



Back Home in World Missions

Back Home, consisting of (l.) Jimmy Layne and Jennifer Layne.

Their name is “Back Home,” they are well-known in gospel circles for their lush vocals, tight harmonies, and captivating lyrical melodies, and they love World Missions!

Back Home consists of Jimmy Layne and his wife, Jennifer. They sing together as if born to the calling. Now and in the coming months they will appear at certain venues with Director Tim Hill on his 22-city “Thanks Again” tour. Their association with World Missions began when their invitation to sing at a local church’s anniversary celebration coincided with Hill’s appearance as the guest preacher. The preacher and the singers discovered they shared the same heart for gospel music and gospel-sharing. Later, the trio accepted Hill’s invitation to sing for missions gatherings.

Jimmy’s personal testimony gives a clue about where the group’s name originated. A series of disappointments resulted in him turning early to alcohol and drugs. Other life complications the young couple suffered, including miscarriages, lost jobs, and personal struggles left them hopeless and helpless, until they turned back to God and back to church. For more than seven years now, they have been “Back Home.” The music he and she have written was born largely from their struggles and subsequent victories through Christ.

For many years the two polished their vocal performance as back-up singers for individuals and groups making records in the country and gospel music industry. Their talented vocals and their hard work as session singers brought them into the orbit of outstanding musical artists, who have become some of their most enthusiastic promoters.

Church home for the group is the South Pittsburg,

Tennessee, Church of God, but they travel widely and can be found in churches and singing venues from Virginia to Texas and beyond. They were greatly influenced by Pastor David Smith, formerly of Trenton, Georgia, now in Monroe, Georgia, and they often seek his ministry counsel.

The Back Home audiences find it difficult to label the exact style of the group’s presentations. It is kind of Southern Gospel, a tad country, somewhat ballad-like, a little bit pop, and occasionally soulful. Pastor Mitch Maloney, of the North Cleveland, Tennessee, Church where they have sung, invented his own classification by labeling their sound “East Tennessee soul.”

While the singers have mastered the delivery of gospel standards, the great majority of their repertoire consists of original songs, often written by Jimmy and Jennifer. They feel strongly that the music they share should offer hope, help, and inspiration to the hearers. Those who hear them testify that that’s the case.

Jimmy and Jennifer stay busy, but they accept invitations to visit churches—and they never turn down an invitation by Tim Hill. Music is in their blood, and now so is missions. It’s a good combination.—*Bill George*