

III. 1900's

A. Haldor Lillenas (1885-1959)



Haldor Lillenas

i. His Life

1. Lillenas was born on Stord Island, Bergen, Norway, the son of Ole Paulsen Lillenas and Anna Marie Lillenas. The family emigrated to the US while Haldor was still a very young child. Living in a sod-constructed home in Colton, South Dakota. In 1889 the family moved to a farm on the Columbia River near Astoria, Oregon. While living in Astoria Lillenas learned English and began to attend school.<sup>58</sup>
2. In 1900 the family moved again, this time to Roseville Township, Minnesota. It was while in Roseville that Haldor (Hal) began attending high school. Hal attended a Lutheran school for his high school years. At the age of 17, Hal began a 4-year correspondence course from the International Correspondence Schools in chemistry and chemical analysis with private tutors. Hal would work as a farm labourer for most of the year, but during the winter he would concentrate on his studies. About 1906, Hal's mother Anna Marie died, and Ole decided to relocate to North Dakota, however Hal decided to move back to Astoria, Oregon. There he would finish his correspondence course and find employment in a chemical factory.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> [http://www.hymntime.com/tch/bio/l/i/l/lillenas\\_h.htm](http://www.hymntime.com/tch/bio/l/i/l/lillenas_h.htm)

<sup>59</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haldor\\_Lillenas#Early\\_life](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haldor_Lillenas#Early_life)

3. Like many Scandinavians at the time, Haldor was raised a Lutheran. The Lillenas family were devout in their religious life, and attended services when held in their area. In fact, Haldor had been confirmed a member of the Lutheran Church at the age of 15. However, from Haldor's own testimony in his autobiography, he stated that he had not experienced "the miracle of the new birth".<sup>60</sup> As still a young boy, Lillenas had been befriended by an elderly woman who taught him English, and about Jesus. As a consequence, in 1906 Lillenas began attending meetings at a mission in Astoria, Oregon.
4. According to McGraw, in his article "*The Preaching of Haldor Lillenas*, in *The Preacher's Magazine*, May 1961, the "singing and testimonies brought conviction to his heart, and later that year he was saved." Soon he was helping in the mission, singing, witnessing with joy to "the wonderful grace of Jesus."
5. NOTE: It must be stated that this mission was connected to the holiness movement, and that one testimony given by a biographer made mention that Haldor was saved, then three weeks later his heart was cleansed.
6. In 1908 Lillenas became a member of the Portland First Church of the Nazarene, then located at 428 Burnside Street. Soon after Lillenas enrolled in the ministerial course of studies, which he began by correspondence. Soon thereafter, Lillenas joined a vocal group connected with the Salvation Army called the "Charioteers' Brigade", which held street meetings and revival services throughout a large portion of California.
7. Due to some generous donations, and the efforts of his pastor at the Portland church, in 1909 Lillenas was able to continue his ministerial studies at the Deets Pacific Bible College, Los Angeles, CA. In addition, he was able to secure part-time work to finance his studies, by the end of the year he accepted the position of music director of a local church, and active in songwriting and preaching. It was during this time that he studied voice at the Lyric School of Music in LA.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *Down Melody Lane: An Autobiography*, by Haldor Lillenas, Beacon Press Hill, 1953, pg. 5.

<sup>61</sup> *The Preacher's Magazine*, "*The Preaching of Haldor Lillenas*, May 1961, pg. 6.

8. The same year he started the church, he also met Bertha Mae Watson, and the next year they were married. As a team they began to sing and compose music.
9. Lillenas published more than 4,000 songs of which he wrote either the words or music or both. Such songs as "Wonderful Grace of Jesus", "He Shall Reign", "I Know a Name".
10. In 1924 Haldor Lillenas founded the Lillenas Publishing Company. Six years later he sold it to the Nazarene Publishing House and became its manager and music editor. Haldor would go on to produce the first Nazarene hymnal, a hymnal of about 700 hymns, eighty-one of which were his own composition.
11. Snippets of the writings of Haldor Lillenas:
  - a. *"I have found a deep peace that I never had known  
And a joy this world could not afford  
Since I yielded control of my body and soul  
To my wonderful, wonderful Lord."*
  - b. *"I desire that my life shall be ordered of Thee,  
That my will be in perfect accord  
With Thine own sovereign will, Thy desires to fulfill,  
My wonderful, wonderful Lord."*
  - c. *"All the talents I have laid at Thy feet;  
Thy approval shall be my reward.  
Be my store great or small, I surrender it all  
To my wonderful, wonderful Lord."*

Note: The above lines are copyrighted, used here in an educational capacity. All rights are held by the Nazarene Publishing House, © 1938.

12. Haldor Lillenas died August 18, 1959 in Aspen, Colorado.
- ii. His Hymns and Songs
1. After the Shadows Cometh the Sunshine
  2. All That I Want Is in Jesus
  3. And Yet There is Room

4. Are You Ready for the Judgment Day?
5. The Bible Stands – # 182 in PHSS (See history below song)
6. Break Forth and Sing of Christ the King
7. A Closer Walk with Thee
8. The Dear Old Bible
9. Tell the Blessed Story
10. Where They Need No Sun
11. Wonderful Grace of Jesus – #131 in PHSS

B. Eugene M. Bartlett, Sr. (1885-1941)



Eugene M. Bartlett, Sr.

i. His Life

1. E. M. Bartlett was born December 24, 1883 in Waynesville, Missouri. He and his parents eventually relocated to Sebastian County, Arkansas.
2. Educated at Hall-Moody Institute in Martin, TN, and at William Jewell College in Liberty, MO. Bartlett received training as a music teacher.
3. An aspiring songwriter, Eugene was able to attain employment with the Central Music Co., a publisher of shape-note singing convention books based in Hartford (Sebastian County), which

was owned by shape-note singing school instructor David Moore and songwriter Will M. Ramsey. Ramsey later moved to Little Rock, upon this occurrence Bartlett persuaded Moore and John A. McClung to partner with him in 1918 to establish the Hartford Music Company, one of Southern Gospel's first significant publishing companies. The company would go on to produce some of Bartlett's first compositions as well as other early Southern gospel songs.

4. In addition to the Hartford Music Company's music publishing interests, Bartlett established the Hartford Music Institute, a shape-note school, in 1921, and began publishing *The Herald of Song*, a monthly magazine covering the quartets Hartford sponsored to promote its products. Albert E. Brumley, the best-known Southern gospel songwriter of all time, attended the Hartford school in 1926 courtesy of Bartlett's financial generosity. Bartlett mentored Brumley, published his first songs, and eventually employed him at Hartford Music.
5. In 1939, a stroke rendered Bartlett partially paralyzed and unable to perform or travel. Amid such bleak circumstances, he wrote his final and most beloved song, "Victory in Jesus," an optimistic number that has been sung by millions in worship services.<sup>62</sup>

ii. His Hymns and Songs

1. He Will Remember Me
2. Jesus Opened Up the Way
3. Just a Little While
4. Victory in Jesus — #418 in PHSS (See history below song)

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<sup>62</sup><https://encyclopediaofarkansas.net/entries/e-m-bartlett-2660/>

C. Baylus B. McKinney (1886-1952)



B. B. McKinney

i. His Life

1. Born Baylus Benjamin McKinney, B. B. McKinney was the son of James and Martha McKinney. He was born in Heflin, Louisiana on July 22, 1886. McKinney attended the Mount Lebanon Academy and Louisiana College in Pineville, Louisiana.
2. McKinney's Bible training and music education came from the Southwestern Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth, TX and the Siegel-Myers Correspondence School of Music, Chicago, IL and the Bush Conservatory of Music of Chicago, IL. Years later the Oklahoma Baptist University would award him an honorary Doctorate of Music in 1942.
3. In 1918, McKinney married Leila Routh, and they had two sons B. B. McKinney, Jr. and Gene McKinney.<sup>63</sup>
4. McKinney served as the music editor for the Robert H. Coleman Co. in Dallas, TX from 1918-1935. In 1919, after several months in the army, McKinney returned to Fort Worth, where Isham E. Reynolds asked him to join the faculty of the School of Sacred Music at Southwestern Baptist Theo. Seminary. He would teach here until 1932, when the financial difficulties of the depression caused the school to reduce its staff, he would then take the assistant pastorate position of the Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

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<sup>63</sup> *Hymns of Our Faith*, by William J. Reynolds, 1964, pg. 356.

5. In 1935, McKinney became the music editor for the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, TN at the invitation of Dr. T. L. Holcomb.<sup>64</sup> In this capacity he compiled and published *Songs of Victory, 1937; Broadman Hymnal, 1940; and Voices of Praise, 1948.*
  6. McKinney wrote about 150 gospel hymns and songs and wrote about 115 tunes for other lyricists.
  7. B. B. McKinney's death occurred in 1952 in an automobile accident near Bryson City, NC while he and his wife was returning to Nashville from a meeting in Ridgecrest, NC.
  8. The following are some of the hymnals and songbooks that he edited:
    - a. *Songs of Victory, 1937*
    - b. *The Song Evangel, 1940*
    - c. *The Broadman Hymnal, 1940*
    - d. *Look and Live Songs, 1945*
    - e. *Songs of Life, 1946*
    - f. *Voice of Praise, 1947*
- ii. His Hymns and Songs
1. All on the Altar
  2. Back to Bethel – #748 in PHSS
  3. Calling You Home
  4. Come unto Him and Rest
  5. Glorious is Thy Name – #57 in PHSS
  6. God, Give Us Christian Homes! – #805 in PHSS
  7. Have Faith in God – #676 in PHSS

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<sup>64</sup> *Hymns of Our Faith*, by William J. Reynolds, 1964, pg. 356.

8. Lord, Send a Revival
9. Wherever He Leads I'll Go – #627 in PHSS (See history of song)

D. Charles E. Moody (1891-1977)

i. His Life

1. Moody was born in Tilton, GA on October 8, 1891. He studied music under A. J. Sims in Dalton, GA, and graduated at the Southern Development Normal School in Asheville, NC.
2. He would go on to serve as the music director for a Methodist Church in Tunnel Hill, GA, later moving to Calhoun, GA in 1927, singing with a gospel group.
3. Charles Earnest Moody died on June 21, 1977.

ii. His Hymns and Songs

1. Because He Loved You and Me
2. Cling to Christ
3. His Love is Precious to Me
4. It Will Be Glory
5. Kneel at the Cross – #360 in PHSS
6. Will You Be Ready?



E. Rhea F. Miller (1894-1966)



Rhea F. Miller

i. Her Life

1. Born March 5, 1894 in North Syracuse, New York.
2. Died March 2, 1966 in Kankakee, Illinois.
3. Not much information is available on Rhea Miller, other than that she was a hymn writer, and that she has for many years been the assumed author of the now popular song "*I'd Rather Have Jesus*" amongst other titles.
  - a. History on the song "*I'd Rather Have Jesus*"
    - i) For many years Rhea Miller has been attributed in the US to writing the lyrics to the popular hymn *I'd Rather Have Jesus*. However, in recent years there has been information out of the nation of Sweden that has shed light on the fact that this claim may not be entirely accurate. We say "may not" because it has not been entirely proved yet.
    - ii) Enter Prince Oscar Bernadotte of Sweden, born in 1859. Prince Oscar was the son of King Oscar II of Sweden and was in line to take the throne of Sweden. However, events would transpire that would change the destiny of his life forever.
    - iii) Prince Oscar served in the Swedish Navy, where he enlisted for 25 years and attained the rank of Vice Admiral. In his youth, he visited the US several

times, beginning in 1876, and sailed around the world from 1883 to 1885 on the Frigate *Vanadis*.

- iv) According to a contributing writer with the newspaper *Dagen* in Sweden, Prince Oscar's mother was influential in his development for the things of the Lord, at a "young age his mind was turned" to the things of Christ. The writer goes on to say, "His mother, Queen Sophia, was a fervent believer. She put her children in the school started by the pastor of the Evangelical Mission, ETUC, Gustaf Beskow. He was Sophia's spiritual adviser and key figure in the revival in the country."<sup>65</sup>
- v) When the decision came for Oscar to remain in the Lutheran church, of which the royalty belonged to, and his father was the head of the country, Oscar left the "state church" for the Evangelical movement in the country.
- vi) In 1885 Oscar would meet Ebba Henrietta Munck (a lady in waiting of the Crown Princess, Victoria of Baden) that had been visiting her brother-in-law. Ebba and Oscar visited the Norwegian sailor church in Amsterdam at the same time. Over time Oscar got to know Ebba and they both soon discovered that they were meant for one another. The problem was nobility was not to marry the common people. If Oscar were to do this, he would be giving up his throne forever.
- vii) Finally, the conflict came to a head between Prince Oscar's father (the king) and his continued seeing of Ebba. Oscar and Ebba were asked to spend two years apart. If after that time there was still interest between the two, then the option of them marrying would be considered.

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<sup>65</sup> <https://www.dagen.se/livsstil/lasarprinsen-oscar-gick-sin-egen-vag-1.312406?paywall=true>

- viii) Two years went by and at the end of those two years, Oscar told his father that if he did not marry the woman that he loved (Ebba), “then he would not benefit the throne”.
- ix) So, the decision was made, Oscar would marry Ebba, however, he would be giving up the right to be the next heir to the throne, instead, his brother next in line would be given that position. Ebba and Oscar were engaged January 29, 1888 and on March 15<sup>th</sup> of the same year they were married in Bournemouth, England by Gustaf Beskow. They were granted the title of Prince and Princess Bernadotte.
- 1) It is at this time according to historians and other sources that Oscar wrote shortly before his wedding the poem *“I’d Rather Have Jesus”*.
  - 2) Snippets from Oscar’s poem: First Line: “I’d rather have Jesus”, Refrain: “Than to be the king of the underground shine / But a slave of sin yarn / I’d rather have Jesus than world crown / and become a child of heaven.”
  - 3) It is very important to note that hymnals in Sweden all note, *“I’d Rather Have Jesus”*, is by Prince Oscar Bernadotte rather than Rhea F. Miller.
  - 4) Note: If one reads the stanzas in the song, it truly makes much sense that these words could have been penned by a king/prince giving up his throne. Note the words of the song.
  - 5) Currently, research is still sketchy to make a definitive decision that the song is truly by Oscar or not. It is quite possible that Ms.

Miller could have loosely based her work of Prince Oscar's poem.

- x) Prince Oscar and his wife would go on to spend their days actively involved with Sunday School teaching, leading youth groups, him preaching in prisons and helping and leading in the YMCA in Stockholm, Sweden, and sitting on the international board of the YMCA.
  - 1) Prince Oscar was stated to have said, "I was more nervous to stand before a group of children, than a filled room of sailors."
  - 2) He was the presiding president of the YMCA in Sweden for 49 years.
  - 3) It is reported that when the prince would interview new employees the first question asked would be "When were you saved?"
- xi) A good friend of theirs, a Baptist missionary Aaron Andersson spoke with them on believer's baptism, but the prince declined in order to not provoke his Lutheran family.

ii. Her Hymns and Songs

- 1. I'd Rather Have Jesus – #150 in PHSS (possibly based on poem by Oscar Bernadotte)
- 2. It Is Worth All It Costs to Be Holy

F. Avis M. B. Christiansen (1895-1985)



Avis M. B. Christiansen

i. Her Life

1. Born October 11, 1895 in Chicago, IL, Avis attended Moody Church of Chicago as a young girl with her parents. At the age of 10 she wrote her first poem. One Sunday morning while in attendance at church, while listening to a song by Harry Loes, the Lord reminded her that the talent she possessed belonged to him. She immediately expressed her desire to use her talent with two written hymns. One of them *“That’s Far Enough For Me”*, was set to music by Daniel Towner, the then music director of the Moody Bible Institute.
2. Avis married Ernest Christiansen in 1917, which later became VP of investments of Moody Bible Institute. Avis would continue to find time to write hymns in spite of the demanding duties of a homemaker. In addition to her hymns, she also published two books of poetry; *“His Faithfulness, 1949* and *Avis Christiansen Avis Christiansen’s Most-Loved Poems, 1962.*
3. Avis would also use pseudonyms from time to time when writing her hymns
  - a. Christian B. Anson
  - b. Avis Burgesson
  - c. Constance B. Reid

ii. Her Hymns and Songs

1. Blessed Calvary

2. Blessed Redeemer – #270 in PHSS
3. I Know His Love is Mine
4. It is Glory Just to Walk with Him
5. Love Found a Way
6. Only Jesus
7. That is Far Enough for Me

G. Norman J. Clayton (1903-1992)

i. His Life

1. Norman was born in Brooklyn, NY January 22, 1903 and died in Carmel, NY June 1, 1992.
2. He was a church organist for 50 years and played for the Word of Life rallies held in New York City by Jack Wyrzten. He worked for the Rodeheaver Co. as a writer-editor.
3. His songs include such well-known titles as; “Now I Belong to Jesus”, “Jesus My Lord Will Love Me Forever”, etc.

ii. His Hymns and Songs

1. After the Night of Sorrow
2. By His Mercy and His Kindness
3. He Lives, the Saviour Lives
4. My Hope Is in The Lord – #388 in PHSS
5. My Life was Full of Sorrow
6. Now I Belong to Jesus – #391 in PHSS
7. We Shall See His Lovely Face

H. John W. Peterson (1921-2006)



John W. Peterson

i. His Life

1. John Peterson was born on November 1, 1921 in Lindsborg, Kansas. Of Swedish heritage, Peterson lost his father when he was only four years old. Peterson came to Christ while still a young boy, he was age 12.
2. James displayed a musical gift early in life, writing his first song while still in high school.
3. During World War II, Peterson served his country in the Army Air Corps, flying the Himalayan supply route to China, the "*China Hump*". After the war he attended the Moody Bible Institute and served on their radio staff there for a number of years. He also attended the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago, graduating in 1953.<sup>66</sup>
4. In 1954 Peterson went to work for Singspiration Music Co. in Montrose, PA. When Zondervan Publishing House bought Sinspiration in 1963, Peterson moved to Grand Rapids, MI, where he served as president and editor-in-chief for over a decade. It was during this time that he compiled and edited the hymnal "*Great Hymns of the Faith*", 1961.
5. At his death at the age of 84, Peterson lived in Scottsdale, AZ.

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<sup>66</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_W.\\_Peterson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_W._Peterson)

6. During his life, Peterson wrote over 1000 songs, and 35 cantatas.
- ii. His Hymns and Songs
1. All Things Work Out for Good
  2. Come, Holy Spirit
  3. A Flag to Follow – #689 in PHSS
  4. Heaven Came Down – #425 in PHSS (See history below song)
  5. Isn't the Love of Jesus Something Wonderful?
  6. It Took a Miracle
  7. I've a Home Beyond the River – #962 in PHSS (See history below song)
  8. Jesus is Coming Again
  9. Jesus Led Me All the Way – #956 in PHSS
  10. O What a Wonderful, Wonderful Day
  11. Open Wide, Ye Doors – #295 in PHSS
  12. Surely Goodness and Mercy