



RELIGION UPDATE

by Dee Armstrong

Bouncing Back

Walking with our Lord is a day by day process. And sometimes along this journey as we walk its narrow path we may stumble, slip and even fall. Don't despair, don't give up for our heavenly father with Jesus and the Holy Spirit is a present help.

Have you ever had an experience where something didn't go right for you or perhaps to your liking? Maybe, you have been slowfull in your promises to the Lord such as; forsaking to joining yourself together with the body of believers (going to church) as the scriptures has said. Not having a meaningful prayer life. Not allowing enough time for your daily Bible reading. Whatsoever the situation may be. Let us not forget that God is merciful and ready to forgive.

In the New Testament Paul the apostle shares words of encouragement to us who may need a dose of "you can make it" in the Epistle to the Hebrews 12th chapter says, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us."

Wake-up and shake your spiritual mind, for all sin is not unto (spiritual) death. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins" — remember what you were before you allowed God to come into your life. When I think back how I was so empty inside trying to keep a smile on my face in and out of the local bars sick with sin, oh I can't help but rejoice in knowing that Christ hath quickened us together and the scripture says by grace ye are saved. "And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; it is the gift of God!" Don't give up! Hold your head up ask for forgiveness and keep on stepping.

This Week's Update With Food For Thought

"I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord. Psalm 40:1-3.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Holy Convocation of the First Jurisdiction, Churches of God in Christ for the state of Oregon will convene through June 15, 1986 at Greater Mt. Calvary C.O.G.I.C., located at 1234 N.E. Killingsworth Street. The public is welcome.

The March for Excellence scheduled for June 8th was postponed. The rescheduled time is for July the 27th. There will be another announcement of this event at a later date.

North Portland Bible College will be in celebration of its 1986 Achievement Awards Friday June 13th. There will be a fellowship reception at 6:30 p.m. at Maranatha Church. Guest speaker will be Rev. Ric Danner. Special congratulations to Sister Jean Boswell and Sister Burnette Holder who will receive their Bible Certificates for completion in the study of the Bible.

Public Service Announcement

Full Gospel Pentecostal Association will hold its 17th National June Convention on Sunday, June 15th through June 22nd, 1986 at Emanuel Temple Church, Pastor Bishop A.A. Wells; 1032 N. Sumner, Portland, Oregon 97217, call 287-2223.

There will be morning and afternoon sessions beginning at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Evening sessions will begin at 7 p.m. nightly. Delegates will be gathering from around the country for this annual time of learning, praising, reporting, rejoicing and more!!! Portland, a warm invitation is extended to you.

First N.W. Couples Conference

Sun River Resort near Bend, Oregon, is the setting for the first Northwest Couples Conference sponsored by Maranatha Church, Portland, Oregon. The conference, scheduled for October 2-4, will feature Dr. George McKinney of San Diego as the main speaker and Frank and Bunny Wilson of Los Angeles as workshop facilitators.

The purpose of the conference is to help couples reaffirm their oneness in Christ and renew their commitment to each other.

The format includes morning and evening sessions, afternoon workshops, fellowship, plus time to enjoy the recreational activities found at Sun River.

Dr. George McKinney will be the speaker for the morning and evening sessions. He is a pastor, teacher and author of the book *Christian Marriage - An Act of Faith and Commitment* which is widely used as a tool for marriage counseling.

Frank and Bunny Wilson, workshop facilitators, have been counseling couples the past eight years.

Those desiring more information can contact Maranatha Church at 288-7241 and ask for Donald Warren, conference coordinator. Confirmation deadline is September 1, 1986.

The idea for the conference was born four years ago out of a desire for married couples to have a time to get away from daily obligations and spend time together learning of ways to enhance their relationship in a refreshing atmosphere.

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Black Gospel Music: The Call and the Response

By Peggy Langrall
Smithsonian News Service

The concert hall is packed. The house lights go down as a young man and woman step into the warm light on stage. Casually, the piano player lets his fingers flow over the keys, releasing a magically beautiful cascade of notes. As the singers begin to blend their rich voices into the sound, a tide of appreciative murmurs rises around the room — "Amen!" "Yes, Lord!"

Sacred music with a bounce, the gospel sound can raise the roof. For listeners worldwide, in church or theater, gospel's electrifying, adventurous harmonies and visceral rhythms are an improvisational delight.

The need to speak out and be heard is the essence of gospel music, and for black Americans, churches once provided the only established outlet for creative expression. "Gospel music has its roots in holiness and sanctified churches of the rural South," says Horace Boyer, gospel musicologist and curator at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. In those churches, at the turn of the century, ancient African musical traditions — call and response, hand clapping, improvisation and spirit possession — intensified religious fervor. These customs would give gospel its special emotional appeal.

Today, gospel has become a major form of 20th-century American music. Black and related white styles account for 7 percent of U.S. record sales & just ahead of classical and jazz. The gospel spirit has influenced jazz, blues, soul, rock and other popular music, even country and Broadway. The style's "message" songs have struck a response on college campuses, and its musical complexity has generated entirely new perceptions in conservatories of music steeped in Western European theory.

How this once unwritten rural music has evolved is a subject scholars and musicians explore in an ongoing series of black gospel concerts and colloquia at the Smithsonian Institution.

New church songs, some including traces of the "sorrow songs" that grew up anonymously among groups of slaves, began to be written down after emancipation. As hope arose for black people, these songs were transformed by individual composers into livelier, more rhythmical forms. The music came to be called "gospel" because its nature and impact were felt to be the truth.

Thomas Andrew Dorsey, born in Villa Rica, Ga., is known as the father of gospel music. At 87, the now frail Dorsey is still the leading light of the Chicago gospel milieu he created. Raised in Atlanta by deeply religious parents, he often heard the old familiar hymns of English theologian Isaac Watts. At age 12, Dorsey was working as a water boy at the circus when famed evangelist Billy Sunday came to Atlanta to conduct a revival on the circus grounds.

Some folks could only see the drama in the revival as Sunday would pull off his coat and loosen his collar in the summertime heat, setting off hollers of "Amen" and "Hallelujah." But the young Dorsey was profoundly impressed by Sunday's religious fervor and by the trombone-playing of his accompanying musician, Homer Roadheaver.



This 1956 photo of the Clara Ward Singers shows Clara standing. She was known for her dramatic flair. The group toured extensively, singing in churches, schools and theaters and helped identify the modern sound of women gospel singers.

Dorsey became a highly sophisticated blues musician before he dedicated his talents to gospel. He mastered several musical instruments while still a child and in his teens began playing blues and ragtime. At the time, thousands of black people were moving to the North, taking their songs and music with them, then adapting them to city life. Dorsey's family headed to Chicago, and there the young man became a jazz and blues composer and arranger. As "Georgia Tom," he played piano for the renowned blues artist Gertrude "Ma" Rainey.

But Dorsey loved the songs of an early gospel composer, Charles A. Tindley, pastor of the Philadelphia Methodist church that now bears his name. Spread mainly by word of mouth, Tindley's compositions incorporated folk images, proverbs and biblical allusions familiar to black churchgoers. His best loved song, "Stand By Me," for example, has a standard gospel form echoing both the fervor of a spiritual and the musical predictability of a Watts hymn:

When the storm of life are raging, stand by me,
When the storms of life are raging, stand by me,
When the world is tossing me,
Like a ship upon the sea,
Thou who rulest wind and water, stand by me.

In 1921, Dorsey heard pioneering gospel singer A.W. Nix sing "I Do, Don't You?" at the black National Baptist Convention in Chicago. He was so moved that he decided to devote his life to composing and singing gospel music. But as the Smithsonian's Boyer notes, "Dorsey found it less than easy to exchange his flamorous past for the status of a gospel singer and composer, unwelcome at the more affluent black churches and unnoticed by publishers interested primarily in ragtime and jazz."

Although Dorsey's tunes had a rocking beat that most churches wouldn't countenance, he went on composing gospel music. Trying to live in two musical worlds, he continued to work with Ma Rainey and others until, in 1926, he suffered a nervous breakdown.

Dorsey lay ill for two years. During this time, inspired by the sudden death of a young neighbor, he wrote the song that would become his first gospel hit, "If You See My Savior, Tell Him That You Saw Me." He borrowed \$5 and mailed 500 copies to churches throughout the country. Three years passed before he got a single order. But in 1930, at the Jubilee Session of the Baptist Convention in Chicago, a young girl with a powerful voice put his song across to loud acclaim. Dorsey's future was set.



The Soul Stirrers, one of the first gospel quartets, was organized in the late 1920s. The young Sam Cook, seen at left in 1955, would go on to perform on the Ed Sullivan Show, becoming one of the first black popular singers to enjoy national attention.

Dorsey now committed himself exclusively to gospel — writing, traveling, directing, even forming his own publishing house. With rocking, hopeful music, he and his energetic assistant, singer Sallie Martin, "lived up" black congregations, from shabby store-front to large established churches. "Sallie Martin would travel in advance of a concert date," Bernice Johnson Reagon, director of the Smithsonian's Black American Culture program, says. "Arriving in town, she would visit choirs and teach them Dorsey's songs. At concert time, the audience would then be full of local choir members who would buy the sheet music to add to their repertoires."

An ever-growing number of gifted performers lent their individuality to Dorsey's songs and created new songs of their own. Two distinct types of gospel groups developed, Boyer explains: quartet and "gospel."

The unique sonority of such a cappella men's groups as the Golden Gate Quartet and the Soul Stirrers comes from the harmonic tradition of the barber shop quartet. The groups called "gospel," among them the trailblazing Roberta Martin Singers and Clara Ward Singers, were originally made up of choirs of women only, accompanied on the piano.

Men in quartets, who usually wear business suits or tuxedos, often slap their thighs in time with the music. The women in "gospel" groups, wearing choir robes, may clap their hands for rhythmic accentuation or sway hypnotically in unison, and the timbre of their rich treble voicings can shift from fiery-shrill to a raspy growl or wordless moan as emotion takes them.

"The printed version of a gospel song is a mere skeleton," Boyer says. "It becomes the responsibility of the performer to bring the song to life." Listeners will shout out their approval for the subtlest change in tune, time or harmony sung with heartfelt emotion. They may respond with a "Yes, Lord," "Well," "Oh" or "You know!"

The great soloist Mahalia Jackson, who was invited to sing at the inauguration of John F. Kennedy, was the first performer to bring sacred gospel music to a national audience. "Sister" Rosetta Tharpe, bowing to promoters' pleas, began to share her unique old-time gospel style with church and nightclub alike, opening up a new era for gospel. Contemporary styles in popular music now augment the gospel sound, and many of today's performers are equally at home in church, theater, films or on television. This is as true for traditional singer James Cleveland, who was the first to add choirs to his programs, and Shirley Caesar with her evangelistic style as it is for contemporary gospel composer Andrae Crouch and such popular groups as the Mighty Clouds of Joy.

Gospel's wide appeal can be judged by the success of Thomas Dorsey's much-loved song, "Take My Hand, Precious Lord." The song has been translated into more than 30 languages and recorded by virtually every professional gospel singer, black or white.

True to its nature, gospel continues to evolve, made contemplative or lively by thousands of folks singing out in their own original styles.

"Movable Feast"

"Movable Feast," a non-sexist, worship celebration will be held at Mallory Avenue Christian Church, Sunday at 3:00. This is the fourth in a series of services held on the 2nd Sunday of each month that explores inclusive, creative approaches to worship. "Movable Feasts" are sponsored by the Standing Women's Committee of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. Everyone is welcome. For more information call (503) 288-5173.

Soul Saving and Healing Revival

A five night revival, a soul saving and healing revival. Bring the sick, come one, come all, you are welcome, beginning June 22nd-26th 1986. Conducted by Queen Ester Jones from Dallas, Texas, a great evangelist, 8 p.m. nightly. Dr. F.J. Crear is the pastor. Phone 249-8491.

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