



**DOWNING MINISTRIES
INC.**

**PRESS KIT &
PROMOTION
GUIDE**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- About Ann...Page 3
- Just The Facts...Page 4
- Sample Introduction...Page 5
- Sample Press Release...Page 6
- Words for Women...Page 7
- Music Style...Page 8
- Why Promote?...Page 9
- Keys to Promotion...Page 10-11
- Contact...Page 12

ABOUT ANN

More than likely you've seen Ann Downing as a regular on the popular Gaither Homecoming Video series, however, the majority of her time is spent maintaining a full schedule of church concerts and speaking engagements throughout the United States, Canada, and parts of Europe.

Apart from her affiliation with the Gaither Homecoming Friends, Ann's own versatile music style appeals to a wide range of musical tastes and age groups beyond Gaither Video fans.

Ann's unique presentation style is also appealing as she comes down from the platform to communicate with the audience on a very personal level. Her spontaneous, off-the-cuff delivery gives the feeling of a conversational visit rather than a rigid formal program.

Raised on a cotton farm in rural Mississippi, Ann grew up dreaming of the day she'd sing Gospel music all over the world. Right out of high school she began to realize her dream by securing a position with the legendary Speer Family. Five years later she met Paul Downing. Suddenly, Ann's dream of singing with the Speer Family for the rest of her life seemed like something she should reconsider. Paul proposed- twice. That's quite the story! Soon after marriage, Ann and Paul co-founded a group that helped shape Gospel music as it exists today. Ann became the winner of her

industry's highest honor—the Dove Award—for Female Vocalist within a year of co-founding the Downings and went on to be inducted into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame for her work with the Speer Family.

Today, Ann continues to expand her mark on Gospel music through solo ministry. She is also a speaker and author (*Skidmarks on the Road of Life*). Ann enjoys speaking at women's events and retreats, seniors' events and retreats, and lay retreats. Her favorite event every year is the women's retreat she and Paul were planning just before he passed way, Middle Tennessee Women's Retreat.

Her Gospel music career spanning more than fifty years, Ann enjoys various awards and accolades, but she's open in sharing that standing on stage or in front of a camera makes her no different than her greatest fan. Fading success; she's been there. Crumbling marriage or financial ruin; she's been there, too. Lost a spouse or experienced a devastating trauma in your family; Ann can relate.

What do you do when you can't "fix" what's wrong in your life or the lives of those you love? What do you do when circumstances beg the question, "Do you really believe what you've said about trusting God?" Ann's intensely personal story is one that reaches us right where we are and helps us hold firmly to the promise "Earth Has No Sorrow That Heaven Can't Heal."

JUST THE FACTS

Awards and Accolades

1998 Gospel Music Hall of Fame Inductee
1997 Grand Ole Gospel Reunion Living Legend Award
1973 Singing News Queen of Gospel Music Award
1970 Dove Award: Female Vocalist of the Year

Radio Highlights

Solo:

May 1999 #8 "Climbing Jacob's Ladder" (# 25 Song of the Year)
December 1995 #16 "Gettin' Ready Today"
January 2006 "He Already Knew Me" debuts at #46

The Downings:

September 1977 #17 "I've Got A Song In My Heart Again"
June 1977 #20 "It's My Desire"
November 1976 #6 "Operator"
September 1975 #15 "I Feel So Good About It"
March 1975 #12 "Oh I Want To See Him"
March 1974 #3 "Greater Is He That Is In Me"
March 1974 #16 "Caught Up Together"
March 1973 #2 "I'll Soon Be Gone"
October 1972 #6 "I've Got Confidence"
July 1971 #16 "Gettin' Ready Today"
May 1971 #15 "Happiness"
April 1971 #5 "City of Gold"
October 1970 #1 "Sheltered In The Arms Of God"
September 1970 #10 "He Touched Me"
May 1970 #3 "Going Home"
January 1970 #1 "Jesus Is Coming Soon"
January 1970 #3 "I'm Free"
January 1970 #19 "I Believe What The Bible Says"

Songwriting:

December 2011 #10 "Bring On the Joy"; Downing/Williams;Tribute Quartet

Author

2009 Skidmarks on the Road of Life

Television Highlights

Reality Check with Ann Downing
Gaither Gospel Hour
The Downings
Christian Television Network, various programming
700 Club
Praise The Lord, TBN
The New Jim Bakker Show
Gospel Singing Jubilee
Crook and Chase, TNN

Tour Highlights

Hosts her annual "Middle Tennessee Women's Retreat"
Speaks at women's conferences all across the U.S. & Canada
Performances in Israel
Performances in Ireland, Scotland, England, and Canada
Concert at Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral
Billy Graham Crusade in Nashville, TN 2000

SAMPLE INTRODUCTION

We often receive requests for ideas on how best to introduce Ann. We have condensed Ann's ministry and accomplishments and provided this sample introduction to help you communicate to the audience who Ann is and what she does. We hope you will find this helpful when introducing Ann. Sample endings are also provided.

More than likely you have seen Ann Downing as a regular on the Gaither Homecoming Videos seen nightly on televisions around the world; however, the majority of her time is spent traveling as a soloist and speaker throughout the United States, Canada, and parts of Europe. Celebrating more than 50 years in Gospel music, Ann is the winner of various awards in the field including the much sought after Dove Award for Female Vocalist and induction into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame.

Ann comes to us from Nashville, TN where she hosts her Middle Tennessee Women's Retreat each spring.

We are delighted/excited to have Ann with us at.....(insert church name)..... to share her ministry and what God is doing in her life.

Various endings:

Let's give her a big....(insert city or church name).....welcome...**ANN DOWNING!**

Make her feel welcomed.....**Ann Downing!**

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

Contact: (Name)

Phone: 333-333-3333

genericemail@email.com

church website or www.anndowning.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dove Award- Winning Christian Music Artist, Author, and Speaker to Make Local Appearance

Nashville, TN (**insert date that press release is submitted**)

Ann Downing, a popular soloist on the Gaither Homecoming Video Series, will appear (**insert date of event**) in (**insert city/state**) at (**insert church or other venue name**). The concert is scheduled to begin at (**insert time**).

Celebrating world-wide broadcast success, including the number one spot on Billboard Magazine's chart for video sales (surpassing all other categories and genres of music), Ann has been included in almost all video tapings since their original success in 1991. "Reunion", the second video released, is dedicated to the memory of Paul Downing who appears on the video but passed away unexpectedly prior to the release date.

Her career as a successful Christian recording artist has taken Ann from childhood on the family cotton farm in rural Mississippi to many of the nation's largest venues including Carnegie Hall, the Crystal Cathedral, and the Billy Graham Crusade in Nashville. In addition, Downing Ministries also home to Ann's Middle Tennessee Women's Retreat (MTWR). MTWR is an annual event held in the Nashville area each spring and is open to women regardless of age or denominational ties.

For more information regarding Ann's appearance, please contact (**insert contact phone number**). Please direct other requests to Downing Ministries.

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Press Kit available at www.anndowning.com/press-kit

Downing Ministries, INC.

PO Box 767 Hendersonville, TN 37077

Speaking Topics from the Heart and Life of Ann Downing -

- Ann uses her gift of music to enhance each speaking session
- 45 min. sessions are ideal for a one-time speaking event such as a brunch or banquet.
 - Several topics are combined for weekend long events.

WORDS FOR WOMEN

- I QUIT (45 minutes- 1 hour)

You reach the end of the rope, so you tie a knot and hang on, but what do you do when you've tied a rope full of knots and still find that nothing changes? Through her intensely personal story, Ann Helps you identify two surprising words that may change your life.

- FATHER KNOWS BEST (45 minutes - 1 hour) Can be combined with "I Quit" for a one day event.

It is a story that seems destined for the big screen, but even Hollywood can't top God's work in the lives of his children! From dramatic start to heartwarming finish, you'll learn about the Father's loving care as Ann shares how God turned the 56 most painful days of her life into a new beginning for one special teenager.

- I'M A SURVIVOR (45 minutes)

Sometimes life votes you off the island and you feel like you are the weakest link. When you are out of life-lines and there is no friend to phone, how will you make it in the real world? Ann turns to the Bible to find the first real survivor - and wouldn't you know that person was a woman? Travel with Ann as she ventures down the path of Ruth and learn to find the divine harvest of purpose in your own life.

- ENOUGH OF THE FLUFF... GIVE ME THE REAL STUFF! (45 minutes)

Comfortable Christianity, move over! Wave goodbye to laid-back religion; this is where the rubber meets the road! When life forces you out of the hymnbook and off the pew, how will you respond? Walk with Ann on a journey that takes you face to face with your faith and challenges you to put it into practice.

- ABOVE ALL ELSE (45 minutes)

You check the mirror once more to make sure you're in the best condition possible, but have you checked your "heart condition" today? Through a series of "heart scriptures", Ann helps us learn what our Heavenly Father puts 'Above All Else' and what "heart-titudes" He desires us to possess.

- NO STRINGS ATTACHED (45 minutes)

Love and acceptance... we all want it, but it seems difficult to find without the expectation of something in return. How can we possibly show our very personal selves to others or even to God? Sharing the story of making a gift for her craft-talented mother, Ann communicates that, beyond a doubt, we're loved... strings and all... with no strings attached.

MUSIC STYLE



Music style. There is, perhaps, no more divisive item in the life of the modern church. It is a generational divide, but it is a divide that can be bridged. Downing Ministries is no stranger to this struggle. Extensive travel and participation in multiple churches of every denomination prove that the real battle is against perception, and in many cases, it is a perception based on assumption rather than personal, factual experience.

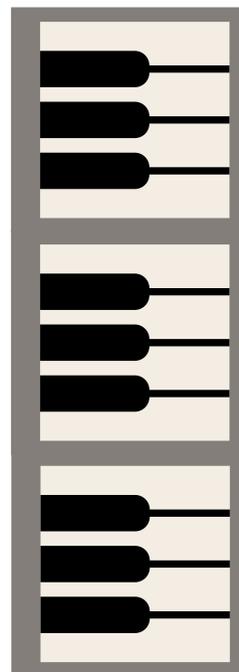
Time and again, Downing Ministries receives correspondence from pastors who are shocked to hear from the youth and young adults of their church following an event. What are the most common remarks? "We really enjoyed Ann Downing. That's not what we thought she would do. We've never heard music like that before." Did you catch the main themes of their comments? "We've never heard music like that before." "Not what we thought."

Downing Ministries will not satisfy an ear in search of rock-n-roll, rap, or heavy metal, and while those styles may not be this ministry's specialty, it would be disingenuous to claim they have no place in worship. For some people and circumstances, they absolutely do. Will Downing Ministries bring lighting and smoke machines for effect? No. Do we disagree with those who do? No. Why? Because the Holy Spirit will move wherever He sees fit, whenever He sees fit, and some people may hear better through those means. Ministry and worship have no set format neither do they have only one sound.

If your church is comprised of hearts in search of encouragement, wives and mothers in search of hope, young people starved for attention or a kind gesture that says they matter, men and women desperate to know that life can be joyful again after the loss of a spouse, Downing Ministries is a strong ministry fit for your congregation.

What will Downing Ministries bring to your event? You can expect uptempo rally cries and songs of affirmation. You can expect mellow contemplative songs that call us all to a higher plain of living out our faith. You can expect transparent honesty presented in a personal, professional, not overly produced style. You can expect laughter. Downing Ministries is comprised of real people who live real lives dealing with the same fallen traits of humanity that everyone encounters on a daily basis. People want to know that we struggle just like they do, but beyond that, they want to know how God helps us face the challenges of each new day. This is exactly what Downing Ministries will bring to your event.

Downing Ministries believes the effectiveness of worship is determined by the message and presentation of the music, not the style. We have our preferences, but we realize that preferences do not equate to right and wrong. In light of eternity, it is interesting to ponder exactly where music style will rank on Jesus' list of things that should have consumed our time on Earth. We happen to believe it may not rank at all.



WHY PROMOTE?

An event can only be as successful as the promotion efforts ahead of time. That's not to say that Downing Ministries measures the success of an event by the number of people in attendance because we don't, but it is a logical cause and effect relationship. You schedule Downing Ministries. We provide promotion materials and ideas with the reasonable expectation that you want to draw as many people as possible.

Imagine you arrive at a venue early, set up, and are in place to greet attendees as they arrive. Now, imagine 4 of every 5 people greet you by saying, "We didn't know we were having a special guest today." How disheartening! Especially so if the event has been booked for several months. Sadly, this is a weekly norm for just about every ministry on the road.

Ministries aren't unreasonable in their expectations. We're not looking for Elvis level crowds, but without promotion efforts, even Elvis would have had far fewer sobbing, swooning people singing along. People have to know something is happening, and they have to sense that it's exciting. This is the number one reason for promotion. It helps build this sense of excitement. And to be sure, if the lead promoter isn't excited, no one else will be either.

If you are a pastor, obviously ministries understand that your time is bound by many constraints, even more-so if you are bi-vocational. For this reason, Downing Ministries highly recommends finding someone in your church or planning committee who genuinely loves people, has a knack for striking up conversation, and doesn't mind asking questions if they aren't sure about something. People with these qualities are ideal for heading promotion efforts.

Christian self-help author, Florence Littauer wrote a book titled, "It Takes So Little to Be Above Average." Originally published in 1983, the truth of the title is exponentially greater today! With very little effort and very little investment, your promotion plan can far exceed the typical.

On the following pages, you will find several promotion ideas. Many seem common sensical, but if you employ only three of the items listed, you'll already be doing more than 85% of other events or churches that schedule outside ministries. Yes, you read that right. On average, only 15% of events bother to promote. Why else would Downing Ministries devote this many pages to the subject?

For most events, about a month ahead is the ideal time to begin heavy promotion although some will reap greater benefit from a longer period of concentrated effort. If you have questions about the best time and in what order to begin, it will be our pleasure to help you put together a timeline for promotion. Contact the Downing Ministries office for more information.

KEYS TO PROMOTION

- 1) There is likely a sign in front of your church or venue that has a place for posting a custom message. Why not use that space to advertise your upcoming event? Cost: FREE!
- 2) You will receive a personalized flyer for your event. Please post copies in your church or venue to help keep your people excited and reminded of the event. Why not use bathroom stall doors, bulletin board space, Sunday School classroom podiums, or other such locations to post these? Be sure to leave them up until after the event. Cost: FREE!
- 3) You will also receive a digital version of your promo flyer. Feel free to distribute this to people who are willing to repost on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and email personal invitations to people in their email address books. This is also a way to make new-comers feel welcomed at your church long before Downing Ministries ever arrives. Cost: FREE!
Hint: The Events page at anndowning.com will have your event posted complete with flyer. You can share this directly from our website to the church's social media accounts as well as personal accounts. Hint Hint: If the church has projection, why not include the flyer in pre and post service slides and/or use it during announcements?
- 4) Word of mouth will always be one of the most effective ways to peak interest in your event. Encourage people to talk about the event with everyone they know and everyone they meet. Use this promo kit to create a half or quarter sheet that includes Ann's bio and/or the flyer for the event. Make these available to your members or planning committee to hand out as they spread the word. Cost: Maybe a little ink and some copy paper, but word of mouth is FREE! Bonus: This also helps new-comers feel welcomed at your church.
- 5) Newspaper is still a viable way to advertise your event. Some local papers won't charge for actual ad space. Others will. Most newspapers have a religion or church events section and allow you to have a small written (no picture) announcement at no cost. An ad with a photo and nice layout will always garner more attention. Downing Ministries has a sample ad and will gladly send a copy to you upon request. Cost: Minimal to moderate, possibly FREE!



CONTINUED KEYS TO PROMOTION

- 6) Christian Radio will usually announce the event and even play Ann's music leading up to the day of the event. Keep in mind that some Country stations have Christian programming on Sundays. Gospel Music stations are usually open to interviewing Ann on-air in the days leading up to the event. If you have a local station, it is completely acceptable to check with them about an interview. This is one way Downing Ministries can help you advertise locally no matter where we're located. Ann is always happy to do this. After you've made the initial contact with the radio station and gotten the name and number of the contact there, give that information to Karissa. She will handle scheduling the actual interview. Cost: Should be FREE! If they're going to charge you, Downing Ministries recommends using other free methods unless you have a budget set aside for this kind of advertising.
- 7) Do you frequent businesses in your community or surrounding area? Ask if they will allow you to post information about the event at the entrance, register, or in the restrooms. Most stores also have a community bulletin board.. Cost: FREE!

Other Useful Ideas

- Setup a phone tree or use a "robo call" to remind people the day before or even the day of the event.
- Don't forget the church bulletin, another free way to keep members reminded and excited. Inserts are an effective addition to your efforts.
- Mail postcard invitations. Use the PDF flyer you'll receive to create a postcard sized announcement. Be sure to include a short handwritten note, too. Think about how you feel when you receive handwritten mail in these days of everything electronic.
- Give the event a special name. Let Downing Ministries know ahead of time and we will customize a flyer to include your specific event information.
- Make it a service project, i.e., request that attendees bring a nonperishable food item or a small toy for a Christmas shoebox.
- Get creative. You may come up with the promotional tool of the century.

Downing Ministries does not recommend mailing information to other churches. Do invite other churches. This is highly encouraged, but it is best to call the pastor or make a personal visit. Always hand deliver promotional material to another church. Mailed packets usually land in the trash, unopened.

DOWNING MINISTRIES INC.



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