

Biography

"The Song Goes On"...Ivan Parker

Ivan was saved at age 9 in his daddy's church in Sanford, when an evangelist preached a fiery sermon on the rapture of the church and heaven. "I remember that night well," he said. "I was sitting on the back row with all my friends. When the invitation was given, I couldn't get to the altar fast enough. My mom and dad had always told me that whenever it came to salvation, I couldn't get to heaven on their experience – I had to have my own."

This decision that Ivan made at age 9 stayed in the forefront of his mind, even though he admits that he made a lot of mistakes along the way. "But I knew Jesus loved me and had His hand on me. I didn't know what God had planned for my life; I just knew I wanted to sing."

In June 2003, "It's True" – the title song on one of Ivan's CD's – climbed to number 2 on The Singing News top 10 list. This is one of Ivan's favorite songs, because it talks about how loved ones (including his dad) made the crossing.

As they are passing from here to there, they are saying, "It's true...it's true. All the things you've heard about heaven are true." With permission from the writer, Ivan rewrote parts of the song to make it express his sentiments.

Testimony Song

In 2008 Ivan recorded a very special song entitled "I Choose" which topped the charts at the number #1 position. This message became universal for Ivan and his audience as the lyrics of hope and encouragement rang out to a hurting world that they have the power to choose life over death, joy over sorrow and Faith over hopelessness. "The choice we have to follow God in the good times and the bad is easy once we make the decision to simply chose God."

The same message is echoed in Ivan's Signature Song, "Midnight Cry." He remembers the incredible feeling he had the first time he heard the song. "I just could not get away from the message in the song. It meant a lot to me, because it was the message that tugged at my heart the night I gave my heart to the Lord. This message is repeated in so many songs." Several years ago, Ivan was asked to sing for the Church of God General Assembly in San Antonio, Texas. As he was placing his luggage in the car, he had a muscle spasm in his back. "The pain was so intense, I thought I was having a heart attack. I could hardly move. My wife asked, "Do we need to cancel and take you to the hospital?" "No", I said. "We're going to San Antonio. The Lord will help me."

When they arrived in San Antonio late that afternoon he was still in a lot of pain. But a group of people started praying and Ivan went on to the service. As they introduced him, he was still hurting. But when he took the very first step to walk on stage, he didn't feel any pain. "When I began singing 'Midnight Cry,' the wave of the Holy Spirit started on one side and moved across that arena. The whole time I was singing, I felt no pain. When I came back offstage I felt the pain again, although not as bad as it had been. I think the Lord blessed me because He saw how determined I was to minister and put His Word before the people."

Ivan's Signature Song, "Midnight Cry" has been sung by him literally all over the world. Ivan recalls singing in Africa and looking over the crowd. "It was amazing seeing all of these people on the other side of the world singing this song word for word and worshipping God. When I was notified in 2007 that this song had gone to the number one position on the radio charts in Europe I was astounded but was reminded that all things are possible through God.

Unique Ministry Opportunities

One of the greatest ministry opportunities to come Ivan's way is being a part of most of the Gaither Homecoming Videos and singing in 70 to 80 Gaither Concerts a year, which average around 15,000 attendees each, in addition to his own solo schedule. In all, his calendar shows an average of 200 performances a year. One of the highlights of his ministry in 2002 was when he stepped on stage at Carnegie Hall and sang not "On the wings of a snow white dove" but "God Bless the USA."

Family

Ivan and his wife Teresa reside in Nashville, Tennessee. They own Parker Music Group which not only represents Ivan Parker but Teresa is a booking agent representing several other artists from the Gaither Homecoming Tour. They have two sons, Ryan and Josh. Ryan is a Bank Officer TO Commercial Lender and is married to Sandy Hagee who is an Attorney. They are the proud parents of two beautiful girls, Olivia and Ellie. They make their home in San Antonio, Texas. Josh attends College and is majoring in Music. He is active in the church where Ivan and Teresa attend. "The greatest Blessings of All is my family and they are the joy of my heart", states Ivan, "They are supportive, loving and caring and I Praise God for them everyday."

Greatest Influence

The two people who have had the greatest influence on Ivan's life are his mom and dad. "My mom, Katie Parker is a real prayer warrior. She has always prayed for God to use her children in the ministry. Reflecting back to my dad's life, I see a lot of what I'm doing and the way God is using me as a fulfillment of his ministry. My dad was a singer and a musician, but when he was called to preach, he put his music on the back burner. It's almost like he passed the mantel to me, and I'm fulfilling the musical side of his ministry."

Some of the great singers who influenced Ivan's career are Bill Gaither, who reintroduced the wonderful old songs of the church and southern gospel music to the entire world, and Jake Hess, who says that Ivan is his favorite "crooner."

Unfulfilled Dreams

Like most Christians, Ivan has known some "ups and downs," but he has lived with his favorite passage of scripture, Psalm 23. "I believe God does His greatest works in us when we are in the valley. It is there that we are more open to what He has in store for us." When Ivan was asked if he had any unfulfilled dreams, he said, "You never stop dreaming about where your ministry is going. I just pray that God will take what I am presently doing and increase it. I am living my dream...but the dream is not completed yet." The song will go on!