

25 February 2008

LARRY NORMAN DIES

Larry Norman, the so called "father of Christian Rock Music" has passed away, aged 60.

The man who was featured in a couple of Simpsons comics leaves a string of Christian hits including *Why Should the Devil Have all the Good Music*, *Sweet Sweet Song of Salvation*, and *I Wish We'd All Been Ready*.

Always a controversial figure, his songs spoke about politics, (*The Great American Novel*), witchcraft and the occult (*Forget Your Hexagram*), religious hypocrisy (*Right Here In America*) and free love (*Pardon Me*).

Norman stated in 1969 that he "wanted to push aside the traditional gospel quartet music, break down the church doors, and let the hippies and the prostitutes, and other unwashed rabble into the sanctuary".

More than 300 artists have recorded his music including Sir Cliff Richard, Sammy Davis Jnr, Rebecca St James, and dc Talk.

Van Morrison, John Mellencamp and members of U2 are reportedly fans of his music, and Larry is often cited for influencing Keith Green and Randy Stonehill in their conversions.

In Larry's farewell message to fans from his death bed, he said (in part):

I feel like a prize in a box of cracker jacks with God's hand reaching down to pick me up. I have been under medical care for months. My wounds are getting bigger. I have trouble breathing. I am ready to fly home.

My brother Charles is right, I won't be here much longer. I can't do anything about it. My heart is too weak. I want to say goodbye to everyone... My plan is to be buried in a simple pine box with some flowers inside....

Goodbye, farewell, we'll meet again somewhere beyond the sky. I pray that you will stay with God. Goodbye, my friends, goodbye.

Our sincerest condolences to Larry's family in America, and Australia. You are in our thoughts.

Larry Norman born 8 April 1947, died 24 February 2008.

The Gospel Music Association of Australia and New Zealand (GMA ANZ) will hold its inaugural conference on the Gold Coast May 8-9 this year. GMA ANZ CEO Richard Langton says the two night + one day conference aims to assemble all the major areas that guide the Australian gospel music industry including radio, production, engineers, retailers, worship leaders, musicians and artists. He says it will provide information sessions, workshops, networking opportunities and worship and artist showcases, industry sessions, songwriting critiques, retailers forums, plus guidance through the recording process and radio panels. Details: <http://www.gma-anz.org>