

Where are they now?

By Paul K. and Kay Logsdon

CCM pioneers reflect on decades of ministry



A bookstore exhibit in the youth section at General Council in 1973 caught Kay's attention. Thumbing through the vinyl record albums in their jackets decorated with eye-catching art, she came across one by a group called Andrae Crouch and the Disciples. She fingered the money in her pocket. Did she dare? Would her parents let her bring this type of music into their Kansas home? She dared, and they did, and soon she knew every word to "Jesus Is the Answer."

As a teenager in New Jersey, Paul had taken a trip with a church youth group to Philadelphia, where he heard Andrae Crouch and the Disciples live. Finally, he was hearing music that offered the sounds of rock 'n' roll but with a Christian message. He began looking for more, and found Randy Stonehill, Larry Norman and other musicians who were defining early contemporary Christian music. It was a genre that became known, simply, as CCM.

We ended up in a park in Pennsylvania called Muddy Run, where people in faded bell-bottoms set out Army blankets in front of a makeshift stage.

Early years, growing years

That was us — teenagers who embraced the new music and became fortunate enough to have a behind-the-scenes seat during some of its developmental years.

Flash forward to 1979. We had each obtained a communications degree from Evangel University, and Paul was working in Christian radio, record promotion and artist relations while Kay did writing and media relations. We had opened our own agency, booking CCM groups into concert venues across the nation, all the while believing that this new music could make a difference in the world.

Our goal was to reach those who didn't come to church, so we took the music to them. That's how we ended up in a park in Pennsylvania called Muddy Run, where people in faded bell-bottoms set out Army blankets in front of a makeshift stage. We were all there to hear singers that no one had yet heard of sing songs that no one yet recognized. And, yet, there was an instant identification with the meaning in their lyrics and the beat in their songs. They were songs about finding God, looking for answers, being ready to meet Jesus. It was the first Creation festival, a genre that — along with the Fishnet festival, Agape festival, and others — helped to define CCM.

Juli Serrano, now a mother of two, was a child at the time. "The most significant thing about CCM to me, growing up," she says, "was the camaraderie among friends that was centered around the music, the concerts, and the festivals. My parents were glad I enjoyed music with godly lyrics rather than secular."

Serrano volunteered backstage at the festivals and at concerts and met

many of the artists personally. "Working with artists allowed me to see the consistency of their music in relation to how they interacted backstage with people," she observes. "Their love and tenderness were clearly demonstrated to me as a young person."

Those early experiences have had a major impact, adds Serrano. "As I grow older, the new worship music has continued to feed my soul with godly lyrics. It helps keep my mind where it should be as a Christian, and, as a result, helps my character."

Flash forward again. In 1988 CCM has become an industry. There is still a struggle over this "music with a message" and how it relates to Christian life, but it is less of an issue. Some in the industry see their biggest problem as "crossing over" from Christian music into secular. Pioneer artists recognize the irony of music that started out to reach the unchurched now being claimed by the church. They press on, believing with passion that the message must still get out to more people.

Much of CCM's popularity has been due to a Christian format adopted by radio stations around the country. An early station was WJTL in Lancaster, Pa.

Debbie Hershey remembers when she first became aware of the trend: "My husband, Barry, came home one evening and switched the radio to WJTL, a new station to us. I gave it a try and within hours the car radio was also on WJTL."

The new music started showing up in more and more concert venues. "Barry and I started taking our daughter to any and all CCM concerts we could find," Hershey says. "At the same time, we were youth leaders and thought we would try this on our youth group. Introducing them to

CCM was one of the greatest accomplishments we had with them."

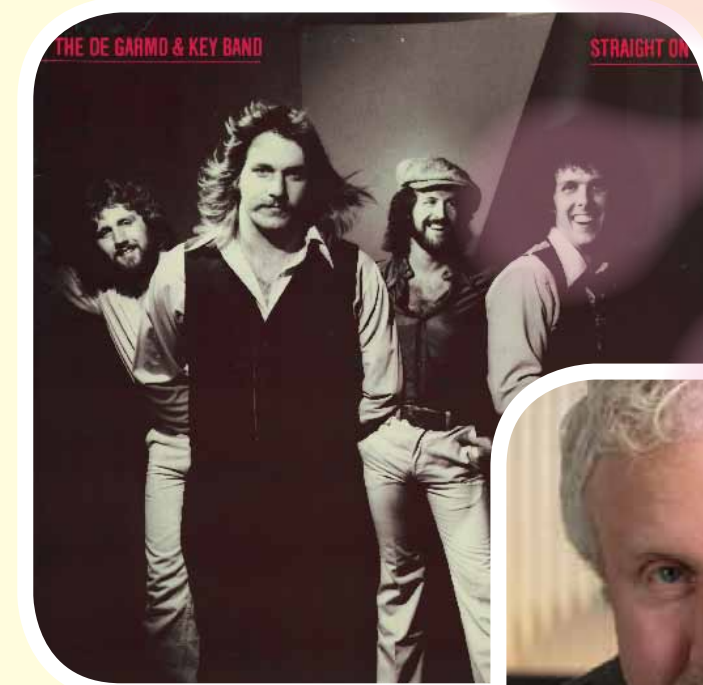
In 2004 the impact of Christian artists has never been greater. Remember Muddy Run? Tim Landis is executive producer of the still-popular Creation festival (www.creationfest.com), which now plays host to more than 80,000 people a year on 500 acres of land in western Pennsylvania. Landis started promoting Christian concerts while he was in high school, he says, "as a way to express and share my faith with my peer group."

His passion has only intensified. "At 48," Landis says, "I am even more committed to promoting contemporary Christian music because I see it as a positive influence on my children and their friends. I feel that more and more Christian artists will start gaining exposure and acceptance in the secular music community." He says one reason for that growing acceptance is that secular companies own most of the major Christian music companies — including the one where CCM pioneer Eddie DeGarmo works.

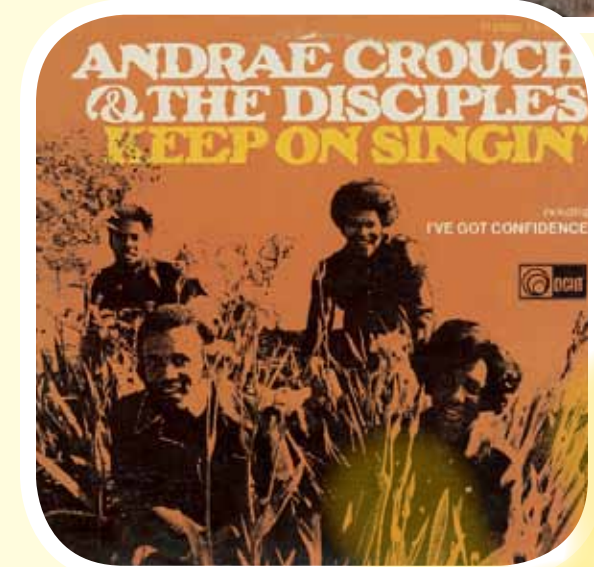
DeGarmo & Key

Mention this band and early fans will be transported back to "Destined to Win." For 17 years, Eddie DeGarmo and Dana Key were part of all that came along with CCM — the albums, the Dove Award nominations, the concert tours and eventually the videos.

"In the early days, we were forging a trail," DeGarmo says. "We saw ourselves as evangelists." That unlikely evangelist is now a grandfather of four and serves as president of EMI Christian Music Publishing. He manages more than 300 songwriters at EMI — one of the five major entertainment companies in the world — with CCM



Eddie DeGarmo today



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artists ranging from Steven Curtis Chapman to Stacy Orrico to Switchfoot. “We’ve seen that there is an enormous global audience for CCM,” he says. “The good news is the guys at the top are smart enough to know what they don’t know, and have hired people who do know Christian music.”

Since DeGarmo & Key disbanded in 1994, DeGarmo has also written and produced a Dove award-winning rock opera entitled

Hero, based on the life of Christ (www.herouniverse.com). The musical pulled in a cast of 21 CCM artists, including Rebecca St. James and Michael Tait, for its debut tour.

Back in DeGarmo and Key’s hometown of Memphis, Tenn., Dana Key has recorded as a solo artist and is now pastoring a church.

“This is the best of times,” says DeGarmo. “I’ve always been about the message, not the commerce. The two

have met for me, even though I sure didn’t start out that way.”

DeGarmo is the uncle of 2004 second-place *American Idol* contestant Diana DeGarmo. Ready or not, a new generation is out there making music.

The 2nd Chapter of Acts

“Hear the bells ringing, they’re singing that we can be born again.”

They were straightforward lyrics with the kind of harmonies usually found only with a genetic tie. A family of early CCM pioneers started touring in 1974: Sisters Annie Herring and Nelly Greisen, with their brother Matthew Ward, became known collectively as the 2nd Chapter of Acts (www.2ndchapterofacts.com). The group was dedicated to the gospel message, and their music was synonymous with CCM for the next 20 years.

While active in touring and widely played on radio, the 2nd Chapter of Acts shied away from interviews, choosing to focus on their ministry and on making excellent music.

In 2004 they remain private but willing to share what has been happening since the group disbanded in 1988, with Nelly Greisen serving as the spokesperson from her home in Colorado.

“I sing at church and serve on some

ministry boards every now and then,” she says. “My husband, Steve, owns a film production and distribution company (www.explorationfilms.com) that has become the most awarded company in Colorado. They do documentaries, and I am a support and encouragement to him. For years, Steve was a support to me, so it has been great to have the roles reversed.”

Annie, the older sister, and her husband, Buck, also live in Colorado

Other movers and shakers...

CHUCK GIRARD: PIONEER AND PARENT



Chuck Girard (www.chuck.org) and Love Song came out of California with soft melodies and words that etched themselves into the hearts of the '70s Jesus People like no hymn ever could. His daughter, Alisa, is part of ZOEgirl (www.zoegirlonline.com), three young women who address self-esteem, teenage sex, eating disorders, suicide and other themes through positive Christian music for 21st-century believers.

Girard, who has recently moved to Nashville from California, reflects on the changes in CCM. “It’s a huge industry now,” he says. “Then, it was more about ministry — there was no money!” He emphasizes that, for him, it is still about the ministry and the impact the music has on young people. Reflecting on his daughter’s venture into CCM, he says, “Alisa has a sound business perspective. She is ministry-oriented and has her own calling and gifts.”

BARRY MCGUIRE: RE-TIRED AND ROLLING

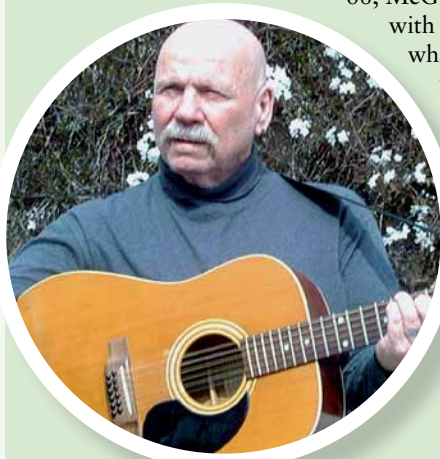
A few of the early CCM artists came out of secular music. Barry McGuire (www.barrymcguire.com) was perhaps the epitome of the changed man, trading in songs such as “The Eve of Destruction” for “Bullfrogs and Butterflies.”

McGuire, who started out as a member of the New Christy Minstrels in the 1960s, says that his music of that era had “all the problems, but no answers.” In the

early 1970s he became a Christian. His early Christian albums included a live production with the 2nd Chapter of Acts called *To the Bride*.

In 1984 McGuire and his wife, Mari, moved to her native New Zealand, where he became involved with World Vision. In 1993 McGuire and Terry Talbot, another early CCM artist, joined forces on a recording and toured with an acoustic folk revival production for several years.

McGuire and Mari travel and perform informally. At 68, McGuire is happily retired, with his own definition of what that means. “When you retire in the Lord,” he says, “you pull into the Holy Ghost Brick and Tire Company, get four new tires, pick up a load of bricks, and hit the road re-tired and ready to keep building whatever God wants us to build.”



NANCY HONEYTREE MILLER: REACHING THE NATIONS

Before single-name monikers became popular, Nancy Henigbaum had a strong corner in the Christian market with her “Honeytree” identity (“Henigbaum” is German for “Honeytree”). One of the few female artists to pioneer in CCM, Honeytree (www.honeytree.org) was part of the Jesus Movement of the '70s — and was, in fact, called the “First Lady of Jesus Music.”

Honeytree went on to work with Chuck Colson in the Prison Fellowship ministry, becoming an ordained minister in 1983. She developed a ministry to singles, and continues to speak and sing at workshops and singles conferences. In 1990, at the age of 38, Honeytree married J.R. Miller, a computer specialist who also sings and travels with his wife. They have one son, William, now age 9 — perhaps her inspiration for her children’s recording, which portrays the story of Jonah from the fish’s point of view.

As for her ministry, Honeytree says that her work, besides “raising William,” is primarily confined to weekends and short-term missions trips. Her most recent work is primarily acoustic, with many of her songs sung in Spanish as a reflection of her commitment to missions.



THE ARCHERS: FAMILY SINGERS, FAMILY FOCUS

The Archers (www.thearchers.org) grew up as Assemblies of God “preacher’s kids,” and went on to help define a new way of spreading the gospel. The group, started by brothers Steve and Tim, was highly visible in the early days of CCM, recording and performing to ever-growing crowds. They were joined in 1976 by 16-year-old sister Janice just as CCM was moving into its own adolescence.

As demand for their concerts spread from their northern California roots, the Archers received encouragement from established musicians such as Ralph Carmichael,

Pat Boone and Andraé Crouch. Their style of CCM appealed to a secular as well as a Christian market, earning them appearances on the *Mike Douglas Show*, two Grammy Awards telecasts (winning a Grammy of their own) and a White House performance before President Jimmy Carter.

Today, the three Archers are scattered around the country, with Tim living in Colorado Springs, Colo.; Steve in Dallas, Texas; and Janice in Corpus Christi, Texas. Steve continues to record. He is currently working on a solo album that will include some re-recordings of classic Archers tunes.

Janice became part of another musical family when she married John Cruse of the Cruse Family. They have three children, including twin “miracle babies” who were born 16 years ago premature and weighing less than 2 pounds each. “It’s a miracle that they lived,” she says, “and a double miracle that they enjoy a great quality of life” with few medical problems. She and her husband pastor Covenant City Church, a church started by his father in Corpus Christi. Tim has two daughters; Steve has three daughters and a son; Janice also has a daughter. She says all of the children have shown musical abilities — and may show up on a recording at some time in the future. ■



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and have kept their hand in music. Annie performs about 50 solo dates a year. Matthew also does some solo touring following his bout with cancer. His story is further detailed at www.matthewward.com. Nelly and Steve have two grown sons; Matthew and his wife have three daughters.

When asked about the changes she has observed over the years, Greisen says, "Most of the CCM artists currently have no sense of their history. We have spoken to many of them and they lack that historical perspective of God's unique work."

With 16 albums to their credit and their songs recorded by fellow pioneers such as Keith Green and Phil Keaggy, the 2nd Chapter of Acts contributed a great deal to shaping CCM into the accepted spiritual art form that it is today. "There are a lot of good people in CCM who are driven by a love for God," Greisen concludes.

Andraé Crouch and the Disciples

For many Assemblies of God young people growing up in the '70s, Andraé Crouch and the Disciples offered their first exposure to the CCM phenomenon. The music was fast-paced and different, and its message was strong enough to be accepted by all ages. "My Tribute" and other Andraé Crouch tunes began showing up at teen talent competitions and in churches of every size.

Crouch has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, which he describes as "another open door to tell people about Jesus." His star — the 2,256th on the Walk of Fame — was unveiled on June 4, 2004. These days Crouch is

busy co-pastoring with his twin sister, Sandra, the church their parents founded in Los Angeles (<http://newcmc.org>). A gospel choir from that church sang during the unveiling of the star.

It's obviously not the first award for Crouch, who has eight Grammys to his credit. What matters to him, though, is what is happening now. He became senior pastor without leaving his music career, and says he considers it an addition to his ministry. He continues to record, and has served as vocal arranger for motion pictures — including work in the animated film *The Lion King*, *Free Willy* and much more.

"Being a pastor is no easy job," he says, "and neither is being in the musical spotlight. But God has given me the strength and inspiration to do both. And that's an answer to a prayer."

Still evolving, still contemporary

Artists and industry leaders alike recognize the major changes in CCM over the years. "The production values and quality of musicianship are now at least equal to the secular music world," Tim Landis says. "In the early days we really did the best we could with very little. The growth of CCM means that it is now accepted by most evangelical churches. In the early days it was controversial."

Flash to now. A young man has just downloaded a song onto his iPod. He holds out the tiny headphones and says, "Mom, this is the song we sang last week in youth group. I think it's something new by a guy named Andraé Crouch. Have you heard it? It's called 'Jesus Is the Answer.'" ■

Paul K. & Kay Logsdon returned to Springfield in 1988, where Paul is director of public relations and publications at Evangel University and Kay is executive director of the Springfield Regional Arts Council. Paul served two terms as national director of the Fellowship of Contemporary Christian Ministries and as station manager of WJTL. Together they owned the Logsdon Associates talent agency. E-mail your comments to pe@ag.org.

ABCs OF SALVATION

Knowing your sins are forgiven and you are ready for heaven is as simple as following these steps:

- Admit you have sinned.**
"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).
- Believe in Jesus.**
"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).
- Confess and leave your sin behind.**
"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

For further help, contact the Assemblies of God church near you.

If you would like someone to pray with you concerning your decision to follow Jesus Christ, please contact the church indicated on the back cover or call:

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