

# RELIGION

## Lamar Campbell & Spirit of Praise

### *I Need Your Spirit*

Focus. Self-awareness. Spiritual growth. All are goals to which any artist aspires. But for Lamar Campbell & Spirit of Praise, they are not the dreams of some distant future. They are very present-tense realities, and the essence of being for this richly gifted man and his choir. And they are the heart and soul of the ensemble's second album, *I Need Your Spirit*.

The project was recorded before an enraptured crowd that filled the historic Madame C.J. Walker Building in the group's hometown of Indianapolis, IN. On the heels of the choir's 1998 self-titled, hit debut album, *I Need Your Spirit* is clearly the launching pad set to propel Lamar & Spirit of Praise from the realm of promising newcomers to the rarefied ground of gospel mainstays, and beyond. *I Need Your Spirit* tips its hat

to tradition while planting its feet most firmly on a solid urban/contemporary R&B foundation.

That unique approach to today's gospel music was perfected on the group's first album featuring modern classics like "He Won't Let You Down." Lamar Campbell & Spirit of Praise foreshadowed the impact Lamar would have as a songwriter and choral director. Critical acclaim pointed toward Lamar as an important artist to watch in the coming decade, as gospel listeners across the nation began to connect with the group's special ability to perform sweeping ballads and up-beat jams with equal flair.

*I Need Your Spirit* takes the next leap toward establishing Lamar as one of today's great choir directors, songwriters and artists. The majority of the album's songs were writ-

ten or co-written by Lamar. With intricate choral arrangements and powerful lyrics, the 11 songs featured on the project reflect the moving energy and spirit-filled depth few choirs can deliver in a live performance.

Is it really Gospel? Absolutely. The Good News and the Church that sings its praises permeate everything Lamar and his 40-voice choir touch. Are there some serious, no-nonsense grooves? Believe it. This group can cook with the best. A touch of pop here, a rocky edge there, a little jazz for good measure. The mix defies labels. Just call it Lamar Campbell, then crank it up and let the sound of something truly new, fresh, and exciting wash over you.

The album's title song lays an infectious hook into a funk/rock pocket so overflowing with joy and unbridled celebration it could rattle the very gates of Heaven.

"We built a reputation for strong ballads on the first album," Lamar notes, "and you'll still find them on the new release. But we wanted to go a

little more urban and expand on what we've done. '*I Need Your Spirit*' picks up the tempo and the energy level overall."

"That particular song is the sound of God's people crying out to

Him from the depths of their beings, saying, 'We Need Your Spirit, and we're nothing without You. It empowers us. The joy is in knowing that He is willing and able to do all that we ask and more.'"



### OBITUARY

*In Loving Memory of*  
Cynthia Yvette McKenzie-Harris

SUNRISE - January 23, 1956  
SUNSET - July 16, 1999

Services were held Wednesday, July 21, 1999 at New Hope Baptist Church. Rev. Johnny Pack IV, Presiding.

Cynthia Yvette McKenzie-Harris was born January 23, 1956 in Vancouver Washington to the union of Muhammad Abdullah and Billie J. McKenzie. She was baptized at New Hope Missionary Baptist Church under the pastorate of Reverend A.A. Newton.

She married James Ward in Berkeley, California. They later divorced and after a few years she married Jerrial Harris. There were no children from either of these unions, however, she has two sons; DeAndre Aumont Guyton and Calbruce Jamal Green. They both reside in Portland, Oregon.

She is survived by: her parents, Muhammad Abdullah and Billie J. McKenzie; three sisters, Rhonda Renee McKenzie, Sharon Lynette McKenzie and Tracy Lurcretia McKenzie; and her grandmother Lucretia McMillian. Cynthia was blessed with a host of aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews and friends.

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