



NightLight

A NEWSLETTER OF McLEAN MINISTRIES

"take heed....as to a light that shines in a dark place." II Peter 1:19

Volume 279 • August 2016

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A Gift of Music 1- 2

Helen McLean 2

Movies: Stories Not Sermons 3

Closing Thoughts 4

Dear Friends,



Education was in short supply in the small town where I grew up in south-west Mississippi. I often lament what I remember now as wasted days and nights, devouring comics or grazing the black and white TV screen. We only had four channels so the grazing didn't take long. It was the hassle of having to adjust the TV antenna so we could pick up channel 3 Jackson or channel 4 New Orleans that took up time and energy. Baton Rouge channels 2 and 9 came through without having to exert any engineering skills.

Out of sheer boredom one rainy Saturday afternoon when I was about 8, I sat at my grandmother's old upright piano, which made a sound like the kind that is only heard in a TV western saloon scene. Speaking of westerns, I tried to pick out the tune to the theme music of *The Rifleman*, then

Cheyenne, next *Rawhide*. I became quite good at playing parts of such tunes with one finger. My mom was outside a good bit doing something or other. The old house was huge and felt pretty empty during the day while everyone was out and about. So when I wasn't outside, I increased my virtuosity by practicing my way up to two fingers.

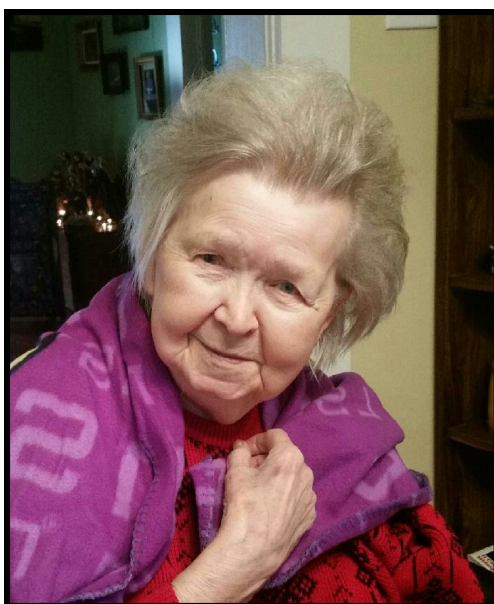
On my 9th birthday, my mom took me into the front living room where none of us children were ever supposed to go. It was a sitting area for company that my three brothers and I would certainly mess up! And of course, we would have for sure. There in the corner was a brand new piano, one that did not sound like it came from the saloon on *Gunsmoke*. I can still smell the wood polish on the keys. All that time I was practicing my two finger keyboard work, Mom had been outside picking up pecans, which she sold. Then with some added money from grandparents she bought me



that piano. I even gave up playing in an afternoon football game so I could sit and try to work out new sounds on that black and white keyboard. Out of frustration at my lack of ability to make music my way, I yielded to my mom's suggestion that I take....God forbid... piano lessons. So began my slow ascent to the use of all ten fingers, first in piano lessons, and a couple of times in fists. They came in handy (pun intended) when I needed more than words to make perfectly clear that playing the piano was not a sissy thing. By the time I was ten, I could play both piano and football with no further controversies. My mom gave me music that day. And God gave me a window into His heart through that gift.

Mom loved to whistle. She also liked to sing. She whistled pretty well but did not sing well at all, so she made up for it by singing loud sometimes. (That's where I got the phrase, "If you can't sing good, sing loud.") After I came into the Jesus Movement in the early 70s, both my parents feared I had been taken into a cult that spoke in strange tongues. One evening after warning me of the danger of weird groups, an amazing thing happened to my Mom. She went to bed as usual. Then, in the middle of the night, she was wakened from sleep by the sound of singing. But it wasn't someone else. It was her own voice singing in another language (not good, but loud!) From that night on, she never looked back with any fear of me being in a cult. Her love for Jesus, a great hunger for His Word, and a quiet life of reading and prayer became the hallmark of my mother's remaining years. She left us Saturday night for her true Home. She can sing now, both loud...and good!

In Loving Memory ♪ Helen McLean



5/20/25 • 7/23/16

Movies : Stories not Sermons



I may upset some folks when I say that I did not like [God's Not Dead 2](#). Here's why. By making atheists into one dimensional demonized bad guys and Christians into the poor but struggling heroes, Christians simply come across as self righteous. The story line of this film did not emotionally hook the heart. It was a sermon rather than a story. Sermonizing does not win people over. There is certainly a place for fact based sermons. When Jesus wanted to instruct His disciples, He gave sermons. But when He wanted to capture the imagination, the heart, then the mind, He told stories.

The Democrats for instance are great at telling stories. They have part of Hollywood and the media to help them do it well. It doesn't matter if the stories are true or not, so long as they move people's emotions. The Republicans only offer facts. This is why talk radio works for conservatives but never works for liberals. Conservatism loves FACTS. Well, we should love facts because they matter! It is a fact if I don't look both ways before crossing a busy intersection I may die! That's a valuable fact. Fact based information may keep you from getting run over, but facts don't stick with the audience or change them. It is STORY that does that. Every good history teacher knows this. So does every bored student who would much rather hear a great story from history than any fact.

Therefore, here is a FACT. If we keep making films that are not human, meaningful, moving, and appealing to the human heart in relational, winsome, beautiful ways we will not win some; we will lose all. Hollywood works hard to make liberalism appear warm, caring, and human. They don't care if it is factual or not. Any lie will be useful so long as it changes the emotions and therefore controls the minds of the general populace. Here's my point. How about we learn to make films that are BOTH factually true AND good stories? We're getting there. Check out [Miracles From Heaven](#), [Heaven is for Real](#), [Do You Believe](#), [Woodlawn](#), and [War Room](#) to name a few. But we still have a long way to go, and films like [God's Not Dead 2](#) are NOT the way to get there.



Closing Thoughts

Mary's paternal grandmother lived to be 95. When she went Home to the Lord, it was not easy for Mary's dad. He carried his memories and his grief with dignity and wisdom, but he was not immune to the emotions of loss and unavoidable vulnerability of emotions that comes with that final ultimate earthly transformation at the passing of one's mother. I learned from him in this, and was prepared to know that I was not prepared for my own mom's passing. Time really doesn't help that much. "She was in her nineties," we say. Yes. What does that really have to do with it? Age is made up of numbers we use to measure the passing of time. The bottom line is that my mom is no longer on this planet. She has always been here, and now she isn't here. I feel so thankful to Jesus that death has lost its power over us. But if I am honest, I also feel....and it is a feeling I know....but I feel....a bit orphaned. That will pass into its proper place in the make-up of who I am. But for now I need to face that and let it be what it is. When its time, the Holy Spirit will transform it into what it needs to be in me: compassion, faith, patient endurance, and the blessed assurance of redemption, reunion, and restoration.



With Love, Clay & Mary

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