, feel free to contact them via email at <mailto: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.

*written by: Laura Yarborough*





## FAST CHAT w/Kelly Price

**Encore:** How was your gospel album received?

**Kelly:** I was very proud that it was well received. I think I was a little concerned with how it was going to be received by the gospel community, because even though I grew up in Church of God in Christ and my parents are preachers, I was coming from being an R&B artist and then doing a gospel album.

**Encore:** Do you plan on doing another gospel album?

**Kelly:** Yes, but it is not my next project, but I will do another one again. I have to decide if I am going to do it live like I did the last one. I do love the studio, but for me gospel music was more so about the interaction, the experience of being in the sanctuary and people being able to interact. I haven't made up my mind on how I want to do it, I've always wanted to do a album with hymns, so I don't know which direction I am going to go.

# Want More?

## Next Issue:

### August 2010

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# The OUTRO

We hope you have enjoyed this issue as much as we enjoyed putting it together. We don't want to be your typical magazine, it is our desire that these interviews and articles can be used as a source of inspiration. One of the goals of this publication is to make the readers want to read it over and over again. Use this magazine to get uplifted during the day. Sometimes you see or read something that just sticks with you, it resonates in your spirit, you want an encore. Till we meet again.

*David M. Wallace*

Under the direction of Founder and President David M. Wallace who is one of the nations top Graphic Artists, Total Prayze Entertainment Group is creating a new path in the Gospel entertainment world through marketing and advertising, multimedia production, event promotion, clothing, etc...

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# TOTAL PRAYZE™

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Strive For Excellence

*if anything is excellent or praiseworthy  
-think about such things.*

*- Philippians 4:8b (NIV)*



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