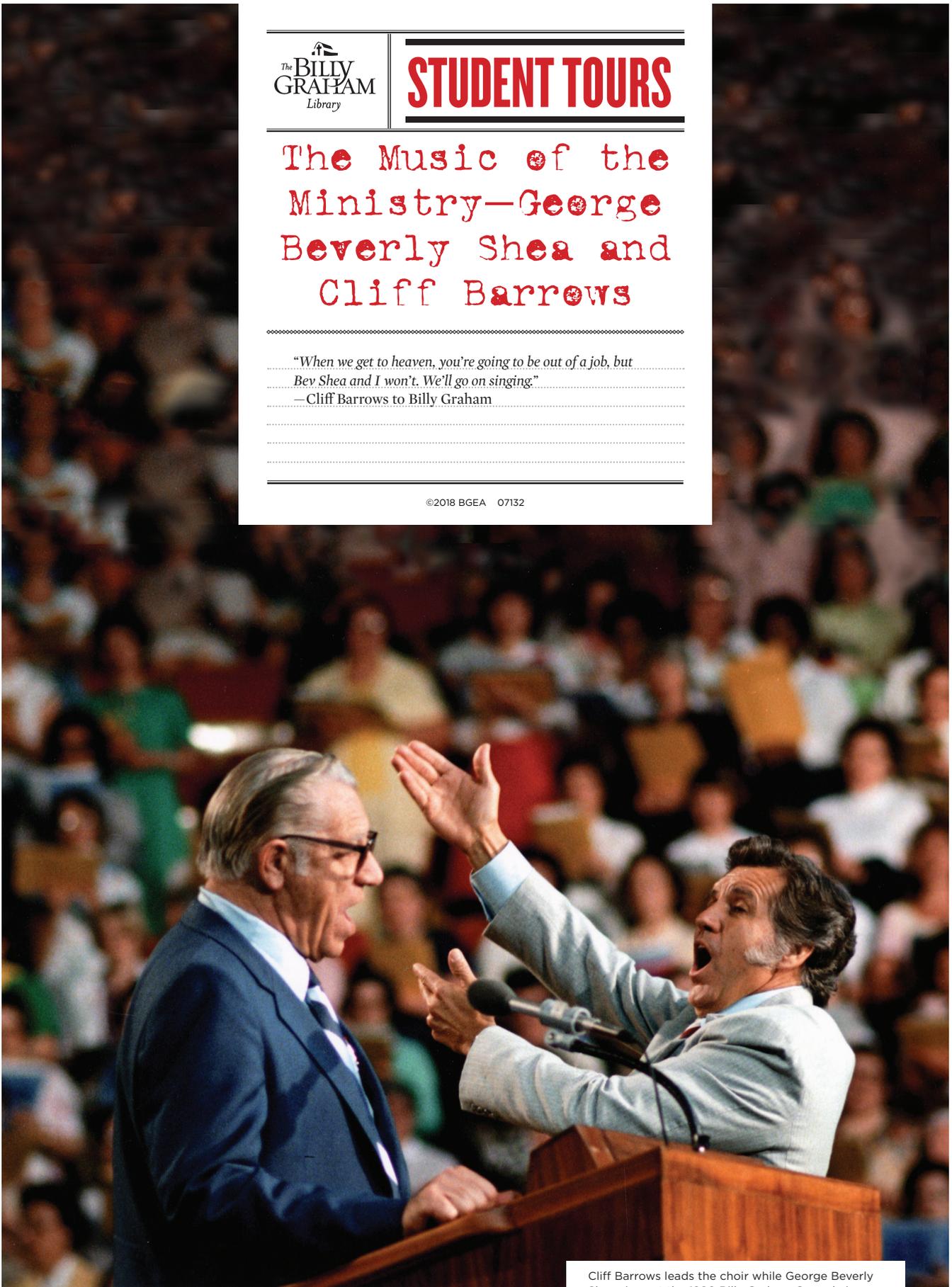


The Music of the Ministry—George Beverly Shea and Cliff Barrows

*“When we get to heaven, you’re going to be out of a job, but
Bev Shea and I won’t. We’ll go on singing.”*
—Cliff Barrows to Billy Graham

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Cliff Barrows leads the choir while George Beverly Shea sings at the 1980 Billy Graham Crusade in Indianapolis, Ind.

The Music of the Ministry—George Beverly Shea and Cliff Barrows

GRADE LEVEL

K–8th

“Cliff Barrows had the tremendous vision for assembling great evangelistic choirs ... No one else worked with 700-800 church choirs from one city to assemble 3,000-4,000 voices. He successfully brought harmony in song and in spirit.”
—Franklin Graham

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- Recognize the contributions of Cliff Barrows and George Beverly Shea to the ministry of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.
- Describe the significance of music in the Crusade programming.

NORTH CAROLINA STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY, ARTS EDUCATION

K.MR.1: *Understand the interacting elements to respond to music and music performances.*

K.CR.1: *Understand global, interdisciplinary, and 21st century connections with music.*

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS

- Anchor 7
- Anchor 8
- Anchor 9
- Anchor 11

Pre-Visit Activities:

- Read and review the attached information with students, and discuss the following questions:
 - What role did Cliff Barrows and George Beverly Shea and their music play in the formation and success of the ministry?
 - Describe the impact of music on the Crusade program. How do you think music delivered the message in a different way while also preparing the audience for the message?
- Watch the following videos:
 - George Beverly Shea Tribute: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWU2evJ8JuU>
 - Cliff Barrows Tribute: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6UL2rFX0Jbc>
 - George Beverly Shea singing “I’d Rather Have Jesus”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHg-o2eGzM4>

Additional Optional Reading:

- *God’s Ambassador*, pp. 39–41, 64

Visit to the Library:

- Students will walk through *The Journey of Faith* tour with an assigned guide. Questions and themes to consider include:
 - What song was sung at the end of each Billy Graham Crusade? Why do you think this song was chosen?
 - Do you think George Beverly Shea, Cliff Barrows, and Billy Graham had a close friendship? What indications do you see? How do you think their level of friendship contributed to the success of the ministry?
 - What songs do you hear as you go through the galleries? Why do you think music is played at the Billy Graham Library?

Post-Visit Activities:

- Students should complete one of the following:
 - Listen to a recording of one of George Beverly Shea’s songs. Write a paragraph describing your thoughts about the lyrics and the music. What do you think the song’s intended message is?
 - Imagine you are a newspaper reporter attending a Billy Graham Crusade. Write a news article about the music there.

The Music of the Ministry—George Beverly Shea and Cliff Barrows

NOTES

“Just as I am, without one plea, But that Thy blood was shed for me, And that Thou bidd’st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come! I come!”

—“Just As I Am”

Pre-Visit Reading: *Just As I Am* excerpt

Cliff Barrows

From the moment I met Cliff Barrows, I knew he had a rare combination of strengths. He loves music, and he knows also the importance of music in touching the hearts of an audience. His uncanny ability to lead a Crusade choir of thousands of voices or an audience of a hundred thousand voices in a great hymn or Gospel chorus is absolutely unparalleled. When he leads the choir in singing “Just As I Am” when I begin the Invitation, he is just as much a part of what the Holy Spirit is doing in people’s hearts as I could ever be. That well-known Gospel hymn has been used by God in Crusades all over the world to draw people to Himself, not only in English but also in other languages as well:

*Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd’st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come! I come!*

Like Billy Sunday’s famous song leader, Homer Rodeheaver, Cliff played a trombone with the best of them—a talent we often used in our earlier Crusades. Ruth remembers one lady—someone recently returned from a remote missionary post (where apparently the only musical instrument was the drum)—who wondered how he managed to slide that instrument up and down his throat so easily! Cliff’s wide contacts with Christian musicians and other artists have brought to our Crusade platforms some of the most inspiring and gifted soloists, instrumentalists, and ensembles in the world.

No one can keep the complicated Crusade platform proceedings running more smoothly than he, whether it is adjusting the pulpit up or down to accommodate a speaker’s or singer’s height or cueing up a song that wasn’t part of the advance plan for the service. He has a dramatic streak in him too—one that has made him a spellbinding storyteller in our children’s meetings (something we incorporated regularly into our early Crusades and have reintroduced in recent years).

Cliff has also overseen with great ability other aspects of our work. Production of *The Hour of Decision* broadcasts, with the assistance of Johnny Lenning, has been almost entirely Cliff’s responsibility. He also has directed the work of World Wide Pictures.

At present he has oversight also of the production of our television ministry, working with our director of communications, television producer Roger Flessing.

The Music of the Ministry—George Beverly Shea and Cliff Barrows

NOTES

But all of that talent is not the secret of Cliff's effectiveness. It is his humility and his willingness to be a servant, which spring from his devotional life and his daily walk with Christ. The love of Christ so monopolizes his heart and will that he never seeks his own advantage at the expense of others or puts another person down. I trust Cliff, and I love him like a brother. No one except Ruth (or perhaps Grady and T.W.) has held so many of my confidences. That does not mean he doesn't have strong convictions of his own, or that, like the other members of our Team, he doesn't express himself freely.

Cliff is a rugged man, equally at home horseback-riding in the Rockies or clearing the brush around his house. But he also has the gentleness and thoughtfulness of a loving father or brother. He is a reconciler; he has held our Team and Crusade workers together many times by enfolding them in his own warm Christian spirit.

When Cliff's hearing was threatened by a tumor a few years ago, and then when his talented and gracious wife, Billie, was diagnosed with incurable cancer, Ruth and I were stricken. We rejoiced with them when Cliff's problem was alleviated, and we wept and prayed as Billie's condition gradually worsened over a period of several years. Her funeral service was actually a celebration—a celebration not only of her life but of the hope we have of eternal life in Christ.

Billie and Cliff had five wonderful children whom Ruth and I love almost as though they are our own.

Cliff now makes his home in Georgia with his wife Ann whom God, in His grace, brought into Cliff's life.

By Cliff's side on every Crusade platform is a talented team of musicians on the organ and piano. For years Don Hustad played the organ; then he left to become professor of church music at Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, where he has trained a whole generation of church musicians. For the past thirty years, John Innes, originally from England, has brought his considerable talents to bear on the organ for us (as well as serving as organist for a large church in Atlanta).

But through the years, I have always known who would be sitting at the piano on my right in virtually every crusade: Tedd Smith. A native of Canada and a graduate of Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music, Tedd first joined us in 1950. One music critic in New Zealand said of his musical skills, "He compels you to look, listen, and think" through his music and poetry. Not only is he an accomplished instrumentalist, but he's also a talented composer and arranger—and a poet too. Often he has worked with Cliff in arranging music and coordinating musical programs. In the last few years, Tedd has helped us develop our special youth-night programs, which make use of contemporary music to reach a new generation with the message of Christ.

George Beverly Shea

No discussion of our music team is complete without mentioning Bev Shea. Like Tedd Smith, Bev was born in Ontario, Canada, where his father was pastor of a Methodist church. I have

The Music of the Ministry—George Beverly Shea and Cliff Barrows

NOTES

already told how we began working together during my brief pastorate in Western Springs, Illinois.

Bev was the very first person I asked to join me in evangelism. He was well known in the Midwest, but at the same time he was humble; he couldn't say no, even to a Fuller Brush salesman! It was God who brought us together. Bev will always be remembered as "America's beloved Gospel singer," whose rich bass baritone voice has touched the hearts of millions in our Crusades and through his sixty-five recordings; one of them, "Songs of the Southland," was awarded a Grammy.

I have sometimes said that I would feel lost getting up to preach if Bev were not there to prepare the way through an appropriate song. But I will always be grateful not only for his musical contributions to our Crusades but also for his warm spirit and his personal friendship over the years. I don't believe I've ever heard him utter an unkind or critical word about anyone.

In 1976 his wife, Erma, died after an extended illness. They had a daughter, Elaine, and a son, Ron, who has become a valuable member of our Crusade-preparation staff. After repeated nudging by Team members, Bev began to date one of the receptionists in our Montreat office. Karlene and Bev were married in 1985 in a candlelight ceremony in our home and now live only a mile from us.

The Music of the Ministry—George Beverly Shea and Cliff Barrows

NOTES

“From the moment I met Cliff Barrows, I knew he had a rare combination of strengths.”

—Billy Graham

Pre-Visit Reading: Biography of Cliff Barrows

“The Christian faith is a singing faith, and a good way to express it and share it with others is in community singing.”

These are the words of Cliff Barrows, music and program director for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, who once led congregational singing and Crusade choirs around the world with Billy Graham. Mr. Barrows first met Mr. Graham while on his honeymoon with his first wife, Billie (deceased), near Asheville, N.C., in 1945. Music played a significant role in the programming of Billy Graham Crusades, for which Mr. Barrows was responsible since they formally began in Grand Rapids, Mich., in 1947. Together, he and Mr. Graham shared the Gospel around the globe.

From the beginning of Mr. Graham’s Crusade ministry, soloist George Beverly Shea and Mr. Barrows were the nucleus of the Crusade musical team. They were joined in 1950 by pianist Tedd Smith, and through the years, organists Don Hustad and John Innes provided additional accompaniment.

“I’ve had no greater joy than encouraging people to sing,” said Mr. Barrows. “Every great moving of the Spirit of God has been accompanied by great singing. I believe it will always be so!”

Mr. Barrows remained active in his later years in the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. He served as host of *The Hour of Decision* radio program for more than 60 years and continued that position for a time through the *Hour of Decision Online* internet radio program, which posted weekly on BillyGraham.org until December 2016. He also served on the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association Board of Directors, beginning in 1950.

In addition to singing at Franklin Graham Festivals and Will Graham Celebrations, Mr. Barrows regularly hosted *Senior Celebrations*, three-day events geared toward senior citizens at the Billy Graham Training Center at The Cove in Asheville, N.C., and *Christmas at The Cove*. He also helped with BGEA’s School of Evangelism ministry for more than 40 years.

For significant contributions to Gospel music, Mr. Barrows was inducted into the Nashville Gospel Music Hall of Fame in April 1988, and into the Religious Broadcasting Hall of Fame in February 1996. Mr. Barrows was also inducted, along with Mr. Graham and Mr. Shea, into the inaugural class of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists’ “Hall of Faith” in 2008.

The Music of the Ministry—George Beverly Shea and Cliff Barrows

NOTES

“His uncanny ability to lead a Crusade choir of thousands of voices or an audience of a hundred thousand voices in a great hymn or Gospel chorus is absolutely unparalleled,” wrote Mr. Graham in his autobiography, *Just As I Am*. “But all of that talent is not the secret of Cliff’s effectiveness,” he wrote later. “It is his humility and his willingness to be a servant, which spring from his devotional life and his daily walk with Christ.”

Mr. Barrows was born and reared in Ceres, Calif. He was married to his first wife, Billie, for nearly 50 years. Then God brought Mr. Barrows and his second wife, Ann, together following the death of both of their spouses to cancer. He and Ann made their home together in Marvin, N.C.

Mr. Barrows, who passed away on Nov. 15, 2016, at the age of 93, had five children: Bonnie, 1948; Robert, 1950; Betty Ruth, 1953; Clifford (Bud), 1955; and William Burton, 1962.

The Music of the Ministry—George Beverly Shea and Cliff Barrows

NOTES

"I've been listening to Bev Shea sing for more than 50 years, and I would still rather hear him sing than anyone else I know."

—Billy Graham

Pre-Visit Reading: Biography of George Beverly Shea

Since George Beverly Shea first sang for Billy Graham on the Chicago radio hymn program *Songs in the Night* in 1943, he carried the Gospel in song to every continent and every state in the Union. He was the recipient of 10 Grammy nominations, two Grammy awards (1965 & 2011) and was a member of the Gospel Music Association Hall of Fame (1978).

As the musical mainstay in Mr. Graham's crusades, Mr. Shea was often called "America's Beloved Gospel Singer." He cannot be claimed, however, by any one country—a Canadian by birth, he is a favorite of people in many nations.

Born in Winchester, Ontario, Feb. 1, 1909, where his father was a Wesleyan Methodist minister, Mr. Shea's first public singing was in the choir of his father's church. Later, he sang with the Houghton (N.Y.) College Glee Club.

Through the years, Mr. Shea was one of the busiest men on the Billy Graham Evangelistic team. Between Crusade, radio, and television dates in many countries, he sang hundreds of concerts and recorded more than 70 albums of sacred music—including nine CDs.

Every hymn he sang was a testimony to the saving power of Jesus Christ and to Mr. Shea's faith in Him. He was a noteworthy composer, and the songs he wrote incorporate the same message. He composed the music at age 23 to one of his best-known solos, "I'd Rather Have Jesus," to words by Mrs. Rhea H. Miller. The poem had been left on the family piano by Mr. Shea's mother, and after reading the words, he sat at the piano and composed the tune. He also wrote "The Wonder of It All," "Sing Me A Song of Sharon's Rose," and "I Love Thy Presence, Lord."

Mr. Shea utilized all available media to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. From 1952, he was heard regularly on network radio, and in more recent years, his bass-baritone voice was transmitted on weekly shortwave programs around the world.

Mr. Shea's network radio singing started on *Club Time*, a program carried for more than eight years on ABC, the Armed Forces Network, and many independent stations. When Mr. Graham, then pastor of the Village Church in Western Springs, Ill., took over the *Songs in the Night* radio program on Chicago's WCFL in 1943, he recalled hearing Mr. Shea's radio singing and enlisted him to help with the broadcast.

The Music of the Ministry—George Beverly Shea and Cliff Barrows

NOTES

That was the beginning of a long association between Mr. Graham and Mr. Shea. In 1947, Mr. Shea went to Graham's hometown, Charlotte, N.C., to sing for the first time in one of Mr. Graham's citywide Crusades.

The fledgling evangelistic team worked together in several other Crusades, and in 1949, the famous Los Angeles tent meetings catapulted Mr. Graham and his associates to national attention. From there, the team went on to share the Gospel around the world.

Because of Mr. Shea's weekly singing on *The Hour of Decision* radio broadcast for many years and his numerous personal appearances, his voice is recognized now in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, South America, and throughout North America.

Like Mr. Barrows, Mr. Shea was a crucial member of the Mr. Graham's Crusade team. Together, he and Mr. Barrows were responsible for overseeing music at each Crusade. Over the years, they were joined by Tedd Smith, Don Hustad, and John Innes.

Mr. Shea is noted for the simplicity of his faith and testimony. To him, compromise was unthinkable. All his life and work was aimed at telling "of the Christ who died for me." A man of deep sympathies, he listened endlessly to the troubles of others but dismissed his own with a word and a smile.

For his significant contributions to Gospel music, he was inducted into the Religious Broadcasting Hall of Fame (NRB) in February 1996, and the Canadian Gospel Music Association presented him with a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004. Along with Mr. Graham and Mr. Barrows, Mr. Shea was inducted into The Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists' "Hall of Faith" in 2008. As a special honor, in 1998 North Carolina Public Television produced Mr. Shea's life story, *The Wonder of it All*, titled after one of his most popular Gospel songs. In 2011, Mr. Shea was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Grammy award by the Recording Academy.

Mr. Shea and his wife, Karlene, made their home in North Carolina. Mr. Shea had two children, Ron and Elaine. In 2013, Mr. Shea passed away at the age of 104.



George Beverly Shea (left) and Cliff Barrows (right) onstage at the Billy Graham Training Center at The Cove.

Post-Visit Reading: George Beverly Shea on God’s Blessings

This interview was conducted just before George Beverly Shea’s 102nd birthday in 2011. Mr. Shea passed away two years later in 2013, shortly after his 104th birthday.

by Janet Chismar, Jan. 31, 2011

Legendary Gospel singer George Beverly Shea received his Lifetime Achievement Grammy award today. Read below as he discusses his friendship with Billy Graham, favorite ministry memories, and thoughts on turning 102.

BGEA: What are your thoughts on being selected for the Grammy award?

Shea: It was a great surprise. The president of the Recording Academy phoned me about a month ago. I couldn’t figure out why he would be calling me, because it’s been a while since I’ve made a new record. I have received a Grammy before, but it was back in 1965. I was very interested to hear about the award. The record executive was very friendly to talk to. He even knew some people at RCA I used to know.

BGEA: Another exciting event upon us is your 102nd birthday. With this lifetime of wonderful blessings from God, what are some of your favorite memories?

Shea: I’ve really enjoyed going to places like New York, Nashville, and Hollywood to do recordings with different arrangers and composers. Back in those days, they used a live orchestra that was right there in studio. One of my favorite recordings I can remember is “Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho”. They wrote a new verse to it, and it was fun to sing.

In my travels, Australia is quite a memory. I went on a musical tour with Cliff Barrows and Ted Smith. Never forget those times.

In 1966 Billy, Cliff, Ted Smith, and I went to Vietnam for 10 days and had the privilege of visiting different places. We had services where 2,500 men were present, and 1,000 men were in the

woods, guarding us. We sang for them and Billy spoke. Through the years, I've actually met three men that were there that time.

Another thing that stands out to me was Korea in 1973. We were there for a week for a series of meetings in different places. The Sunday meeting was held at a black top area for wartime landing. They had the black top painted off in squares, and there were 4,500 people in a square. We had a total of 1,100,000 people there. We are on a platform 16 feet high, and I will never forget the image of all those people as I sang "How Great Thou Art" with a 10,000-voice choir.

BGEA: Tell us how your friendship with Billy Graham began.

Shea: In 1943, I was an announcer in Chicago at Moody (WMBI). One morning on the other side of my glass door stood a tall blond young man named Billy Graham. He came to tell about his interest in my program, *Hymn From the Chapel*. That is how we met and we became acquainted from there. He was 21 and I was 31. That's how we became acquainted. It has been a blessing to be friends with him.

BGEA: Do you still sing in public?

Shea: I still sing at The Cove (Billy Graham Training Center), which is about 15 miles away from my house. I sing there about eight times year, for senior adult events and at Christmastime.

BGEA: What advice do you have for other singers?

Shea: I never put my hand on a knob to open a door. The Lord opened doors for me by having Billy Graham ask me to come sing. And I never even planned on being a Gospel singer!

BGEA: Valentine's Day is coming up soon. What advice can you offer to couples in keeping their marriages strong?

Shea: I've been married to Karlene for 25 years. And it's been bliss spelled with capital "B!" One of the reasons for our wonderful marriage is that I tell her every day that I love her. You have to work at marriage—do kind things, remember birthdays and anniversaries, and enjoy one another's friendship. Serve together—open your home to others so they can come in and enjoy it.

BGEA: As someone who has walked with the Lord for quite some time, what advice do you have for other Christians?

Shea: Keep your devotions, study the Word, enjoy His presence, and learn from Him daily.