

Christian Rock Pioneer Larry Norman Dies

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News of Norman's death was announced at his official Web site by his brother, Charles, who said that Norman's "heart finally slowed to a stop." Norman had been semi-invalided following a severe heart attack in 1992.

Dubbed by the media as "the father of Christian rock," Norman recorded three albums for Capitol Records in the 1960s, including the seminal *Upon This Rock*. He later signed with MGM Records for *Only Visiting This Planet* and *So Long Ago the Garden*.

He founded his own label, Solid Rock Records, in 1975 and went on to release more than 50 other recordings, though his output was affected for more than a decade by partial brain damage suffered in a 1978 airplane accident.

Norman was also instrumental in nurturing the early careers of musicians Steve Camp, Keith Green, Mark Heard and Randy Stonehill. Norman was inducted into the Gospel Music Association Hall of Fame in 2001 for his music that was recognized as "an unlikely mix of love songs, the Gospel message, and wry commentary on American culture" that "exemplified the goals, ideals and standards of everything the original architects of contemporary Christian music intended for it to be."

In a personal message dictated to his brother for his Web site

shortly before he died, Norman said that he felt like “a prize in a box of cracker jacks with God's hand reaching down to pick me up... I am ready to fly home.”

He thanked people for their prayers and support, ending with, “Goodbye, farewell, we'll meet again/Somewhere beyond the sky/I Pray that you will stay with God/Goodbye, my friends, goodbye.”

Funeral details have yet to be announced.—**Christian Retailing**