

FEBRUARY 2026

faith family music ministry

# CHRISTIAN VOICE

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magazine



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PRESENCE OF GOD?

“Ichabod” Over the Church



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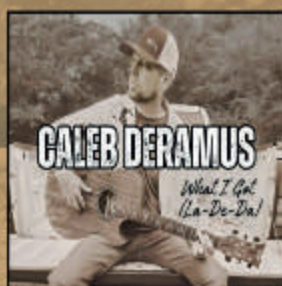
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## FROM THE EDITOR

### Truth in an Age of Tension

There's a strange pressure in the air these days, a tension you can feel even before you can name it. It's in our conversations, our churches, our newsfeeds, and even our worship. Everyone seems to be speaking, but very few are saying anything that carries weight. And in moments like this, the people of God face a familiar challenge: how do we hold to truth when the world around us is pulling in every direction at once?

The temptation, of course, is to soften. To sand down the edges. To speak in a way that keeps the peace, even if it costs us clarity. But Scripture never gives us that option. Truth and love are not enemies. They are not opposites. They are not competing virtues. They are two sides of the same calling - and when we separate them, we lose both.

Jesus never sacrificed truth to appear loving, and He never sacrificed love to appear right. He carried both perfectly. And if we're going to represent Him well in this cultural moment, we must learn to do the same.

This is the age of tension - moral tension, cultural tension, spiritual tension. But tension is not something to fear. In the hands of God, tension becomes a refining fire. It reveals what we truly believe. It exposes what we've been leaning on. It forces us to decide whether our convictions are rooted in Scripture or in sentiment.

The Church doesn't need louder voices right now. It needs clearer ones. Voices that speak with humility, but also with courage. Voices that refuse to trade conviction for comfort. Voices that understand that truth without love becomes harsh, but love without truth becomes hollow.

As we step into February - a month the world associates with love - maybe this is the reminder we need most: real love tells the truth. Real love warns. Real love protects. Real love calls us higher. And real love refuses to let the people of God drift quietly into confusion.

My prayer for you, and for all of us, is simple: that we would be people who speak truth with tenderness, conviction with compassion, and clarity with courage. The world may be tense, but the Word of God is not. And in an age like ours, that is very good news.

*John*

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 magazine



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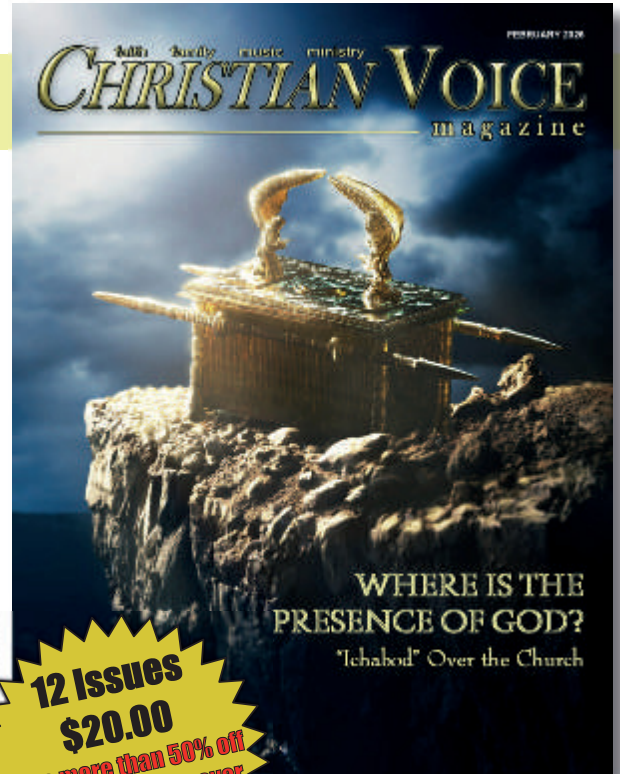
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## CROSSFIRE

### *The Bridegroom Cometh, Go Ye Out to Meet Him (Part 1)*

Gabriel Swaggart

*“While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight, there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.” - MATTHEW 25:5-6*

**T**his parable given by our Lord Jesus Christ details the action of ten virgins - five who were wise, and five who were foolish. As well, it gives us the all-important doctrine of the rapture of the church.

I believe the rapture of the church is about ready to happen. There are no more biblical prophecies left to be fulfilled, which means that it could happen at any moment. But it grieves me that this great doctrine of the Bible is not really preached from behind most pulpits in this country, and I’m beginning to wonder if it is even believed by those pastoring youth groups and churches. Some have even gone so far as calling those who do believe in the rapture, as I do, as having an “escapist” mentality. Think about that for a moment. To call a person who is looking for the rapture as having an escapist mentality is to call the rapture a fairy tale. In response, my question is this: do you believe in the resurrection? Of course they would answer with an emphatic yes. Well, if a person believes in the resurrection, then he should believe in the rapture, because the two events are one in the same - two words that refer to the same event.

#### **THE TEN VIRGINS**

The ten virgins in Matthew 25 refer to people who have accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior. They have been cleansed from all sin, redeemed from all unrighteousness, and delivered from the grip of Satan - they represent the church today.

Each virgin carried with her a lamp, and she was supposed to carry oil along with it. This spoke of each virgin as being responsible for her own planning; she was to make sure she had enough oil for her lamp.

Now, the Bible tells us that five virgins were looked at as wise, and five were looked at as foolish. Why? As mentioned, each virgin not only carried her lamp but was supposed to carry also enough oil to keep it lit continually. The light in the lamps refers to the light of Christ, which means now that we have been born again, saved, redeemed, justified, and delivered, we have the light of Christ living within us and shining outwardly.

Matthew 5 says we have been chosen by God as the light of the world. Christ is the Light, and we are reflections of that light, which is to shine so that others can be drawn to the Lord Jesus Christ. Outwardly, these virgins were all the same. The difference, as we’ll soon see, was in their character.

#### **THE FIVE FOOLISH VIRGINS**

The Holy Spirit labeled five virgins foolish because they took no extra supply of oil; they only had that which was in their lamps. Oil, as outlined in the Word of God, is a symbol and type of the Holy Spirit. When an individual is saved, the Holy Spirit resides on the inside of that person (John 14:15-18; 16:4-16), and because of this, the Holy Spirit will lead us and guide us into all truth, which is Christ and Him crucified.

As well, it is natural for the light that now resides in that heart and life to burn bright. This is not the same as being filled with the Spirit, but rather born of the Spirit - what we call being born again. However, as great as our salvation experience is, the second greatest happening for someone who is saved should be the baptism with the Holy Spirit. This is where the extra oil comes into play. The Holy Spirit functions in our lives and designed that we have many fillings, extra fillings. It is a supply that will not last forever, only a short time, and that is why we need the extra oil for our lamps, so that our lamps burn bright continually.

#### **SPIRITUAL BURN-OUT**

Tragically, for many Christians across this nation - and the world - the oil of their lives has long since burned out, and there have been no refillings. They have become a spiritual desert and experienced something called “spiritual burn-out.” This happens when a Christian strives with all of his might, power, strength, and ability to live for God, but he cannot seem to overcome the sin nature ruling in his life. He loves God with all of his heart and life, but he’s trying to live for God through the means of self-effort, which, in all honesty, God can never accept. God only accepts faith – faith anchored in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. The light begins by shining bright, but because there have been no refillings and no extra oil to fill their lamps, the oil runs out, which means the lamps begin to go out. Soon the light is extinguished, which would result in loss of the soul.

Others try and live off of their old blessings - what took place yesterday, or last week. The emphasis here should be obvious: the Holy Spirit wants us to understand that it is not what happened yesterday, but what we need today.

Please understand that I am not demeaning what took place yesteryear. We have what we have today because of the great outpourings of the Holy Spirit that took place in certain parts of this nation that literally shook this world. But I do want you to understand that we cannot live off of past blessings. We need fresh manna from heaven for today. We need a fresh touch to face the trials that are before us. This is where having and experiencing a fresh refilling is needed. Every morning, when I seek the face of God, I use my prayer



language, and I have noticed that there are times when my prayer language changes, and I am refilled with the Holy Spirit, and that provides strength, rest, and refreshing for the journey ahead (Is. 28:12). Never stop at the initial filling.

Ask the Lord daily to refill you, for there is enough oil to be poured out on His children, which never will run dry.

### THREE MAJOR THEMES

The rapture of the church is right around the corner, and this parable given to us by the Lord Jesus Christ stresses three major themes: faithfulness, watchfulness, and consecration. These three major themes are lacking in much of the church world today. In fact, Jesus spoke of this very moment in Revelation 3:14-22, as He spoke to John the Beloved concerning the Laodicean church. He told them, "So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot (if a person is lukewarm toward something, it means he hasn't rejected it, but at the same time he has by no means accepted it; in the mind of God, a tepid response is equal to a negative response), I will spew you out of My mouth." (There is no prospect of repentance here on the part of this church, or restoration. In fact, there is divine rejection.) (Rev. 3:16, The Expositor's Study Bible).

The five foolish virgins had the outward show and the outward form of faith, in other words, they had the appearance



of faith, but in reality, it was all an outward show. And because of this, they lost their chance to be with the bridegroom, which means they lost their souls.

Dear reader, the time for your salvation is now. The Bridegroom - Jesus Christ - is coming. The rapture of the church is right around the corner, and you must make your calling and election sure. Today is the day of salvation! All of your chances to make it right are on this side of eternity. Make it right today.

*To be continued in the next issue.*

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# Remembering...

## LARRY FORD

*November 10, 1947 - December 1, 2025*

By Cory Parker

Some voices don't just sing - they lift. They rise above the noise of life, carrying hope, conviction, and the unmistakable nearness of God. Larry Ford had one of those voices. Born November 10, 1947, Larry carried a grand Irish tenor that could fill a sanctuary with power and still land softly on the heart. His gift was matched only by his humility, a rare combination that made him one of Gospel music's most beloved ministers.

Larry became a defining presence in the Gospel music world, known for his sincerity, his excellence, and his unwavering devotion to the message he carried. His work with the Gaither Vocal Band and the Dixie Echoes Quartet helped shape the sound of Southern Gospel for generations.

Whether blending seamlessly into tight quartet harmonies or stepping forward for a soaring solo, Larry brought emotional depth without ever overshadowing the message. That balance - that ability to elevate a song without drawing attention to himself - became one of his trademarks.

It's no surprise he was often called "Gospel music's ambassador to the world." Larry's ministry took him to more than 38 countries and nearly every state in the U.S., sharing the hope of Christ with audiences who didn't just hear his voice, they felt it. His Grammy Award for 'Best Southern Gospel Recording' was a testament not only to his talent, but to the integrity and heart behind it.

For countless fans, some of Larry's most cherished moments came during the Gaither Homecoming Christmas recordings. When he stepped forward to sing a familiar carol, it somehow became new again - timeless, reverent, and wrapped in the warmth of his unmistakable tenor. Those performances became part of the soundtrack of Christmas for families across the world.

On December 13, 2025, just one month after celebrating his 78th birthday, Larry Ford stepped into the presence of the Savior he spent a lifetime introducing to the world. As news



of his passing spread, tributes poured in from fans, fellow artists, pastors, and friends - all honoring a man whose voice carried heaven and whose spirit reflected Christ.

Larry leaves behind more than recordings. He leaves behind a legacy of humility, excellence, and unwavering faithfulness. He leaves behind memories of a man who sang with conviction, lived with integrity, and loved people deeply. And he leaves behind a testimony that will continue to echo long after the final note: that God is faithful, His grace is enough, and a life surrendered to Him is a life well lived.

Heaven gained a voice we will miss dearly. But what a moment it must have been - the singer finally meeting the Savior he sang about so beautifully.



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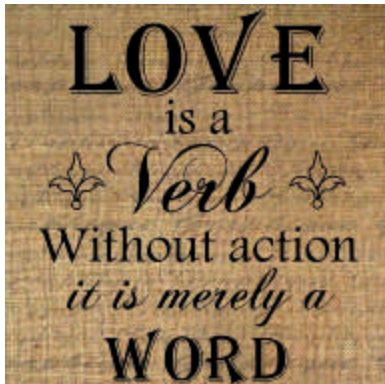
## Love in Action

Margie Tanner

In the month of February many will express their feelings of endearment by giving special gifts for Valentine's Day, tokens that say "I Love You," or "You are very special to me." Even children get excited about receiving Valentine cards from their friends and enjoying candy hearts or suckers.

We need to understand the true meaning of love. What is love? Love is God. Love is the number one characteristic of Christianity. In the Bible, the Greek word for love is "agape." This is God's love for us. It is a non partial, sacrificial love manifested by the gift of God's son to make provision for the sins of humanity. Human love is usually conditional and based on how other people behave toward us. God's love is unconditional and everlasting, with no respect of persons.

If we are Christians then the kind of love Christ displayed should be seen in our lives. Jesus loved the sinner, Jesus reached out to the poor, the sick and the lonely. According to the Bible, love is caring in action. Love is much more than just a feeling, it is what we do. Jesus said, in 1 John 3:18, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." We must do more than say the words, it must be backed up with actions.



We live in a troubled world with hurting, needy people around us every day that feel so sad, alone and unloved. We that know the love of Christ should share that love with others. The feeling of being loved is the craving of every human heart. So let's spread a little love, do something kind for someone today.

Reach out and meet a need

in someone's life. Jesus said, in Matthew 25:40, "If you did it not unto them you did it not unto me."

Let's not take for granted how blessed we are to have family and good friends around us. We should make sure that these people know that we love them. Tell them and then prove that love by spending time with them, listening to them, and doing little things that touch the heart and make unforgettable memories.

Let's also remember to express our love to the Lord, but it too must be more than words. In John 14:15, Jesus said, "If you love me keep my commandments."

Remember 1st Corinthians 13:13 states, "The greatest of all gifts is love."

In closing, I want share the words of a beautiful song recorded by Jan Harbuck, written by Louis Brown. (I appreciate them allowing me to share these word with you.)

### **"Love Ain't Love Till You Give It away"**

*There are so many missing the love we can share  
It makes a big difference, anytime, anywhere  
If we put love on hold, someone is left in the cold  
It's the best way to show that we care  
Gotta share it with children and old people too  
and every brother that needs it from you  
For we are his keepers, we have to dig deeper  
and be much kinder in all that we do  
How much is enough, there is no boundaries  
God gave till it hurt on old Calvary  
Love ain't love till you give it away  
when He fills up your heart  
you must spread it each day  
It's wasted my friend to hold it within  
Love ain't love till we give it away.*

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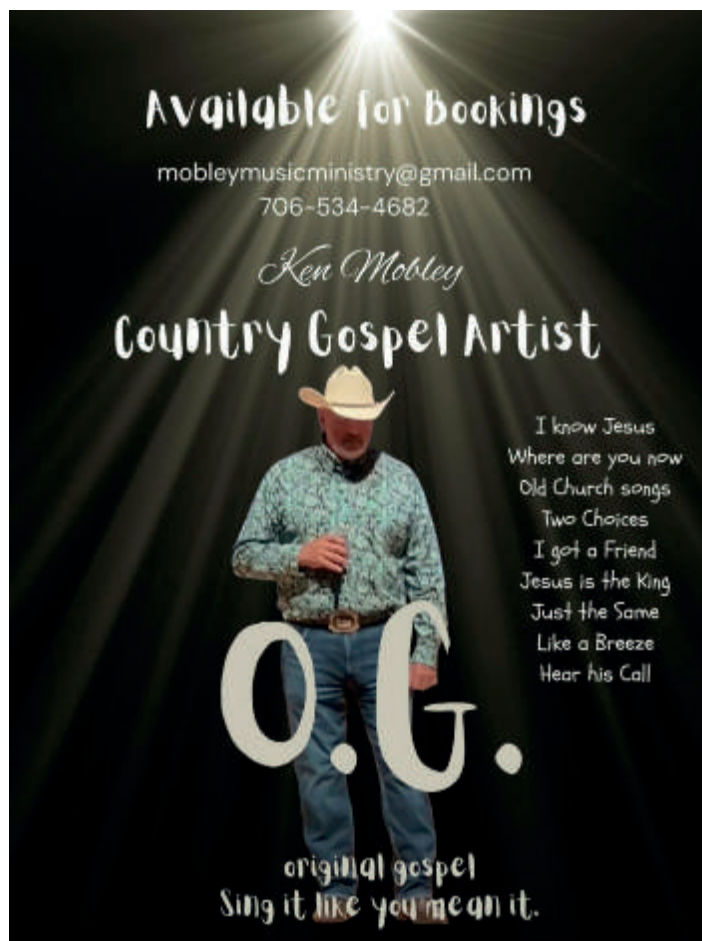
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Jeremy Ryan Abbott - known to fans simply as J Abbott - is enthralled with music and the craft of songwriting. To him, music is far more than sound; it is feeling. It is faith expressed outwardly, family woven into melody, and passion shaped by years of hard work. Today, that lifelong journey enters a new chapter with his signing to Grace Records Nashville LLC, marking a major milestone in Abbott's rising career.

## A JOURNEY OF FAITH, FAMILY, AND THE MUSIC THAT MOVES HIM

# J. Abbott

By Chloe Wright

Abbott's musical story began almost as soon as he could walk. Raised in a home where faith was central, he grew up performing with his family's Christian music ministry, The Abbotts, touring throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Those early years not only developed his vocal ability but also taught him that music can minister, connect, and ultimately help fulfill one's calling.

By his twenties, Abbott was no longer confined to church venues. Determined to grow, he stepped into bars, clubs, patios, VFW halls, American Legions, Moose Lodges, and any place willing to hand him a microphone. He sang with local bands, entered karaoke competitions, and performed anywhere a crowd could gather. At times, he performed seven nights a week, building a reputation for grit, consistency, and heart.

It was during this season that fans began calling him "Rascal," a nod to the raw emotion he poured into Rascal Flatts classics like *God Bless the Broken Road* and *These Days*. The nickname stuck, reflecting both his fun-loving

personality and his ability to connect deeply with listeners through the shared language of Country music.

A pivotal moment came during a trip to Nashville, where Abbott attended a VIP Breakfast on Broadway hosted by Mark Wills Music. Soon after, he auditioned for American Idol Season 7, advancing to the IZOD Center in East Rutherford, New Jersey. He later competed on America's Got Talent in Columbus, Ohio. These experiences sharpened his stage presence and fueled his determination to pursue music professionally.

Since then, Abbott has shared stages with industry greats, top producers, and Grand Ole Opry musicians. One standout moment was performing before thousands at a Pittsburgh Pirates Semi-League Baseball game, a powerful confirmation of his ability to command a large audience with authenticity and energy.

Musically, J Abbott stands at the crossroads of Country, Christian Country, Gospel, and touches of Country Rock. His influences range from Gospel icons like the Gaither Vocal



Band, The Crabb Family, and Phillips, Craig & Dean to Country legends including Mark Wills, Rascal Flatts, George Strait, Garth Brooks, and Jason Aldean. The result is a sound that feels both familiar and fresh - resonating with traditional Country fans while engaging a new generation.

Abbott's songwriting is rooted in lived experience. His number-one hit *Over & Over Again* is among his most personal works, written in memory of his father, Kenneth Abbott, who passed away at just 58. The song chronicles grief, healing, and the renewed faith Abbott found in Jesus Christ - whom he calls "a new best friend." The message resonated deeply with listeners, helping many through their own hardships and climbing to number one on multiple charts.

Another major success, *Knock Knock*, also reached number one and ranked as the #3 song of 2023. These hits solidified Abbott as a rising force in Christian Country and Southern Gospel, earning him multiple fan-voted nominations at the AGM and ICGM Awards, including 'Breakthrough Artist of the Year,' 'Song of the Year,' 'Video of the Year,' and 'Album of the Year' for "A Better Man."

With the release of his highly anticipated single and music video *Who Needs Whiskey*, Abbott steps boldly into the next phase of his career. The song isn't really about whiskey at all. It's about what happens when God brings the right person into your life. Suddenly, the things you used to lean on don't hold the same weight anymore. You don't need the old escapes, the old crutches, the old ways of coping. Love brings a steadiness that a bottle never could. That's the heart of the song.

The song showcases the writing talents of Nashville hitmaker Corey Lee Barker, whose catalog includes more than 2,300 recordings for artists such as Vince Gill, Neal McCoy, and Bill Anderson.

Produced by seven-time Grammy Award winner Mark Fain - known for his work with Miranda Lambert, Luke Combs, and Carrie Underwood - the track captures Abbott's signature blend of heartfelt storytelling and modern Country edge. Engineers Steve C. Chandler and Ben Fowler, both industry heavyweights, helped shape the polished, emotionally rich production. The music video, directed by Chris Odem, features a compelling performance by Heather



Rickman, who brings Abbott's vision to life with authenticity and energy.

Momentum surrounding *Who Needs Whiskey* surged with the announcement that Abbott has officially signed with Grace Records Nashville LLC. The label describes him as "a powerful and uniquely strong voice... capable of connecting on multiple levels - crossing generational and cultural boundaries and bridging faith, Country roots, and high-energy storytelling."

For Abbott, the signing is deeply personal. "The journey has gone from singing in the living room with my family as a kid to embracing the very best in the music industry," he says. "To have a team that believes in the message and the music - it's unbelievable."

Despite his growing success, Abbott remains grounded. "Family and faith are everything for me," he says, crediting his mother, Mary Abbott, as a constant source of strength. "That is and always will be the foundation of everything I do."

From a small-town Ohio boy with a big heart to a nationally signed artist, J. Abbott's story is a testament to what faith, hard work, and purpose can build. With a mature voice, boundless energy, and lyrics that inspire hope, he stands out in a Country music landscape often driven by trends rather than truth.

With the support of Grace Records Nashville and an unwavering commitment to his calling, J. Abbott's journey is only just beginning.



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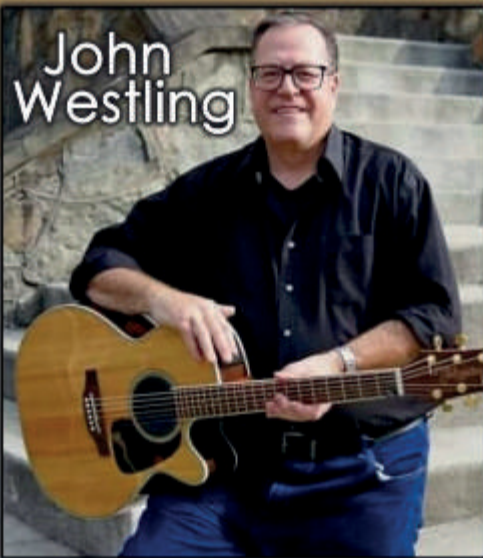
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# ENJOYING EVERYDAY LIFE

## What's in Your Heart?

Joyce Meyer

**P**roverbs 4:23 says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it" (NIV).

The Bible has a lot to say about your heart; not your physical heart, but what's going on inside of you - your thoughts, motives, and desires. These "hidden" things are important because they eventually come out through your words, attitudes, and the things you do. If you have a healthy heart, then it leads to a healthy life.

So, I want to ask you today: What is in your heart? Is it full of murmuring and complaining? Or is it filled with praise and thanksgiving to God?

Just like it's possible to have a physical heart murmur, I believe we can also suffer from a spiritual heart murmur. We can get into a habit of complaining or "murmuring" about the things we aren't happy with in life. These murmurs are often the result of jealousy, resentment, or a lack of gratitude.

For instance, I can remember a time years ago when my next-door neighbor was given a brand-new coat - the very coat I had been praying for! I thought, Surely, they delivered it to the wrong house by accident. Instead of being happy for her, I seethed with jealousy and grumbled about how I deserved it more than she did.

The truth is, God can never bless us to the degree He wants to until we learn how to truly be happy for other people. If all we can do is complain about what others have and what we don't have, it just keeps us stuck.

The Israelites are the perfect example. Because of their unbelief and bad attitudes, they literally wandered around in the wilderness for 40 years. The Bible says "All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, 'If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this wilderness!'" (Numbers 14:2 NIV).

They complained when they were hungry, and so God supernaturally provided them with manna every morning. Although they were satisfied for a little while, they began to grumble because they wanted meat instead (Exodus 16:11-16; 17:1-7).

It's easy to read about the Israelites and think, How could they be so ungrateful? However, we often do the very same thing! We can pray to have children, then later complain about all the hard work that comes with it. Or we can desire a bigger house and then get upset because we have to spend more time cleaning it.

I used to be a chronic complainer. I would make my list and ask God for all the things I wanted, while complaining about the things I already had. One day, the Lord spoke to my heart and said, "Joyce, if you're not thankful for what you have now, why should I give you more to complain about?" That got my attention!

Maintaining a grateful heart is the cure for a spiritual heart murmur. Psalm 50:23 says, "He who offers a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving honors Me; and to him... I shall show the salvation of God" (AMP). When we are thankful, it opens the door for God to answer our prayers and bring blessings into our lives.

What we focus on has the ability to make us either happy or miserable. We can either dwell on the negative things or choose to magnify the good. When we choose to be thankful, we become happier, and we bring more joy to those around us.

The old saying "Count your blessings" is terrific advice. I think it's easy to get used to all of the wonderful things God does for us and take them for granted. That's why it's so powerful to take even just a few minutes each day to thank Him for the blessings in our lives.

It felt a little awkward at first, but I've made a habit of being thankful. As I go about my day, I'll thank God for His help with my work, the beautiful day He has provided, and even the coffee I get to drink. I praise Him for the people He has placed in my life and for the strength He gives me to keep on going when I feel too busy or overwhelmed.

It's not only important to thank God for who He is and all that He does for us, but we also need to regularly thank the people who make our lives better. I think you would be amazed how much your relationships would improve if you simply began saying, "I appreciate you" from time to time.

Are you dealing with a heart murmur of your own? Have you been tempted to complain about the things you don't like instead of focusing on the blessings in your life? If so, I encourage you to practice being a person of gratitude. Voice your thankfulness to God for the wonderful things He does for you each and every day.

As you do, you will fill your heart with joy and gratitude...and release the power of God's goodness into your life like never before.

\*\*\*\*\*

For more on this topic, order Joyce's two-part teaching resource *Secrets for a Healthy Heart*. You can also contact us to receive our free magazine, *Enjoying Everyday Life*, by calling (800) 727-9673 or visiting [www.joycemeyer.org](http://www.joycemeyer.org)

Joyce Meyer is a New York Times bestselling author and founder of Joyce Meyer Ministries, Inc. She has authored more than 150 books, including *BATTLEFIELD OF THE MIND* and *OVERCOMING EVERY PROBLEM* (FaithWords). She hosts the *Enjoying Everyday Life* program, which is broadcast to millions in over 110 languages. For more information, visit [www.joycemeyer.org](http://www.joycemeyer.org)

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# JOHN PENNEY

*A Georgia Voice Carried by Grace*

By Jackson McKee

For more than four decades, John Penney has lived at the crossroads of Country music, Gospel truth, and heartfelt storytelling. His journey - from Southern Georgia stages to national Country charts, and ultimately to the front lines of Christian Country ministry - is a testament to a man shaped by faith, family, and a calling that refused to let him go.

## **Roots in Southern Georgia**

John Penney grew up in the musical soil of Southern Georgia, surrounded by the sounds of Country greats, Gospel harmonies, and the Rock 'n' Roll that shaped a generation. Those influences formed the foundation of his artistry, but even early on, Penney developed a style unmistakably his own.

His first major chapter unfolded with the Sunshine Express Band, a six-piece Country/Rock group that toured concert halls, fairs, festivals, and nightclubs across the Southeast. The road sharpened his voice, his stage presence, and his understanding of what moves an audience.

## **A Breakthrough in Nashville**

Penney's career shifted dramatically when he connected with legendary Nashville producer Joe Gibson, a partnership that helped him flourish as a solo Country artist. His songs began receiving national attention, opening doors to share the stage with icons such as Merle Haggard, John Anderson, Ronnie McDowell, T. Graham Brown, Freddy Fender, Moe Bandy, and Helen Cornelius.

During his time with NSD/Soundwaves Records, Penney's songwriting and vocal talent earned him significant recognition. He was twice named one of Georgia's Top Ten acts by the Atlanta Songwriters Association, and his original



material won the Middle Georgia Talent Search for both 'Best Original Music' and 'Best Song.' His work repeatedly caught the attention of the Indie Bullet Songwriting Competition, where he reached the Top 10 on two separate occasions. Billboard also honored him with multiple awards during this period, and his debut album, "Georgia Lady," produced several singles that climbed into Cashbox Magazine's Top 100.

These achievements placed him firmly among the most promising Country artists of his era, yet Penney's story was never just about the spotlight.

### A Season of Family and Faith

At the height of his momentum, Penney made a decision that revealed the heart behind the artist. When his daughters - Candace, Carla, and Caitlin - were born, he stepped back from the demands of touring to prioritize home life.

"Family has always come first," Penney has often shared, and that conviction led him deeper into his local church alongside his wife, Carlene, and their girls. It was there that he began writing and performing Christian songs, discovering a new dimension of his musical identity.

Though he never drifted far from music, Penney entered a quiet season of reflection and growth. But God was not finished with his voice.

### A Granddaughter's Birth and a New Beginning

The birth of his granddaughter, Stella, reignited something powerful in Penney's spirit. That moment became the catalyst for his return to the studio, resulting in his first Christian album, "The Gospel Truth." The project was warmly received, but Penney sensed there was more to uncover, more to say, more to surrender, more to share. "I have a sense of purpose now," Penney said. "I want to spread what God is doing in my life, and I am able to play music to do it. That's exciting!"

His renewed passion led to a season of prolific writing, even as his family walked through painful battles with cancer and drug addiction. Those struggles deepened his ministry, shaping songs that carried both honesty and hope. One of the most poignant examples is found in the lyrics of *I Will Be Saved*, written with his daughter Carla: "Mercy comes down

*from heaven... washed in the blood of Jesus... I will be saved by His amazing grace."*

These words reflect the heartbeat of Penney's message: redemption is real, grace is available, and Jesus is still changing lives.

### A Ministry That Keeps Growing

As Penney stepped fully into Christian Country music, doors began opening once again - this time with a deeper purpose behind them. His work in recent years has been met with tremendous affirmation. He has been honored with the Horizon Award, recognized as 'Male Vocalist of the Year,' celebrated for 'Video of the Year,' and named a Living Legend by the International Country Gospel Music Association. His songs have repeatedly risen to the top of Christian Country charts, earning him multiple number-one placements and solidifying his voice as one of the genre's most heartfelt storytellers.

In 2024, Penney reached a milestone few artists ever experience: he was inducted into the Georgia Country Music Hall of Fame, a recognition that affirmed both his early Country career and his later Gospel ministry.

### Looking Ahead With Purpose

Today, John Penney continues to travel, sing, write, and minister with a renewed sense of mission. The stages may vary - from churches to festivals to award shows - but the message remains the same. He sums it up simply: "I just want to tell the story of Jesus."

Through every lyric, every testimony, and every mile on the road, Penney is doing exactly that. His music is more than melody - it is ministry. It is the overflow of a heart transformed by grace and determined to share the love of Christ with anyone willing to listen.

And as long as God keeps opening doors, John Penney plans to walk through them guitar in hand, singing the truth that changed his life.



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## Debra Perry and Jaidyn's Call Welcome Seasoned Southern Gospel Artist Brian Alvey to the Ministry Team



Debra Perry & Jaidyn's Call are thrilled to announce the addition of acclaimed Southern Gospel singer Brian Alvey to their ministry family. Brian, a talented and experienced vocalist, musician, and songwriter, brings a rich heritage in Gospel music and a heart devoted to serving the Lord.

With a distinguished career that includes singing with several of the top groups in the Southern Gospel Music Industry such as Tribute Quartet, Kingdom

Heirs, and recently Second Chance Ministries, Brian Alvey is recognized not only for his remarkable voice but also for his deep love of God's Word. His dedication to faith, family, and ministry aligns perfectly with the mission and values of Debra Perry & Jaidyn's Call.

"We are blessed to welcome Brian, his wife Amber and his children Collin, Parker & Winston into our ministry family," said Debra Perry. "His talent, spirit, and love for the Lord make him a wonderful addition to all we are doing in advancing God's Kingdom through music and ministry."

"I am honored to join Debra Perry & Jaidyn's Call," said Brian Alvey. "I look forward to serving alongside this incredible ministry, sharing the message of hope and faith through music, and ministering to hearts everywhere God leads us."

With hearts united in purpose and vision, Debra Perry & Jaidyn's Call are excited for the years ahead, praying for a

fruitful journey as they continue to lift up Jesus through worship, song, and testimony.

## Gaither To Host 2-Day Event In Minnesota

On May 1 and 2, 2026, Gospel Music legend Bill Gaither will present a Homecoming Weekend musical celebration at Grace Church in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. Over the course of two days, nearly two dozen Homecoming friends will gather for two exciting concert events.

The Homecoming music collection has become a phenomenon that has captured the hearts of millions worldwide. The series gave birth to the Gaither Homecoming concert tour, which has taken place in cities worldwide with collective attendance figures exceeding more than 1.1 million, while nearly every volume in the DVD and CD series has certified gold or platinum.

For over three decades, Bill and Gloria Gaither have taken their exciting Homecoming Tour on the road, touring internationally and enjoying sold out crowds in cities worldwide. The exciting tradition continues in Eden Prairie as this 2026 Homecoming Celebration brings together dozens of artists on one stage for a weekend that has the promise of being quite historical.

This special weekend will feature Gaither's own Vocal Band, consisting of Wes Hampton, Reggie Smith, Adam Crabb and Todd Suttles, as well as Gaither alum Mark Lowry, Grammy-winning male vocalist, Jason Crabb, as well as popular multi-award winning groups like The Martins, The Hoppers



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and Karen Peck & New River. Additionally, popular Homecoming artists set to appear include Gordon Mote, Joseph Habedank, Angela Primm, Lynda Randle, Gene McDonald, Ladye Love Smith, Chris Blue and other popular Homecoming friends.

This two-day concert event promises to be exciting for the entire family. Make plans now to be a part of the Gaither Homecoming in Eden Prairie at Grace Church on May 1 and 2.

Additional information regarding this exciting event is available at [gaither.com](http://gaither.com) or [tprlive.co](http://tprlive.co).

### The Watchman's Voice Launches New Website, Bringing Prophetic and Scriptural Clarity to a Culture in Crisis

A bold new platform has entered the digital landscape with the official launch of The Watchman's Voice, a website dedicated to prophetic commentary, biblical discernment, and cultural analysis for a generation hungry for truth. The site - now live at [WatchmansVoice.net](http://WatchmansVoice.net) - serves as a central hub for articles, op-eds, audio and video content, and spiritual resources designed to awaken, equip, and challenge readers.

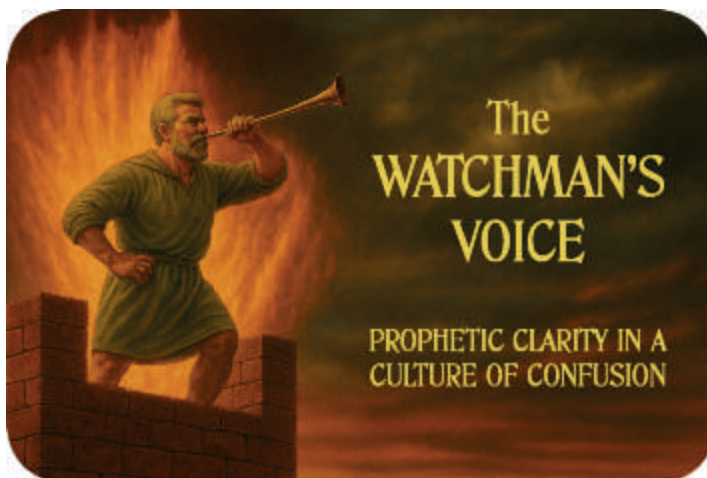
The launch is accompanied by an active Facebook page, expanding the publication's reach and creating a space for real-time engagement, discussion, and community connection.

Founded and edited by John Lanier, The Watchman's Voice exists to call believers back to biblical conviction in an age of confusion. "This platform was born out of urgency," Lanier says. "We are living in a time when deception is loud, compromise is celebrated, and truth is treated like an inconvenience. The Watchman's Voice stands as a reminder that God still calls His people to warn, to discern, and to speak with clarity."

The new website features a growing library of content, including prophetic editorials addressing cultural drift, spiritual compromise, and the state of the modern church; Biblical teaching and commentary rooted in Scripture; and investigative and research-based articles on doctrinal trends and theological issues. Each piece is crafted to confront complacency, stir spiritual hunger, expose error, and call readers back to the authority of God's Word.

Lanier, known for his editorial work with Christian Voice Magazine describes the website as "a digital watchtower."

"We're not here to entertain," he explains. "We're here to warn, to encourage, and to point people back to the cross, back to holiness, back to Jesus. The website allows us to speak directly into the lives of believers across the nation and around the world." The Facebook page extends that mission by offering frequent updates, shareable graphics, short-form commentary, and opportunities for readers to interact with the content and with one another.



The Watchman's Voice launches at a time when many Christians are seeking clarity amid cultural upheaval. The platform aims to be a steady, uncompromising source of biblical truth.

"People are tired of watered-down messages," Lanier says. "They're looking for something real - something rooted in Scripture, not trends. The Watchman's Voice is committed to giving them exactly that."



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WHERE IS THE  
PRESENCE OF GOD?

BY ROYCE LANIER



*“The most dangerous thing that can happen has happened. We have learned how to be religious without God. That was the tragedy of Saul’s rule. During the entire reign of Saul, the Ark was missing, and there was never an effort made to bring it back. This is a tragedy, but it got worse, they never missed the Ark. They learned how to be religious without God. There is an imitation of the Holy Spirit in Pentecostal circles, and fools think it is good.” - B.H. Clendennen.*

**T**he modern Christian church has failed to take inventory of its spiritual condition. Merriam-Webster dictionary states that the word “condition” means a premise upon which the fulfillment of an agreement depends. Covenant is a synonym for the word “condition.” For example, 2nd Chronicles 7:14 starts with “IF” my people. The word “IF” illustrates that a condition must be met.

In 2nd Chronicles 6:21-42, we read that King Solomon requested that God forgive the sins of the people. In 2nd Chronicles 7:14, God responded with under these “conditions” that, *“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land”*.

When God said, “my people,” He included His people for all time. Make no mistake that we must take inventory of what we call a church today. In Revelation chapters two and three, Christ surveyed the seven churches, took inventory, and found in five churches that he had “somewhat” against them. The conditions found in those five churches would result in the removal of their candlestick.

You may have seen church signs that asked, “What is missing in CH\_RCH? U are”. But the real question is “Where is the presence of God?”

We can see a lesson during the leadership of Eli and his two sons Hophni and Phineas. In those days, the Word of God was rare - no open visions or widespread revelation. This is evidence of problems already. The New Testament church in this spiritual plunge - from an Old Testament tabernacle perspective - we would see no ashes in the brazen altar. The Laver would be empty of water, and stale bread on the table. There is a stench at the altar of incense before God, and the light and the anointing is no longer burning from the lampstand. In other words, our spirit man has been deprived by sin and the lack of devotion. This is apostasy, the abandonment of our first love.

We have wolves in sheep clothing preaching on the pulpits of our churches, false prophets spewing agendas and manipulating the masses, smart boys of religion who’ve learned to imitate church. Today’s leadership tries to keep status in the church because they see it was a career rather than a calling. Many Christians fail to discern the absence of God because of sin. When we learn to have church without God, we are nothing but a powerless religious machine.

Where is the presence of God? He is in the house of Dagon. (1Samuel 5:2)

How did this happen to Israel? Brothers Hophni and Phineas were priests, but the bible says they were the sons of Belial. They were worthless, wicked, and had no respect for the Lord. They bullied the people, took offerings by force, and seduced women who assisted at the door of the tabernacle.

This sound familiar?

Eli had knowledge of the evil his two sons were doing to the people, the tabernacle, and the Lord. In 1 Samuel 2:27-36, a man of God came to Eli and said unto him, *“Thus saith the Lord, why do you scorn my sacrifices and offerings? Why do you give your sons more honor than you give me, for you and your sons have become fat from the best offerings of Gods people.”*

The Lord also told Samuel that He would judge Eli because his sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not. Eli rebuked his sons, but they ignored him. Since Eli took no further action, judgment eventually came to the house of God.

Now, in 1 Samuel 4, Israel had gone up to fight against the Philistines, and the Philistines slew about 4,000 men of Israel. In verse three, the elders of Israel wondered *“Why has the Lord defeated us before the Philistines?”* The elders’ intent was *“Let us bring the ark of God, for it will save us.”* In other words, let us bring the presence of God out to us. When the ark of God had arrived at camp, the people shouted with a great shout that even the ground shook. This was simply another religious shout that impressed the Philistines, but not God. So, the next battle was a slaughter of the Israelites of 30,000 men. Hophni and Phineas was among the dead in battle, and when the news reached Eli, he fell and broke his neck, resulting in his death.

The Philistines captured the ark of God, and they placed it in the house of Dagon. When Phineas’ pregnant wife heard about the capture of the ark of God and the deaths of her husband and father-in-law, she immediately went into labor and gave birth. She delivered a boy and named him “Ichabod,” which means ‘the glory is departed.’ After seven months, the Philistines returned the Ark of God, and the Ark laid solitude for twenty years.

Where is the Presence of God? He’s in solitude at the house of Abinadab. (1 Samuel 7:2)

Samuel was the power of attorney while the sign of Ichabod was on the door post of the church. When Samuel “solemnly” protested having a king for Israel, God gave what the people voted for. All this sounds familiar in modern church today because we are in an era of Christianity where



King Saul rules. We don't need Samuel for sacrifice. (1 Samuel 13:11-13). We can bring the presence of God to where we are without repentance. (1 Samuel 4:11). The glory has departed out of the house of God. We are a nation that wants a leader to solve all the problems and all we have are spiritual "Sauls."

People believe that grace will be granted without repentance. They disregard discernment and expect to hear from God when the altar and the blood has been removed. No longer hiding the Babylonian garment, just wearing it to church.

In Hebrews 13:5 it says, *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."* God is omnipresent and omniscient. God keeps His promise by his omnipresence. However, when we walk in sin and repentance is abstained, we no longer have the manifest presence of God. Sin will stop the flow and like King Saul, He (God) will reject him. Then anoint another man or woman of God or go in solitude. Judgement will come. While apostasy has set in, judgement has begun.

Where is the presence of God? He has left the ninety-nine to search for the one. (Matthew 18:13)

1 Peter 4:17 says, *"For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?"*

Psalm 9:17 also warns, *"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."*

And in Isaiah 29:13, *Wherefore the Lord said, forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men.*

Much judgement pending for the house of God while the prodigal church plays in the pigpen. God works in order and if you are a pastor, shepherd, or leader in the House of God, then take this warning.



Take inventory, take a survey and take appropriate action. *"So, thou O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore, thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me."* - Ezekial 33:7.

The Lord says, *"Just as I have dealt with Eli, Hophni, and Phineas, I will deal with you. Resign or repent, for the cloud is about to move and the presence of God (The Ark of God) will be on the shoulders of the intended leadership."*

*"And they commanded the people, saying, when you see the Ark of the covenant of the Lord your God. And the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it."* - Joshua 3:3,

The "condition" in the church today is set for 2 Chronicles 7:14. Will we hear from Heaven? Will we see revival once again?

### ***Where is the presence of God?***



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## *ON THE ROAD WITH GOSPEL MUSIC TODAY*

### *A Sold-Out Night with The Regals and Swanberg*

Ken & Jean Grady

A few years ago, it wasn't uncommon to have a place to go for a great meal and Gospel music and enjoy a date night or just a great night out. There was the Hallelujah Supper Club in the Charlotte area and The Joyful Noise in the Atlanta area. These eventually closed and we lost the closeness of community over the sharing of a meal with other believers plus the entertainment aspect of the supper club.

Recently, the Regals, from South Carolina, started thinking about how to revive that idea and found a venue right in their hometown. The Lyman Event Center was the location for the first Evening at the Dinner Theater with The Regals and Dennis Swanberg. Sold out days before the event, 224 people enjoyed a great Bar-B-Que dinner with a BBQ sandwich, chicken, green beans, macaroni & cheese, cole slaw and cake.

The Regals delighted the crowd with some new songs as well as requested older songs. Members of the group are Gary Hautamaki, Kim Lanford, Steve Woodard and Stephen Jewell. Kim Lanford is also a comedian, and he is always funny with his stories. After the Regals, Dennis Swanberg ("The Swan") shared stories of his life and we all laughed a lot and shed a tear or two as Dennis told us about how his life isn't perfect and how he kept going through some of the hardships. He brought it all together as he quoted Proverbs 17:22, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine," highlighting how a positive and cheerful attitude can be beneficial for our health and well-being.

Two books and a thumb drive were available at the product table where many fans flocked to as the evening ended. We laughed, we cried, we ate and we were blessed. The Regals are planning more supper club nights and I'm sure they will sell out fast.



**A Sold Out Crowd**



**The Regals**





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## Getting Oil from Venezuela is More Complicated Than People Think

Chris Woodward

It's been said that the Trump administration's actions in Venezuela were about oil. Whether that's true or not, it is accurate to say that there is a lot of oil in Venezuela.

President Donald Trump posted on Truth Social that Venezuela's interim authorities will turn over 30 to 50 million barrels of sanctioned oil to the U.S. This is to be sold at market price, and Trump ensured that the money will be "used to benefit the people of Venezuela and the United States."

Kenny Stein of Institute for Energy Research says that Venezuela technically has the world's largest proved oil reserves. "Proved reserves mean that's oil that they know is there, and that they know how to produce. Venezuela has the largest proved reserves. It's about 300 billion barrels of oil. That's significantly larger even than Saudi Arabia, which is the next largest. I think it's about four times the proved reserves in the United States."

One issue with Venezuela's oil is that it is heavy crude, which means, as Stein explains, that it is very expensive to produce and that it does not flow very easily. Meanwhile, he also says that the infrastructure is not there to get things moving soon.

"The money needed for investment has been taken by the government to spend on whatever. The literal copper at sites was stripped by desperate people trying to feed their families. Pipelines were not maintained. If you don't keep the well maintained and flowing, it will basically be bricked," says Stein. "It's not something you can turn off for a while and turn back on."

Stein says this is why Chevron has been lobbying different U.S. presidential administrations for limited sanctions waivers on Venezuelan oil so that Chevron can continue to maintain their existing fields in Venezuela. "All Chevron was doing was spend enough money to make sure they didn't become completely useless," states Stein.

To make matters worse, Stein doubts that people know exactly how bad the situation is with Venezuela's oil industry. "Foreigners have not been operating there," says Stein. "Venezuelans was arresting foreign executives at times."

## Police Deaths Down Significantly in 2025, But in Many Cities, Bad Sentiment Lingers

Steve Jordahl

On-duty law enforcement deaths dropped by 25% in 2025 compared with 2024 totals, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund. However, the good news comes with an asterisk.

In 2025 there were 98 law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty. That's down from 196 in 2024, according to the Officer Down Memorial Page. Randy Sutton, a law enforcement veteran of 34 years turned media commentator, says that's really good news. "Is it good news that less officers were killed? That's 100% absolutely yes."

But he says the anti-law enforcement sentiment in some cities has not diminished. Officers are still subject to extreme violence just for putting on the uniform. "Three-hundred-forty-seven officers were shot in the line of duty, and 22 of them, of the 45 officers who were killed, were ambushed."

He also says years of 'defund the police' abuse has left many agencies severely shorthanded.

In the wake of George Floyd's death in 2020, a dozen local governments voted to reduce their police budgets by over \$1.4 billion, including major cities like New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Philadelphia.

In Minneapolis, city council members pledged to dismantle the local police department, aiming to replace it with a new public safety model, though this effort faced bureaucratic hurdles, including a blocked charter rewrite and political opposition.

Similarly, school districts in cities like Denver, Oakland, and Seattle reduced or eliminated police presence in schools, reflecting a broader movement to reevaluate the role of law enforcement in community services.

Sutton says fewer officers means less proactive policing, visiting neighborhoods, working with kids in the community and the like.

The lack of officers also means serious police work is not being done. "It also means less crime being solved and less individuals being taken into custody who were committing crimes."



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## Honoring Trump, Netanyahu Undercuts Rumors of U.S.-Israel Rift

Chad Groening

A pro-Israel activist is praising the prime minister of Israel for making it clear that the alliance between the U.S. and Israel is strong.

During his recent visit to the U.S., Benjamin Netanyahu announced that President Donald Trump is receiving the Israel Prize, his nation's highest cultural honor that, until now, has never been awarded to a non-Israeli.

Prime Minister Netanyahu said the decision reflects the overwhelming sentiment of Israelis across the political spectrum who appreciate what President Trump has done to help Israel and support the shared fight against "terrorists and those who would destroy our civilization."

"It's going to be awarded to President Donald J. Trump for his tremendous contributions to Israel and the Jewish people," Netanyahu told reporters at Mar-a-Lago late last month, calling it "such a fitting thing."

Gary Bauer, chairman of the Campaign for Working Families, says this should set the record straight. "For months, the American media has been once again taking a complete lie, repeating it over and over again until they convinced the American people it's true," he observes. "That lie was that there was real tension between President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu."

"Of course they're going to have disagreements; they're leaders of two different countries," Bauer adds. "But on the big things, they're together."

In October, Netanyahu called Trump the "greatest friend" Israel has ever had after Hamas released the final 20 living hostages under a peace deal brokered by Trump and his administration. "No American president has ever done more for Israel," the prime minister said at the time. "It ain't even close."

He credited Trump for standing up for Israel at the United Nations, recognizing Israel's rights in the West Bank, and withdrawing from what he described as the "disastrous" Iran nuclear deal.

Bauer believes both leaders understand that their countries are the pillars of Judeo-Christian civilization. "I think Bibi did a great thing," he submits. "I think that his awarding President Trump this on this trip was the prime minister's way of not only honoring the president but also poking his finger in the eyes of reporters that want to divide Israel and the United States at this dangerous time in the world."

## New App Could Be Safety Guard Parents and Educators are Looking For

Bronson Woodruff

Screens in classrooms have proven to be a distraction, often hindering students' learning, whether it be phones, laptops, or other devices. AFN reports on a new app that could be an alternative to banning phones in classrooms.

The app is called Opal. According to Opal's CEO and founder Kenneth Schlenker, Opal helps users with daily screen time, blocking blocks games and social media.

Seventy-six percent of public schools in the United States have now put some sort of ban in place, reports Just the News. However, according to Schlenker, that is not fixing the deep-rooted issue. He is quoted as saying that losing phones in class means kids are not learning healthy habits, but rather they are "just losing access."

Tina Descovich is CEO and co-founder of Moms for Liberty. "We're entering a new era between phones, AI, and all the technology in classrooms, and what we're learning over the last several years is that it's not all that it cracked up to be. So, I welcome any opportunity to put some more parameters and safeguards around some of these technological tools that have been placed in the hands of our children."

The question lies on whether there should be a complete ban on technology in classrooms and students should go back to paper textbooks, notes on notebook paper, etc.

"I think that there should be a variety of options for students. All students learn differently, and that's the great thing about the American education system - we can have some schools provide paper and pencil options only and others that can be full-STEM and immersed in technology," states Descovich.

Descovich says that she thinks, overall, it's not realistic to ban all technology from K-12 schools. "I do think we can be smart and can set parameters — maybe have no technology for our youngest learners and then increase it as they get older with parameters, with guidelines — to keep our children safe and protected from the bad things that are out there, from the dopamine addiction that we know now happens," says Descovich. "I think this isn't going away anytime soon, and we have to have these open and healthy conversations about it."

Descovich concludes by stating that she thinks that the future of education is going to include technology, all that is left is just figuring out how to do it safely.



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When Chris Perdue talks about the day he met Jesus, he doesn't hesitate. "I got saved at the age of 13," he says, "and what is unique about that is it happened on my 13th birthday, on January 13th. The greatest birthday gift I have ever gotten is knowing I have Jesus in my heart."

That moment in West Virginia would become the foundation for a ministry that now stretches across the country - a ministry marked by music, testimony, restoration, and a relentless message of hope.

***Rise Up: The  
Redemption Story  
and Ministry  
Journey of  
CHRIS  
PERDUE***



Long before radio charts and national concerts, Chris served quietly and faithfully in local ministry. He began as a Children's Pastor in Ripley, West Virginia, later stepping into the role of Chaplain for Union Mission in Charleston, ministering to men in a homeless shelter.

It was there that Chris noticed something missing. "Each evening I was there, we did not have any special music at all for the chapel services," he recalls. "I thought, why not? This is a captive audience, per se. We not only wanted to feed and care for the men and women's physical needs, but their spiritual needs as well."

So, he sang - one song before each guest pastor preached. And something unexpected happened. Pastors began inviting him to their churches. Requests for special music grew. Doors opened. And Chris Perdue Music was born.

His ministry path would eventually take him west to Nevada as an Associate Pastor, then to the greater Nashville area as a Youth Pastor. But the call to music kept growing louder. "After several years in that role, God called me to the music ministry more on a consistent basis," Chris says. And he obeyed.

Chris's musical DNA runs deep. As a child, he was captivated by the Homebound Gospel Quartet of Ripley, West Virginia. "Those four men had no idea how they were impacting me to love Gospel music," he says. Their influence introduced him to the giants of the genre - The Cathedrals, The Speer Family, The Kingsmen - voices that shaped his own.

Years later, Chris sang bass in a local quartet and later baritone with the professional trio Harvest Gold of Gallatin, Tennessee. But one of the most meaningful moments of his career came during his 15th year in ministry. Chris released a project titled "Legacy," featuring a song the Homebound Gospel Quartet sang often: *The Courtroom*. "What made it special," Chris says, "was that the tenor, Jeff Waybright, and the lead/baritone, Ron Arthur II, came into the studio and sang their parts on the song. I got to sing with two of my heroes."

Chris's ministry is not built on polished perfection - it is built on transparency, redemption, and the courage to tell the truth about what God has done. "I am not one to dwell in my past sins," he says, "but to tell others about the One who can set you free."

His testimony - raw, honest, and rarely spoken from pulpits today - has become a lifeline for countless men and women battling pornography and other destructive addictions. Through partnerships with ministries that provide tools for victory, Chris has watched lives change. "I have seen several marriages saved because of Chris Perdue Music and the platform God has given me," he shares. "Seeing homes being restored from this awful destructive sin is an amazing feeling."

At concerts across the country, people approach him with tears, gratitude, and relief. "They tell me they have hope because of my story," Chris says. "It resonates with their struggle or with someone they know."

Chris's music has become a soundtrack of hope for listeners nationwide. His 2025 single *Roof Tearing Off Friends* climbed to #25 on multiple charts, propelled by listener requests and DJ support. "I want to personally thank every listener who called in requesting my song," he says. "And more importantly, God for allowing me to construct it."

His newest project, released January 1, 2026, is his most personal yet. "Rise Up" is a fully original album - every lyric written by Chris himself. "The latest album is bursting with uplifting Country Gospel tunes," he explains. "Every song is about hope, overcoming, and what it means to have a victorious life in Christ."

He credits SGH Promotions for helping bring the music to radio audiences nationwide.

Like many independent ministries, Chris's journey has not been without struggle. "Challenges are always financial," he admits. "But God continues to provide, even up until the eleventh hour, when God will place it on someone's heart to help meet the need. God has ALWAYS been faithful."

And the rewards? They are eternal. "Some of the greatest rewards have been people coming up to me before or after a concert and telling me they have hope because of Chris Perdue Music."

There was a time when Chris hesitated to share his testimony. Fear of judgment held him back, until one night, driving home from a concert, God confronted him. "God asked me if I was ashamed of what HE had done in my life," Chris says. "I had nothing else to say, because I knew I wasn't ashamed."

That moment changed everything. Now, Chris shares boldly. And people respond. "More and more men and women come to me and tell me about their struggle or just looking for hope and an answer," he says. "Seeing spouses come up and tell me there is hope because of my story encourages me to keep sharing what God can do."

Chris Perdue Music is more than concerts and CDs - it is a ministry with a pastor's heart and an evangelist's urgency. "Being a former pastor, I understand what the church needs," Chris says. "You will get a little preaching (in a subtle way) and encouragement during every Chris Perdue Music concert. No one will walk away without hearing the good news of Jesus and how He can set you free."

His mission is simple and unwavering: "Chris Perdue Music will always aim to see someone take their next spiritual step."

And his message to the church is clear: "It's time to rise up, church, and let the world see the power of God that is setting you free."





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# *Sailing Away* The Story Behind the Song

*Sailing Away* is a heartwarming song written by the late singer/songwriter, Roger Horne. Mike Keller, along with friend Bob Sellers recently recorded this song that is resonating with listeners everywhere. It's already climbing the charts and currently sits at #39 on the CVM Southern Gospel Top 100. Mike tells the story behind the song, and explains his heart for it.

By Mike Keller

**A**s I talked with brother Roger Horne in September of 2023, shortly before his home going, I asked him about a song I really liked, *Sailing Away*. I told him that I would love to record it, and I asked him what impressed him to write the song. He recalled that he and his wife were in Florida on a vacation, and one evening while sitting on the shore watching the sunset, he observed a little sailboat with just one man in it sailing by. He explained to me, 'Brother Mike, it was though he just turned into the sunset and just kept sailing away.' Roger said he began to pen these words...

*The waters are smooth and the sailing seems so easy. Oh but things have not always been that way. For I've seen the billows roll, bringing storm clouds to my soul. But Jesus has always been my stay. I'm sailing away on the old ship of Zion, sailing to that homeland of the soul. Friends and loved ones are waiting to welcome me yonder, I'm sailing to my heavenly home.*

But the verse that really got my attention was the last verse which goes like this: *I cannot complain, for my trip has been a good one. But I must be nearing that shore.* Brother Roger Horne passed away three weeks later. The song continues... *For I can almost see the lights of my mansion, oh so bright, and Jesus is standing at the door.* Then the last chorus is sung.

This song has touched so many hearts, including mine. Brother Roger is in that mansion he sang about and with the Savior he loved and wrote about over 700 times.

Roger and I never met face to face, but I did talk with him several times in that last three weeks. What I take from our conversations was that he was a gentleman - a gentle, kind, and God fearing man of God.

My hope is that this song will continue to bless folks everywhere and let them know that there is an eternal home of the soul to be obtained by salvation through Jesus Christ - and no other.



In my 68 years of this life, never a song or person such as brother Roger Horne ever touched my heart and never a song written ever ministered to my soul other than *Sailing Away*. I also want to personally thank brother Bob Sellers for singing the lead tenor and baritone, Tommy Swindle for his engineering, mixing and mastering, brother James Michael Rainey for the beautiful track he produced, and brother Milton Smith for his orchestration on this song. I also want to thank Brother Randall Wilds and Christian Voice magazine for your support. For over 40 years I've been singing the songs of Zion - and this one is the best.



Ultimately, if it had not been for my wife Linda, I may have never listened to the voice of the Lord. Not very many people encouraged me. Some even tried to throw cold water on the promotion of this powerful song. But Linda is the backbone of Mike Keller Ministry, and she has been with me all the way with encouragement. Thank you, sweetheart, for your encouragement. You're my rock.





# A PREACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

## What Can We Do?

Jerry Roach

**R**ecent events in our nation have brought to mind a question posed by the psalmist David. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3) I have written and preached messages dealing with this question many times.

We are now reaping the harvest of the seeds sown over several decades. Bibles and prayer were banned from our public schools. As Romans Chapter 1 teaches, the downfall of a nation begins with suppression of truth. Generations have been taught that truth is relative - no such thing as absolute truth. Christian symbols have been banned from many public places for years. Historical statues and monuments are being taken down. The U.S. Constitution is being shredded. God is mocked. It's as Romans 3:18 says, "There is no fear of God..."

We're told in 2 Timothy 3-4, "*In the last days perilous (Chaotic) times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful., unholy, without natural affection (unloving), trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent (uncontrolled sexual passions), fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady (headstrong), high-minded, lovers of pleasure more that lovers of God; having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof...Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the*

*truth...the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth.*" (Preachers, take note!)

"Preach the word! Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

I think of an old Gospel song that says, "*Living below in this old sinful world, hardly a comfort can afford; striving alone to face temptations sore, Where could I go but to the Lord? Where could I go, O where could I go; seeking a refuge for my soul? Needing a friend to help me in the end, where could I go but to the Lord?*" (J.B. Coats)

Dottie Rambo expressed it well with her lyrics, "*Who do I lean on when there's no foundation stable? When the Earth all around me is sinking sand on Christ the Solid Rock I stand.*" (I Go to the Rock-Dottie Rambo)

While those around him advised David to flee, he declared in Psalm 11:1, "In the LORD put I my trust." He stood firm on the solid foundation. Psalm 46:1 says, "*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*"

"Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." (Ephesians 6:10)

There is a firm foundation that will never be shaken nor destroyed. He is our Eternal Omnipotent God. Let's go to Him in prayer for America. In God we trust!

**John Penney**

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# TOP 100 FEBRUARY 2026

# GCM Southern Gospel

TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST	TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST
1	3	His Mercies Are Fresh Everyday	Carroll Roberson	51	63	Where The Roses Never Fade	John Lanier
2	4	I'm A Believer	Troy Burns Family	52	30	Jesus Guy	Jeff Arrandale
3	6	Symphony Of Grace	Austin Glover	53	67	If The Good Lords Willin'	Doug & Gina Green
4	7	More Than A Hollow Hallelujah	Isaacs	54	57	Thank God For The Darkness	Barbara Jean
5	11	Soul Set Free	Kingsmen	55	58	Open Hands	Amy Michelle
6	9	Be Sure	Shepherds	56	76	Overflowing	Kenny Keith
7	12	Sow The Good Seed	Greater Vision	57	87	I'm Gonna Make It	Freemans
8	14	Ain't Lookin' For Trouble	Mark Dubbeld Family	58	83	A Million Reasons	Perrys
9	25	Deep Waters	Triumphant Quartet	59	--	Hard Trials Will Soon Be Over	Gaither Vocal Band
10	21	What A Friend	Oxendine Family	60	28	It's Still The Blood	Allen Baker
11	5	Troubled	LeFevre Quartet	61	62	He Keeps The Son	Rocky & Tamie
12	23	Go Ahead And Shout	Sacred Call	62	45	The Name Is Jesus	Wendy Jones
13	8	Turn To The Right	Greg Sullivan	63	50	Lily Of The Valley	Tammy Caldwell
14	20	On My Way Back	Donna Burke	64	81	Bring Back The New Again	The Hagers
15	61	I Speak Jesus	Karen Peck & New River	65	97	Lord Are You Busy	Loretta Jent
16	38	All He's Ever Been	Chronicle	66	74	All Ready	Alan Frink
17	2	Satisfied	Jonathan Wilburn	67	75	Carry Me	Lori King
18	70	That Somebody Was Me	Guardians	68	41	My Home In Glory	Jonathan Bond
19	27	Fired Up And Filled Up	Angela Seng	69	68	When I Think Of Calvary	Violet Maynard Family
20	16	Home Is Always Where I'd Rather Be	Believer's Voice	70	90	Loving You	Nelons
21	32	When Believers Will Be Leaving	Down East Boys	71	77	Saved Delivered & Healed	Craig Stone
22	31	I Surely Will Someday	New Salem	72	51	Peace In The Valley	Lil Blair & The Fantastic Violinaires
23	66	Pray	Mark Trammell Quartet	73	42	Pray Til Something Happens	Taylor Brothers
24	1	I Will Sing	Hoppers	74	--	Say Something	Tim Menzies & The Isaacs
25	34	All About The Love	Calvin Bridges	75	79	Fear Not	Gil Magee
26	10	There's A Miracle Comin'	Judi Kellar	76	82	Upon A Cross	John Westling
27	18	According To John	Mark & Cindy Maynard	77	--	Up Above The World So High	Inspirations
28	65	Where The Soul Never Dies	Joyful Sound Trio	78	89	Let Me Tell Ya	Rhapsody Praise
29	37	Sent By The Father	Donna Kilmurray	79	43	Trusting And Depending	Chosen
30	39	Come Along Let's Fly	Keith Barkley & Family Tradition	80	98	All I Need	Mark S Dubbels
31	72	He'll Never Stop Being God	Sunday Drive	81	93	Behind My Praise	Brian Free & Assurance
32	13	You Can Know How It Feels	Dean with Ronnie Hinson	82	96	There's Coming A Day	Common Bond Quartet
33	46	His Hand Can Reach Your Heart	Keith Buchanan	83	80	Not As Much As God Does	Donna Frost
34	84	The Only Way He Knew How	Jeff & Sheri Easter	84	85	Take My Hand	Expectation
35	56	Robes Of Pure White	Heartland Quartet	85	91	I Love The Lord	Greater Purpose Trio
36	29	Come On Down The Road	Journey N Faith	86	86	I'm Not Worried	Jennifer Harris Gray
37	60	It Should've Been Me	Amanda Rosales	87	95	So Many Reasons	Tribute Quartet
38	49	Father Forgive Me	Michael Walsh	88	99	Thus Saith The Lord	Jennifer Leanna Phillips
39	69	Sailing Away	Mike Keller with Bob Sellers	89	--	In The Middle	Gold City
40	78	I Went Down	Kingdom Heirs	90	92	All That Glitters	Cathy Guffey
41	15	Faith Song	Megan Brianna	91	94	In Spite Of My Yesterday	The Kapples
42	17	Second Time Around	Port City Quartet	92	--	You Can Sleep Tonight	Big Mo
43	59	Highway To Heaven	Rick Towe	93	--	He Did It All For Me	Ernie Haase & Signature Sounds
44	47	Jesus Is Alive And Well	Lena Aldridge	94	--	Put Your Hand In The Hand	Ronnie Booth/Blackwood Bro.
45	19	Tell The Devil	Joseph Habadank	95	--	That's Who He Is	11th Hour
46	54	I've Gotta Move	The Stones	96	100	Stand Tall	Hyssongs
47	64	The Big Move	The Masseys	97	--	Walking Each Other Home	Gordon Mote
48	40	Grand Homecoming	Lorraine Howard	98	--	My Burdens Have Rolled Away	Pine Ridge Boys
49	33	I'll Never Get Over	Debra Perry & Jaidyn's Call	99	--	God Said Your Going To Make It	Lore Family
50	53	A Work In Progress	Denise Edwards	100	--	I Am Saved	Tate Emmons



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# TOP 100 FEBRUARY 2026

## GCM Country Gospel

TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST	TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST
1	15	<b>It's Never Too Late</b>	<b>Chuck Hancock</b>	51	60	My God Can	Valerie Ellis Hawkins
2	7	Through Christ	Jimmy R Price	52	33	Always Enough	Dale Rochell
3	17	Hallelujah	Dust and Grace	53	67	No Thought To Pray	Jerry Weatherly
4	8	Anyway	The Pauls	54	61	Man From Galilee	Jennifer Sides
5	13	Back Pew Prayer	Woodie Kitchen	55	68	Wish You Were Here	Johnathan Bond
6	10	Here's My Heart	Scott Peacock	56	70	Shout Of Testimony	Mike Leichner
7	12	Country Sinner	Victoria Steelman	57	84	Why Me Lord	Richard Lynch
8	9	Mama's Old Chester Drawers	Marvin Harrell	58	65	God Don't Waste The Hurt	Gary Russ
9	21	God Talks To Me	Dawson Road	59	69	You're The Man	Judy Bailey
10	14	Just Me	John Penney	60	43	The Colors And The Cross	Bobby Gibson
11	26	Blood Bought Cowboy	Marty Deroche	61	72	Don't Cry For Me	Teresa Johnson
12	23	If That Ain't True Love	Melanie Walker	62	73	I Feel New	J'Lee
13	18	When Love Arose	Joy LaVallee	63	78	If That Isn't Love	Bruce Minchey
14	25	Hand In Heaven	The Murphys feat. Abigail	64	35	He Owns Both Sides Of The River	Terry & Debra Luna
15	3	You Can't Box Me In	Fortner Brothers	65	50	Take Over Me	Rex Robards
16	32	Greatly To Be Praised	Melissa Evans	66	77	Somebody Bigger Than You And I	David Smith
17	20	Looking In The Rearview	Daryl Baker	67	52	One Of These Days	Carol Barham
18	24	I've Been Thinking	Waymasters	68	74	The Most Perfect Gift	Clare Cunningham
19	36	Even When I Fall	Thomas Brown	69	80	Meanwhile Back At The Cross	Ron Hemphill
20	5	Father To The Fatherless	Jim Sheldon	70	91	It's Time, Lord	Eddy Mann
21	1	Somebody's Praying	Michael Knight	71	97	Warrior Of God	Mark Umfleet
22	2	That's When God Moves	David Timms	72	40	Nothing No Nothing	Rachel Taylor
23	41	Say Hello To Heaven	Steve Warren	73	54	Blessed Is The People That Know	Jonathan Ray Smith
24	47	Where Are You Now	Ken Mobley	74	79	Footprints In The Sand	Dwight Sanders
25	30	You Can Call On Him	Aaron Partridge and Steve Apirana	75	86	The Crossroads	Richard Sprayberry
26	27	Living Proof	Ken & Kim Stull	76	89	What I Don't Know	Paula Slow
27	49	Get Out Of The Boat	Felicia Deramus Paul	77	81	It'll Be Good To Be Home	The Journeys
28	34	My Home In Glory Land	Beverly Brown Simms	78	53	Grandma's Bible	Debbie Bennett
29	37	New Man	Chuck Day	79	82	Country Church	Claude Davis
30	4	Wake Up Call	Cyndi Reynolds	80	90	Love Like Jesus Does	Aaron Justice
31	38	Footsteps Of My King	Todd Lee	81	96	I Got A Friend	Ken Mobley
32	11	Heavens	Chris Hughes	82	85	He Lives	Ed Bruce
33	46	Pushing You Away	Mike McAdoo	83	92	The Way You Do	Michael Walsh
34	55	Everything You Do	Norman Lee Schaffer	84	87	You Can Talk To The Father	Richard Strong
35	58	He Made It All	Dust And Grace	85	--	Three Nails And A Cross	George Strait
36	59	Hannah Whooped The Devil	Jason Welch	86	66	Why Me	Jenny Dean
37	45	I Saw A Miracle Today	Michael Ray Fain	87	51	Thank You For The Rain	Ben Stone
38	48	In Times Like These	Bruce and Betsy Mullen	88	88	The Journey	Joe Land
39	19	Get On Board	Carl Ray	89	93	God's Great	The Messengers
40	28	I Felt God Today	Heather Thomas Van Deren	90	95	That's The Least That I Can Do	Greg Marlow
41	44	Daddy's Hat	Debra Camp	91	--	Give It All You've Got	Steve Anthony
42	62	Honey In The Rock	Mary James	92	94	Blessings	Steven Paul McCollum
43	16	Right Where You Want Me To Be	Don Stiles	93	--	Saving Grace	Krystina B
44	42	Bucket List	Daniel Wheeler	94	98	Picture This	Jessie Ritchie
45	6	God Does Not Change	Cowboy Joe Babcock	95	--	Tell Me That There Ain't A God	Jon Brennan
46	64	My Everything	Tarrance Phillips	96	100	Heading Home With Jesus To Be	Lizzy G And Jeff Naper
47	71	What I Got (La-De-Da)	Caleb Deramus	97	99	In The Morning	Hunter Logan
48	22	It Matters To Him	Jan Harbuck	98	--	Walking Out Of Egypt	One Voice
49	31	Waiting In The Water	Debbie Mills	99	--	Build Me An Ark	Caroline Owens
50	57	Don't Need A Stone	By Faith	100	--	Brothers And Sisters	Ken Lehning



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# CVM Contemporary Christian TOP 50 FEBRUARY 2026

TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST
1	3	What An Awesome God	Phil Wickham
2	5	Jesus Loves	Zach Williams
3	19	Can't Steal My Joy	Josiah Queen & Brandon Lake
4	10	Heaven On My Mind	TobyMac
5	15	Do It Again	Kirk Franklin
6	10	All Yours	Kierra Sheard
7	12	Your Way's Better	Forrest Frank
8	24	Won't Start now	Seph Schluter
9	29	No Survivors	Jeremy Camp
10	34	Don't Faint	Jekalyn Carr
11	2	Let The Church Sing	Tauren Wells
12	25	Honest	Leanna Crawford
13	1	Come Jesus Come	CeCe Winans & Cody Johnson
14	43	Shine Like Heaven	Shekinah Grace Moyes
15	27	Make A Way	Vashawn Mitchell
16	11	Til The Horns Blow	Chaz Chesson feat. Brian Angel
17	38	Dusty Bibles	Josiah Queen
18	30	Confident	Bri Babineaux
19	28	Somebody Prayed	Crowder
20	44	Live Breathe Fight	Tamela Mann
21	4	Do It Anyway	Tasha Cobbs Leonard
22	1	A Thousand Times	We Are Messengers
23	--	God Story	Anne Wilson
24	35	Words	Donald Lawrence
25	36	I'm In A Change	Mack Holland
26	31	Trust And Obey	Erica Campbell
27	42	Give You All My Worship (feat. Leon McCary)	Marvin Dexter Moore
28	32	Your Glory 2 C U	Earnest Pugh
29	37	Blessings	Yolanda Adams
30	--	Unspoken	Jackeeh
31	40	Still	Crowder & Zach Williams
32	41	Place In This World	For King & Country
33	47	I Believe You	Megan Woods
34	14	I Was Not Alone	Terrill
35	8	That's Who I Praise	Brandon Lake
36	--	Grateful (feat. Fridayy)	Dante Bowe
37	20	Double	William Murphy
38	--	Give Me You	Me' Kayla
39	45	Don't Stop Praying	Matthew West
40	--	In The Room	Mr.Jae Tyson
41	48	Give Me You	Me'Kayla
42	49	Church Parking Lot	Otis Kemp
43	--	Blessings	Tanya Nolan
44	50	I Can Count On You	The Group Fire
45	39	Jesus Guy	Jeff Arrandale
46	--	Have Your Way	Katy Nichole
47	--	Church Medley	John P. Kee
48	--	How Good It Is	Chris Tomlin
49	--	God Did It	Kenny Lewis & One Voice
50	--	Let It Be A Hallelujah	Lauren Daigle

# CVM Black/Urban Gospel TOP 50 FEBRUARY 2026

TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST
1	7	Come Jesus Come	CeCe Winans & Cody Johnson
2	10	Words	Donald Lawrence
3	6	Searching	Anthony Reels
4	9	Do It Anyway	Tasha Cobbs Leonard
5	5	Let The Church Sing	Tauren Wells
6	14	Grateful (Feat. Fridayy)	Dante Bowe
7	11	Still A Long Way From Home	George Carter & Gentlemen of Faith
8	12	Still Knocking	100 A.K.A. The Messenger
9	18	Building Bridges Instead of Walls	Frozone Hayes
10	19	In The Room	Mr.Jae Tyson
11	1	Yahweh	Jason Nelson
12	17	Let it Rain	Predestined of Michigan
13	30	Do It Again	Kirk Franklin
14	32	He Was There	Marvin Sapp
15	2	Amen	Pastor Mike Jr
16	3	Double	William Murphy
17	20	Like You	Mary Dailey
18	29	Give Me You	Me' Kayla
19	24	Work It Out For Me	Zacardi Cortez
20	39	Your Glory 2 C U	Earnest Pugh
21	16	All About The Love	Calvin Bridges
22	27	Peace In The Valley	Lil Blair & The Fantastic Violinaires
23	41	Trust And Obey	Erica Campbell
24	37	Live Breathe Fight	Tamela Mann
25	35	I Can	Marcus Jordan
26	34	Make A Way	Vashawn Mitchell
27	26	Working On A Building	Larry Hill
28	44	God Don't Cancel Me	Rudy Currence
29	47	Church Medley	John P. Kee
30	--	God Did It	Kenny Lewis & One Voice
31	33	Misfits	Keylosophy
32	25	God Has Been Good	Chanella Monroe
33	36	God Is Amazing	Dee Echols
34	40	Right On Time	Fantastic Spiritual Voices
35	45	I'm In A Change	Mack Holland
36	15	Clap My Way	Micah Lee
37	50	Church Parking Lot	Otis Kemp
38	--	When I Think	Ricky Dillard
39	36	He Was There	Marvin Sapp
40	--	Blessings	Tanya Nolan
41	46	Rescue Me	Dr Leon Thompson
42	42	Somebody Touched Me	David Moore& Focused
43	--	I'm A Child Of The King	Micahel Gl
44	49	I Can Count On You	The Group Fire
45	21	Blood Of The Lamb	Ecclesiaster 5
46	--	Your Name	Jovonta Patton
47	--	Don't Faint	Jekalyn Carr
48	--	Unspoken	Jackeeh
49	--	I'm A Child Of The King	Micahel Gl
50	--	Confident	Bri Babineaux

## DENISE EDWARDS

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# CVM Bluegrass Gospel TOP 50 FEBRUARY 2026

TM	LM	SONG TITLE	ARTIST
1	5	That's What We Did	Jeff Tolbert & Primitive Road
2	6	Lay 'Em Down	Benson
3	7	The Truth, The Light, The Way	Darin & Brooke Aldridge
4	9	Memories Of Mother	Junior Sisk with Ricky Skaggs
5	12	Ready And Waiting	King James Boys
6	16	Soldiers Of Heaven	Ashleigh Graham
7	14	Build Me An Ark	Caroline Owens
8	22	Come Jesus Come	Grascals
9	18	Even Better When You Listen	Joe Mullins & The Radio Ramblers
10	13	Rise Above It All	Becky Buller & Nathan Woodard
11	17	Two Old Church Pews	Danny Paisley
12	28	Come On Home	Lakeside
13	24	That Reunion	Tim Raybon Band
14	3	Jubilee's-A-Coming	Little Roy & Lizzy Show
15	26	Follow The Leader	Nick Chandler & Delivered
16	21	Above The Clouds	Eighteen Mile
17	4	Come To Jesus	Amanda Cook
18	8	My Lord Is Taking Me Away	High Fidelity
19	20	Jesus Sweet Jesus	Mark Houser & Bluegrass Drive w/ Rhonda Vincent
20	27	More Than A Hollow Hallelujah	The Isaacs
21	40	Can't You Hear Jerusalem Moan	Hammertowne
22	12	No One But Jesus Can	Kristy Cox Feat. The Blake Wood Brothers
23	29	I'll Never Feel The Fire	Tim Davis (featuring Jeff Tolbert & Josh Swift)
24	38	Jesus Satisfies	Danny Roberts
25	33	I've Made It Home	Shelton & Williams
26	11	Grace Carried Me Here	Ben Rochester Family
27	2	It Was Jesus	Right Side
28	45	In Spite Of My Yesterday	The Kapples
29	41	Blue Collar Gospel	Jerry Salley & The Oak Ridge Boys
30	--	These Old Burdens	Williamson Branch
31	10	I Need Jesus	Carson Peters & Iron Mountain
32	50	No Empty Chairs In Heaven	David Parmley
33	43	Master Carpenter	Lincoln Mash & Heather Alley
34	25	Child Of The King	Daniel Grindstaff
35	--	How Can You Refuse Him Now	Rhonda Vincent
36	44	There's A River	High Road
37	19	The First Time I Heard About Heaven	Cox Family
38	48	Good Time Get Together	Jesse Smathers
39	35	He's Gone	Jaelee Roberts w/ Ricky Skaggs, Sharon & Cheryl White
40	15	At Jesus' Feet	Eagle's Wings
41	29	When Jesus Calls My Name	Don Rigsby
42	--	Heaven Is Your Hometown	Wilson Banjo Company
43	--	Are You Praying Hard	Gospel Plowboys
44	49	That Sweet Land Of God Somewhere	Primitive Quartet
45	--	Call On Him	Eagle's Wings
46	37	Wings Of Love	Authentic Unlimited
47	31	Rock Pile	Dave Adkins
48	--	On The Battlefield For My Lord	Larry Sparks
49	--	Little White Church	Crandall Creek
50	--	I Am The One	Jeff Tolbert & Primitive Road



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# TABLE & TESTIMONY

*Where Food Meets Faith and Every Dish Tells a Story*

Annie Ruth

## *What My Hands Remember*

February always brings me back to the women who taught me how to cook, how to pray, and how to stand. Long before anybody called it Black History Month, we were already keeping history alive in our kitchens - passing down stories with every pot we stirred and every biscuit we set on the table.

I learned early that a kitchen can be a refuge. A place where the world slows down long enough for you to breathe, listen, and remember who you are. My mama used to say, “Baby, the Lord meets you right where your hands are working,” and I’ve found that to be true. Some of my sweetest moments with Him happened with flour on my apron and a hymn in my throat.

So this month, I want to share a few recipes that carry the memory of the women who shaped me - dishes born out of strength, faith, and the kind of love that doesn’t make a fuss about itself.

These aren’t fancy. They’re faithful. And sometimes faithful is exactly what a soul needs.

### **Sweet Potato Biscuits**

These biscuits fed us through lean times and good times. Sweet potatoes stretched the dough, added sweetness, and reminded us that God always provides something to work with.

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup mashed sweet potatoes
- 2 cups self-rising flour
- 6 tbsp cold butter
- ½ cup buttermilk
- ¼ cup sugar (optional)
- Pinch of salt

#### Directions

Mix dry ingredients. Cut in butter. Add sweet potatoes and buttermilk. Pat, cut, bake at 425°F for 12–15 minutes. Serve warm with honey or sorghum.



### **Cast-Iron Skillet Cornbread**

This one never failed to bring folks to the table. A good cornbread will hold a meal together the way a good memory holds a family together.

#### Ingredients

- 1½ cups cornmeal
- ½ cup flour
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 egg
- 1¼ cups buttermilk
- ¼ cup melted butter or bacon drippings



#### Directions

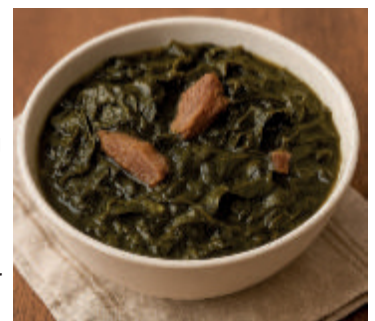
Heat skillet with a little oil. Mix dry ingredients, then add wet. Pour batter into hot skillet. Bake at 425°F for 20–25 minutes.

### **Collard Greens with Smoked Turkey**

Where I come from, greens weren’t just food - they were fellowship. You didn’t rush them. You let them simmer slow, the way wisdom settles into a person over time.

#### Ingredients

- 2 lbs collard greens, washed and chopped
- 1 smoked turkey wing or leg
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp sugar
- Salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes to taste
- 6 cups water or broth



#### Directions

Add turkey, onion, garlic, and water to a pot. Simmer 30 minutes. Add greens, seasonings, and cook low and slow for 1½–2 hours until tender.

*When I cook these dishes, I hear the voices of the women who came before me - steady, strong, and full of faith. Their stories live in my hands. Their prayers live in my memory. And their love lives in every meal I set before you.*

*This Black History Month, I’m not just remembering where we’ve been. I’m remembering who held us together. And I’m thanking God for every one of them.*





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