

Mary, Did You Know
By
Bill Dagle

Most of the songs we sing at Christmas date back hundreds of years—earning the title of “traditional Christmas carols.” Today, there are many contemporary songs for Christmas, but the words have little to do with our Lord’s birth. Yet, for the Christian, hope strings eternal. In the song, *Mary, Did You Know?*, the true meaning of Christmas is new and alive again. Besides being fresh and Biblical, it is also the first Christmas carol to be born out of the Southern Gospel music field.

It was during the mid-1970’s, while at Bible School, that I saw Mark Lowry in action. As a student at Lynchburg Baptist College (today, Liberty University), Mark would sing and act up for the Thomas Road Baptist congregation. Good for a song and a laugh, this hyperactive kid had something special. His parents had known this for years, encouraging him to use that energy to honor God. Mark’s night at the National Quartet Convention, with 15,000 in attendance, proved they were on the right track. By 1988, Mark was invited to join the Gaither Vocal Band. Capitalizing on all that energy, Mark Lowry soon became a household name in the Southern Gospel music field. Then, in 1991, the writer and the musician finally met when Mark Lowry gave Buddy Green a Christmas poem with this note attached: “Buddy, here are some God-inspired words. Please add some beautiful music and make it a profitable hit.” Mark later said he sent the memo as a joke. What else is new?

Born in Houston, Texas, in 1958, Mark would eventually settle down in Houston by 1988. It was during that Christmas season that Mark was asked to write the program for the Living Christmas tree presentation at Thomas Road Baptist Church. As he wrote the monologues, he began to think about Mary. Then, from the perspective of a reporter, he started to ask questions: “Mary did you know your baby boy would one day walk on water? Mary, did you know he would save our sons and daughters? How about giving sight to the blind, calming the storm; and finally, did you know when you kissed your little baby, you’ve kissed the face of God” What a question!

With Christian parents encouraging, solid Biblical training, a creative look at our Savior’s birth, and the addition of the Southern Gospel sound, God used all of these to give us a new Christmas carol. It is a carol that will undoubtedly stand the test of time as the traditional carols have. In these songs, we find the true meaning of Christmas, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”