

RELIGION

Witness Spreads The Message Of Good News

Witness comprised of LouAnn McGowan, Diane Campbell, Lisa and Laeh Page share a childlike faith and mature wisdom that could put some of their elders to shame. With echoes of classic female vocal groups from the Supremes to En Vogue, Witness members, along with producer/songwriter Michael Brooks, fuse the sounds of their musical mentors with cutting edge pop/r&b sensibilities and an uncompromising Gospel message.

LouAnn, Lisa and Laeh are natives of Detroit, Michigan, and Diane, born and raised in South Bend, Indiana, now calls Detroit home as well. Singing since their youth, the girl's musical influences range from traditional Gospel to secular pop and r&b. "We have a very contemporary sound," says LouAnn, "but traditional Gospel is still the foundation beneath it all and that will never go out of style. We love traditional, and can sing it in a heartbeat."

At every Turn, Witness' latest release, *A Song in the Night*, brims with the excitement of truly knowing the Lord they sing about, while joyfully blurring the distinctions of age, race and easy musical categorization.

"The Blood" melds an infectious melody and groove with a simple but profound message of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. On the album's title song, the quartet set their seamless harmonies over gorgeous orchestration as they sing of the redemptive power of God's Word.



Witness: Diane, Laeh, Lou, and Lisa

"'A Song in the Night' really speaks to me," says Laeh, "because a lot of times people look at us on stage and see the glitz and the glitter, but there are so many things that we go through like anyone else where we have to pray and seek God, and sometimes it's in those midnight hours that takes place."

They pour out their hearts with angelic harmony on "Oh What Love," a powerful ballad celebrating Christ's love for His children, while "Give It To Him" is an irresistibly catchy mid-tempo jam that joyfully beckons listeners to lay their burdens on the Lord.

Especially close to the group's

heart is "Never Change," featuring Lisa's heartfelt lead vocal atop her partners' layered, silky-smooth harmonies, and "Ask of Me," the uplifting, album-closing message of hope and encouragement.

"'Never Change' has so much meaning to me," says Lisa. "There are so many people over the years— even close friends or family—who let

you down. But when you realize the Lord is always the same, and always dependable, you can see He allows difficult things to take place that make you turn to Him and trust Him to work it out for you."

As gifted as they are vocally, LouAnn, Lisa, Laeh and Diane see themselves first and foremost as ministers of the Gospel. "We

travel the entire country," says Laeh, "talking the Good News wherever the Lord tells us to go. Our greatest goal is just to stay open and available to the Lord and His leading."

"What we do on stage is just a small part of the picture," adds Diane. "How we live our lives gives us experiences to relate to others and testimonies to share. Ministry is everyday life."

"We tell people, and make sure they understand, none of this is us," Laeh explains. "It's God and we give Him all the glory. If it wasn't for Him, we wouldn't be doing this."

Witness released the first of its now seven albums in 1986, and has both Grammy and Dove Award nominations to their credit, as well as 1993 Stellar Award. The group has also scored big at Gospel radio with hits like "Old Landmark," "Standard," "We Give Thanks" and "Just as You Are," all written by Brooks, who is the keyboard programmer and instrumental mastermind behind the group.

With a calm self-assurance that's characteristic of Witness, each member holds visions and dreams for the future that are remarkably of one mind. Though they didn't realize it until after the group's name had been chosen, "Witness" perfectly sums up the group's sense of purpose.

"Witness is a ministry," says Diane. "There will always be good singers and talented people, but our goal is to reach out. That's why we sing Gospel music. That's who we are."

National Baptist Convention



From the left: Dr. C.L. Fairchild, Tom Leavens, Rev. Henry Lyons, and Dr. Clay Evans.

CGI Records and the National Baptist Convention USA, Inc. announced the signing of the organization's first recording in their 116-year history.

National Baptist Convention is recognized as the country's

largest black denomination. CGI Records has agreed to produce a live recording of traditional Gospel songs by the organization's 1,000 voice national choir and prominent Gospel artists during NBCUSE's annual conven-

tion in Orlando, FL, in September.

Rev. Henry Lyons, President of the black organization, acknowledged the church's need to document the music that has been so pivotal to the black experience. "Our members listen to Gospel music and spend money in that area," stated Rev. Lyons. "We've emphasized music-making in our churches, but we've emphasized preaching more. We need to provide this music to our audience and the rest of the world."

"We look forward to recording with unbridled excitement," stated CGI Head Bill Gilbert. "The opportunity to work with this prestigious organization is a blessing and our joint effort will help spread Gospel music worldwide."

Profits from the recording, available in January 1997, through Light Distribution and Polygram Group Distribution, will help fund the National Baptist Convention's seven affiliated liberal arts colleges and 25 Bible colleges.

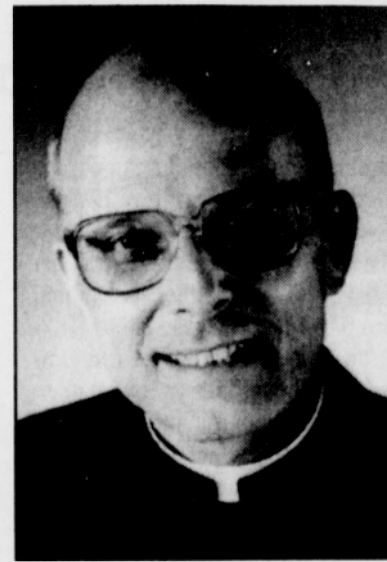
Portland Archbishop Installed

Archbishop Francis E. George, O.M.I. was installed as the ninth Archbishop of Portland in Oregon on at St. Mary's Cathedral. Archbishop George was appointed by Pope John Paul II on April 30, 1996. He was previously the Bishop of Yakima, WA.

The installing Prelate was Cardinal Roger Mahony, Archbishop of Los Angeles.

Archbishop George was born January 17, 1937, in Chicago, IL. He attended St. Pascal elementary school in Chicago and St. Henry Preparatory Seminary in Belleville, IL.

He entered the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate on August 14, 1957, and made Profession of Perpetual Vows on September 8, 1961. He was ordained a priest at St. Pascal church in Chicago on December 21, 1963. He served as the Provincial Superior of the Midwestern U.S. Province of the



Archbishop Francis E. George

Oblates of Mary Immaculate, St. Paul, MN., from 1973-1974, when he was elected Vicar General for the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in Rome. He served in that position from 1974 until 1986.

He was appointed the fifth

Bishop of Yakima on July 10, 1990, and ordained and installed as Bishop on September 21, 1990.

The history of the Archdiocese of Portland began with the arrival of Father Francis N. Blanchet and Father Modeste Demers, missionaries from Canada, at Ft. Vancouver on November 24, 1838. It is the second oldest archdioceses in the United States after Baltimore. The name was changed by Papal Decree of Pope Pius XI on September 26, 1928, to the Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon.

Archbishop George will be the second Archbishop of Portland to be a member of a religious order, Archbishop William H. Gross was a member of the Redemptorists. He is also the second Bishop of Yakima to named Archbishop of Portland with Archbishop Cornelius M. Power being the first to come from Yakima.

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