

Lawrence Hill, Original ‘Oh Happy Day’ Singer, is Aging Gracefully in the Arts

SENTINEL NEW SERVICE

Lawrence Hill, original ‘Oh Happy Day’ singer is aging gracefully in the arts. After 50+ years in gospel music, he’s still ‘following the notes’ and sharing new inspirational, uplifting, music with the world.

When Lawrence Hill toured the world in 1969, as one of the original Edwin Hawkins Singers, he became a pioneering part of Black music history with the worldwide success of Edwin Hawkins’ hit song, “Oh Happy Day.”

Today, he continues to make waves with the release of his new music “Worry About Nothing.” The release is a much-needed call to bring peace, hope, and love during these troubling times.

In the early 1970s at the height of his music career, Hill took his talents with him to Los Angeles, California. Eager to reach that next level, he turned to songwriting, producing several smash hits for different artists like Gloria Jones who wrote the song, “If I Were Your Woman,” and produced The Commodores’ first album.

Hill and famed rock artist T-Rex co-produced Gloria’s song, “Would You Like to Know.” Throughout the course of his career, he rubbed shoulders with many other icons, including late David Bowie and The Doors.

“Working with them was like working with family,” he said.

Fast forward to the mid-90s, he gained further commercial success as a vocal-



Lawrence Hill

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ist, writer, and actor. He earned credits from the television show “Touched by an Angel,” where he served as a choirmaster for several episodes, and the ABC sitcom “Sister, Sister.” He also accumulated film credits with the films “Eve’s Bayou” and “Caveman’s Valentine.”

“These projects gave me a sense of what’s needed to work in the industry, and it wasn’t all fun and games,” he said.

“You had to be disciplined and be ready to do what they needed right on the spot...to make it hap-

pen.”

Afraid of getting lost in the shuffle of artists affected by the early 2000s music evolution, Hill decided to pool together his knowledge of the music industry and start Inheritance Records.

The specialty label was a byproduct of the blood, sweat, and tears he had put into building his music career years prior, officially launching it in 2012. One of his artists is Patrice MucCular, in which he produced her song and album, “Yes Lord,” distributed by Universal Records.

As a former government

official, working for California state and district attorney offices as well as child services, Hill has also had his hand in political activism.

He additionally served as a lobbyist and union advocate, fighting for laborers’ rights in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. His tireless efforts led to him working directly with former California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and his previous administration.

“I was the only union lobbyist or person that they would allow to come talk to them in their office, other than that, it’s do not cross

their line,” he said.

Now a retired AARP member, Lawrence keeps busy with the multiple music and artistic projects he’s involved in, remaining active in the arts. The author of two books, his works transcend beyond music and into other realms. Hill also serves as a minister of music at multiple churches, allowing him to remain connected to his gospel roots.

When death came knocking at his door, Hill’s life flashed before his eyes—the wake-up call that motivated him to continue leading a productive, purpose-filled life.

“I’ve battled multiple major sicknesses and almost died a couple of times,” he said.

“I’ve had a brain tumor

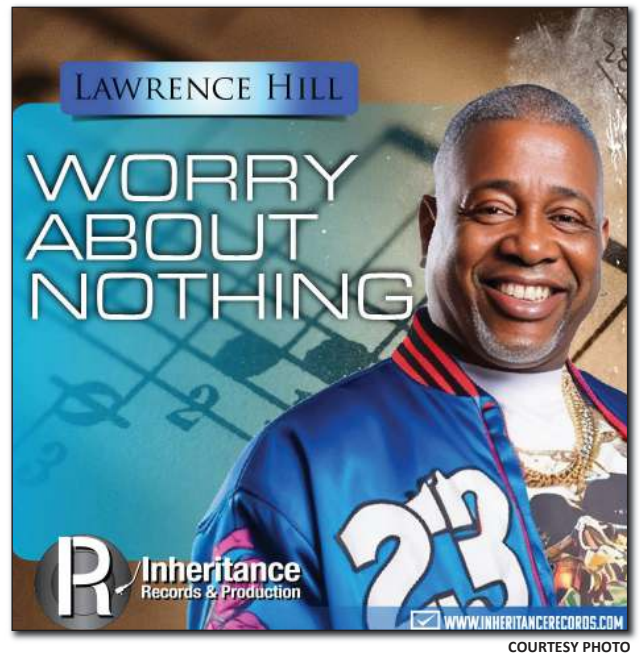
Despite his health struggles, Hill is still standing strong with much to live for and look forward to.

“I’ve started several other ventures [outside of my record label] since retiring, including my own literature publishing company,” Hill shared. He also has a radio drama project in the works.

Since Hill is “still kicking it” in his retirement years, he devotes most of his time and efforts towards completing his passion projects, which indirectly benefit his health and well-being.

“It gives me something to look forward to,” he said.

“As I get older, I can utilize the discipline I’ve developed throughout my career, see what’s in front of me and see victory in every-



COURTESY PHOTO

and also battled prostate cancer but learned to keep it moving. I lost the fear of death through those sicknesses. If you can get over that then earth can seem just like heaven.”

thing...even if it doesn’t happen right away.”

“Worry About Nothing” is available now wherever music is sold digitally. To learn more, visit inheritancerecords.com.

Words of the Week – Friends N Strangers

BY REV. DR. KELVIN
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And if a stranger sojourn with you in your land, you shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwells with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God (Leviticus 19:33-34 KJV).

The other day, I received several text messages from family and friends regarding the events that were transpiring in our city. “What’s going on in LA,” they all were asking.

When I turned on the television and saw that the National Guard had been unlawfully deployed to our city by President Trump, usurping the authority of the Governor Gavin Newsom and without consultation with him or Mayor Karen Bass, I then began to realize that God was speaking a word to the treatment of the strangers living among us.

The recent demonstrations and protests against the unlawful detainment and deportation of immigrants living among us who

may have entered our country illegally require, if not demand, a response from the faith community as to how they are to be treated.

The Trump Administration has made it crystal clear how it feels about the treatment of strangers living among us. With targeted mass deportation and detainment of them, as well as National Guard and military deployment against those who stand with them, the Trump administration has shown no regards for the human rights or due process of strangers living among us, which are the very fabric and foundation of our democracy.

Bad people: murders, thieves, robbers, rapist, kidnappers, and criminals are not the only people who have been and are being rounded up and sent to detainment facilities domestically and deportation facilities abroad. According to the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), of the 51,302 persons detained by the US Immigration Customs Enforcement agency (commonly referred to as ICE) as of June 1, 43% have no criminal record, and many more of them have only minor

offenses including traffic violations. According to the agency’s numbers as of June 11, more than 207,000 immigrants have been deported this year.

It was a series of raids and arrests the other week of non-violent workers in the garment district and at Home Depot stores that prompted the protests in select areas (one square block) of Los Angeles – downtown near a federal building where the ICE offices are located, around City Hall, and the Metropolitan Detention Center. The majority of the protests have been civil, but there has been some looting and property destruction that local law enforcement had under control.

The demonstrations and protests prompted an unwarranted, unnecessary, and questionably unlawful military deployment by President Trump of 2,000 National Guard persons and 500 Marines to our city that escalated rather than deescalated the situation. The Trump Administration has made it crystal clear how it feels about the treatment of strangers that are living among us.

In this Leviticus text, the Lord tells Moses to speak to the entire assem-

bly of Israel and share various teachings with them that will make for peace and prosperity in the land that the Lord has given them. In the first part of



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Rev. Dr. Kelvin Calloway

this chapter, Moses shares with them how they are to treat one another. In the latter part of this chapter, he shares with them how they are to treat strangers/foreigners living among us.

He tells them that they should treat the strangers as they treat themselves (native born); as neighbors. Moses reminds them to do so because of the way they had been treated in Egypt. They had not been treated as neighbors, rather quite the contrary. They were treated like slaves, like bondservants, like chattel property, less than human.

The King James version of the text says that they should not vex the strangers living among them while the New International version says that they should not mistreat the strangers/aliens living with them (v.33). Contrary to the administration’s treatment of them, Moses teaching on the treatment of strangers living among the Israelites was that they should not afflict them, torment them, nor harass them.

Moses teaching to the entire assembly of Israel is not to mistreat the strangers living among them, but rather to treat them like they would treat themselves. To treat strangers with kindness. To treat strangers with benevolence, and generosity, and goodness. To treat strangers with kindness is to be well meaning towards them, and to have a disposition of doing good to them.

Moses’ next teaching to the entire assembly of Israel is to treat the strangers living among them as friends. To treat strangers as friends is to treat them with respect. It is to treat them with dignity, and honor, and consideration. To treat strangers as

friends is to recognize their worth and value as human beings created in the image and likeness of God.

The Trump administration’s mistreatment of the strangers/foreigners/aliens living among us is not just malicious and mean-spirited, but an abomination to God for failing to recognize the image and likeness of God in all people created by God!

Moses’ final teaching is to treat the strangers living among them as neighbors. To treat strangers as neighbors is to treat them with compassion. Compassion, sisters and brothers, is the motivation not to cause pain and suffering, but rather to relieve and alleviate the pain and suffering of strangers. Compassion can best be described as having a sacred heart of boundless love for friends and strangers.

In treating our stranger like friends, we fulfill all the law and the prophets to love God with all our hearts, and souls, and minds, and our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:36-40).

Strangers are here like the weather, but friends are together forever.

Amen and Amen and Amen!