

July Edition: When Stars Die

Unite the USA

In this edition, ***Unite the USA*** covers the cultural side of America: Why? Within days, three beloved cultural celebrities passed away: Michael Jackson, Ed McMahon, and Farrah Fawcett. Each star influenced American culture and couture.

Unite the USA hopes to shine a little insightful light on the recent stars' deaths. So, let's take time to focus on what is really important: faith in God. Without Him, life is meaningless.

- To gain insight into life in the face of stars' deaths, read this month's featured article: ***When Stars Die***, a recent most-read favorite on the "700 Club" site. It's written by a co-founder of *Unite the USA*: Stacie Ruth Stoelting.
- In addition, the devotional by Kathi Macias is a perfect reminder of the importance and power of prayer.
- Utilize the helpful links -including a Christian's video response to Michael Jackson's death.

Following our national holiday, let's band together and focus on what is truly important: prayerful interaction with God and accompanying prayerful action!

God bless,

Carrie and Stacie Stoelting

UniteTheUSA.org

When Stars Die

This article, by Stacie Ruth Stoelting, has been a current favorite "most read" feature on CBN.com.

By [Stacie Ruth Stoelting](#)

CBN.com -Michael Jackson. Farrah Fawcett. Stars emerge, shine, and die. Applause matters nothing on deathbeds. (I pray for their families.) Instead, fickle fans mourn and move on... to the next star.

Think of Carlyle Blackwell. Not familiar with him? Well, he was a very famous movie star -in over 180 films!- with a star (#6340) on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. But pollution and street dirt mar his star...and will coat every star to come.

Why look to mortals for inspiration when God loves you like a celebrity? God's awesome immensity infinitely surpasses any man or woman! He's incomparably wonderful! Listen to God's own words from Isaiah 40:25: "'To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?' says the Holy One."

No one is God but God. God's Word remains the final word. Media feature and fracture celebs faster than an exuberant toddler stumbles. Yes, celebrities and non-celebrities sin (fall

short of God; make mistakes) and die. No one lives forever on earth and everyone makes mistakes.

With my little girl, blonde bob and big eyes, I soulfully peered up at my first grade teacher: My clumsy hands had made a mistake...again. With gentle grace, Mrs. Grant said, "You know you're perfect when you never need an eraser. Nobody's perfect, Stacie."

Yes. We all need erasers...or the delete button! (I had to use it on this column. Yes, "Backspace" has to be one of my favorite keys!)

Guess what? Jesus pushes the erase button! He selects and erases every sin of our past, present, and future whenever we ask Him to make us right with God.

God saw to it that you were born! He loves you so, so much. Jeremiah 31:3 sends my heart soaring! In it, God clearly states that "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness."

Fact: You don't have to feel like an unpopular person...groping in the dark for significance and yearning to be liked. Jesus more than likes you: He loves you! He'll brighten your life. The bright light of Jesus never fades! The bright light of Jesus beams out to you now. Will you receive it? I did and it's indescribably magnificent! (My ministry's very name declares this truth: Bright Light Ministry.)

Mortality makes us consider our morality. Does our life match up to the standards of our Life-Giver? God doesn't measure us according to our fame. He notices how we play the game. This week, Gen-Xers felt hit hard. The news of celebrities' deaths reminded them of their own aging and overall mortality. Tricia Goyer said it well in her insightful, applicable book, *Generation NeXt Marriage* (Multnomah, 2008): "If we hold loosely to the things of this world, we will discover eternal riches. What could be better than that?"

I agree with Tricia!

Eat and take home some delicious "take-out spiritual food" from Psalm 84:11: "For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless."

Highlight this and let it sink into your heart: Jesus Christ loves you more than people love celebrities. He doesn't view one person as more famous than another. He loves you beyond expression! He loves me. The King of kings, reigns with unending, glorious radiance! Why reject such a righteous, loving, all-powerful King? He sent His Son to die and rise again for you to live forever. [Click here to meet Him.](#)

Never doubt two things: the devil's evilness and God's goodness. God remains forever good and forever God. No celebrity compares. Could we ask for anything or anyone better than that?

With Jesus, we sparkle like stars in the universe. And I'm not just typing that. It's God's own point! Take a peek for yourself:

"Do everything without complaining or arguing. Then you will be innocent and without any wrong. You will be God's children without fault. But you are living with crooked and mean people all around you, among whom **you shine like stars in the dark world.** You offer the teaching that gives life. So when Christ comes again, I can be happy because my work was not wasted. I ran

the race and won." (Emphasis added to Philippians 2:14-16, NCV.)

Let's shine for Jesus. Through Him, we shine as stars that never die!

Stacie Ruth Stoelting loves to give God glory and share His story! She writes feature articles for CBN.com. She has sung/spoken for the 43rd President, been pictured in major media (i.e. The New York Times), written a book at age 15, and keynoted conferences since she was a teenager. Today, she offers a new conference for those facing heartaches: The Heart Hospital. Her new album, Heavenly, will release nationally in July. Visit www.brightlightministry.com for more information and to send prayer requests.

The Importance of Prayer

By [Kathi Macias](#)

Nearly 35 years ago, as a relatively new believer, I was getting ready to leave a Sunday morning church service when I noticed a newcomer sitting in the pew in front of me, a few seats down. As we all made our way toward the center aisle to exit the building, my eyes caught his so I smiled and introduced myself. We exchanged brief pleasantries, and then, as I turned to move on, I wished him well and promised to pray for him and his family during the week. I had no sooner climbed into my car, however, than I felt convicted of not having taken the time to pray for him on the spot. The feeling that I needed to offer to do so would not go away, though I argued with myself that he had probably already left. Still, I decided to go back into the building to check.

Sure enough, though the sanctuary was otherwise empty by then, the young man sat alone in a pew, his head in his hands, and I realized my sense of urgency had been God's call to prayer. I went to him and told him I believed the Lord wanted me to pray with him, and he began to weep.

"I live just down the street a few houses from this church," he said. "My wife left me a few days ago and took the kids, and I've been so depressed. This morning I decided to give life one more chance by coming here to this church. I told myself that if God would send someone to pray with me, I wouldn't kill myself when I got home. I'm so glad He sent you."

And I'm so glad I obeyed! How often do we say we will pray for someone and then forget our promise? And how important is it to obey God's specific call to prayer? Sometimes that call to prayer comes as a nudge from the Holy Spirit, as it did for me that day more than three decades ago, but other times it comes through a command in the Scriptures. First Timothy 2:1-2 is explicit in its call to all believers to pray "first of all" for those in authority, whether political or church leaders. Are we heeding that command? Do we regularly pray for our pastors, our congressmen, our President, regardless of how we may feel about them personally?

I've been a part of the presidential prayer team since its inception in 2001, meaning that I daily prayed for President George W. Bush, those who worked with him, and their families. It also means that I now pray daily for President Barack Obama, those who work with him, and their families. As a believer I have no choice. If I fail to pray for those in authority simply because I don't happen to agree with them, then I am being disobedient to God. And yet I have heard Christians complain about George Bush and his policies, as well as Barack Obama and his. We seem to be quite accomplished as complainers, but not so faithful as intercessors. In addition to

being disobedient, that makes us poor witnesses to those who don't yet know the One who issued the commandment to pray.

I for one have been guilty many times of promising to pray but not following through. As a result, I find myself becoming critical of others. Whether a young man contemplating suicide or individuals in positions of authority with nearly unfathomable responsibilities on their shoulders, people need us to be obedient and to intercede for them. Let's commit together to use our words "first of all," as the scripture instructs, to pray for and bless people, rather than criticize them. If we do, God will be faithful to fulfill His purpose.

Kathi Macias, a wonderful writer, contributes yet another stellar devotional for Unite the USA. She is a leading author of both non-fiction and fiction books. Visit www.kathimacias.com to learn more about her God-given talents, insightful books, etc.

Quick Links

- 1. Video: Christian Response to Michael Jackson's Death**
- 2. How to Share Your Faith**
- 3. Michael Jackson: Blurring the Distinctions**
- 4. Thousands Remember Jackson**