

THE LAST WORD



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Flowers with Faces

Roy Disney once told the story of an event that took place when his famous brother was in the fifth grade back in Ohio. The school teacher in that little classroom had given the children an art assignment. She waited as each child took out crayons and colored pencils and went to work with their drawings. After a while, she started down the aisle, looking over the children's shoulders at their crude drawings.

When she got to the little Disney boy's desk, she reached down and picked up the youngster's paper. "Walter, flowers don't have faces."

The little Disney boy looked up and said with authority: "Mine do!"

Walt Disney had a dream. He saw things others did not see—and put them on paper. Across the years that dream materialized into a mouse who talked, an elephant who flew, a cricket who danced, and flowers—thousands of flowers—all with faces.

Every person has within him certain gifts from God—placed there from the beginning of time. These are the things we dream of—what David called "the desires of the heart."

True satisfaction in life comes only when we operate in our gifted areas. In other words, nothing makes a person happier than doing what God created him to do.

The Holy Spirit not only brings gifts, He activates all those creative gifts hidden in the heart. Whatever that gift may be, at least three things will evidence it as a gift from God: (1) you will be good at it, (2) you'll have an opportunity to use it, (3) you'll love to do it.

I have a friend in Panama who has just come into her gifted area. Dottie Nelson is an American housewife living in the old Canal Zone. Her husband, Dave, works on one of those huge dredges which keeps silt out of the Panama Canal. Dottie plays the organ in the little Union Church at Gamboa—a church made up of American citizens who work on the canal, U.S. military personnel, and a growing number of Spirit-filled Panamanians.

A couple of years ago something strange began to happen. The Holy Spirit began moving in power in that little church. When He got to Dottie, she started writing songs. Her pastor, Bill Wilbur, recognized she had a special gift and gave her opportunity to sing her songs before the congregation.

A lot of people were blessed. Well, not a lot, for the church had fewer than 100 members. But those who heard her loved it.

On one of my trips to Panama to preach for Bill, I heard Dottie sing. She was good. But it's hard to sound like Amy Grant when you have to sit at a squeaky little Hammond piano and sing over the noise of a tropical rain pounding on a tin roof and a dozen babies crying in the congregation.

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I returned to the States thinking her voice, like one of Thomas Gray's ghosts in *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, would be a "flower born to blush unseen."

Then early last year Dottie wrote. She wanted to come to the States and "cut a record." I wrote back, discouraging her. Too many housewives, and some househusbands as well—many with excellent voices—have spent small fortunes cutting records. Most of these remain stacked in their kitchen or are gathering dust in some church closet. It's sad, but in today's market-oriented world, unless a musician has an agent, a distributor, a traveling "ministry," or a husband who is a host on a national television show, chances are those records will never be heard outside a small circle of personal friends.

I hated to see that happen to Dottie. So I did my best to poke a hole in her balloon.

But gifted people never take "no" for an answer. If God has spoken, they move ahead against all odds. They believe the same God who gave them the gift will provide an outlet for that gift.

A week later she phoned from Panama. It seems an American friend sitting in the little Gamboa Union Church was also hearing from God. He felt the Lord had told him to underwrite the cost of Dottie's record. He wanted her to fly to the States, find the finest studio, the best producer and arranger, and record her own songs before a full orchestra. He was going to foot the bill.

She did just that. She flew to California and spent almost a month "cutting her record"—in English and Spanish.

Dottie Nelson still has no agent, no distributor, no traveling ministry, and it doesn't look as if her husband's going to become a TV host. I have no idea how she's going to market all those records—especially from Panama. But I imagine the God who gifted her will also open the door to spread this gift across the world.

After all, if a kid who draws flowers with faces can bless a generation, why not a young housewife from Panama who has a dream? ➔