

Recollections from days gone by

This is from Jim Stahl. I was recently reminiscing about my early days in the ministry. It was October 1973 when I went to the tent in Indianapolis and Jesus came into my heart. The Jesus rallies continued for four more weeks, and every night was such a wonderful experience of praising the Lord and being blessed by His presence. The Joyful Noise and The Last Generation were gone to Europe, but the brothers and sisters who led the songs brought God's Spirit to us in a wonderful way each night. He dwells in the praises of His people.

In November I caught up with the team in Nashville. Each night was like a slice of Heaven on earth. We would begin singing the choruses and joy would overflow our hearts. *He's my doctor when I'm sick, He is so real to me, and that is why I love Him so, He's so real to me.* Part way through the choruses it was time to get out in the aisle and hug your neighbor, because that Old Time Religion *makes me love everybody.* Then the Joyful Noise would minister to us with a few of their great songs; you would hope that they would sing one of your favorites, and then realize that each of their songs was your favorite.

The preaching without fail would stir your heart, and when you heard the red-headed Irishman say, "Mark, come to the organ", you knew that at the least you were going to rejoice to see sinners making their way down the sawdust trail and at the best you yourself would be there at the altar pouring your heart out to Jesus, and that Heaven would kiss the earth and you would be caught in the middle of the smack.

No hurry to end the altar call, but at some point the meeting would be dismissed. Nevertheless many were not ready to leave that wonderful atmosphere and Ike Lewis, who was born in Memphis, Tennessee, was born again in Gary, Indiana, and whose home had become Heaven, would take a mike and we would continue to *Praise the Lord, while we had a chance, because we might not have a chance anymore.*

Every morning, after breakfast and before body meeting, it was time for the family meetings. Twelve circles formed with folding chairs throughout the big tent. Without the accompaniment of a guitar, we would sing verses of the Scripture put to a melody. That was so valuable; today so many of those verses are engraved upon our memory because we sang them day after day. *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul, the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple, more to be desired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey in the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned, and the keeping of them is great reward.*

Songs that still play in my mind at various times throughout any given day, pure Scripture.

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