

Choir CD praises, promises a future

By Peggy Kreimer, Post staff reporter

"Hallelujah!"

The word rises like the sun and rumbles like a thunderstorm.

"Hallelujah for the Lord!" The words soar.

"God almighty!" They soar higher. "He reigns!"

Power and joy and laughter pour out of Rev. Richard Fowler's lungs.

He's singing before the Lord, and he's also singing before the morning rush hour, as WCVG radio announcer Avery Corbin plays another request off the new compact disc by Covington's Ninth Street Baptist Church Workshop Choir. The CD, "A Decade of Anointed Praise," opens with a spoken call from Rev. Fowler to sing out in praise, and answers that call with songs that rock like dance music.

"The quality of the music is awesome," said Corbin, who is the morning drive-time announcer for WCVG, a 24-hour gospel station.

The station has become the CD's biggest promoter, and listeners are requesting favorite cuts.

It took a lot of time and money to make the CD, but you need look no further than the children in the pews at Ninth Street to understand the choir's commitment.

Any profits from the CD will be used for the church building fund and a project called the Ninth Street Baptist Academy. It is an effort to focus the church's young people on academic achievement. The church will work with parents to help them help their children with homework and reading skills.

The church also plans to start a personal commitment program in September, which will encourage young people to wear simple uniforms to their classes at public or private schools. Boys would wear a shirt, tie and pants; girls a skirt and blouse.

"Rather than following the crowd, they would be setting the standard in behavior, showing people what Christ-likeness looks like," Rev. Fowler said.

The CD is the culmination of something that started 10 years ago when Rev. Fowler and more than 130 choir members from churches as far away as Hamilton, Ohio, started singing together as a workshop choir. The choir asked Rodney Posey, a nationally recognized singer and choir instructor from Cincinnati, to give a workshop in 1989.

The weekend event stretched into programs lasting four and five days, with Posey teaching new songs, directing, polishing the choir's singing style and showing them how to get more out of themselves and the congregation.

A little more than three years ago, the choir members started talking about making a CD. In December, they made it.

Posey directed the production effort. He also wrote and sings the songs that Rev. Fowler calls the anthems of the project, "Lifter of My Head" and "Be Glorified."

" 'Lifter of My Head' says, when I was ready to give up, ready to throw in the towel, He lifted my head," Rev. Fowler said. "When things get rough. When they look impossible, He's the one, who steps in and says, I'll take it from here, "

The hardest part of making the CD was coming up with the money to pay for technicians and expensive recording equipment, studio time in several different sound and tape studios where more technicians had to mix and splice and re-record.

The choir held a flea market and sold hot dogs at Randolph Park. They played in a celebrity basketball game with staff members of WCVG. They sold tickets to the taping concert at Corinthian Baptist Church in Cincinnati (chosen for its acoustics) and sold ads in a souvenir program book.

"We dug in our pockets and then we would go and borrow some more. We did everything except hock the house and the car," Rev. Fowler said. "At different phases we kept going back to the choir and saying, 'Are you sure you want to do this'? They were sure. They worked to make it happen."

How to order CDs, tapes

"A Decade of Anointed Praise," Elder Rodney Posey presents the Ninth Street Baptist Workshop Choir, is \$10 for a cassette tape and \$15 for a CD.

Tapes and CDs are available at in Northern Kentucky at: A Personal Touch, 401 Madison Ave., Covington; All About Sounds, 420 Scott St., Covington, and at Ninth Street Baptist Church, 231 E. Ninth St., Covington. In the Cincinnati area: Brighter Day bookstore, 5941 Hamilton Ave., College Hill; God's Provisions bookstore, 7426 Montgomery Rd., Silverton, and Cincinnati Bible College & Seminary bookstore, 2700 Glenway Ave., Price Hill.

Listen for the music on WCVG Gospel radio, 1320 AM.

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