

Gospel Artist Timothy Wright Dies

✖ **April 24, 2009** – The Rev. Timothy Wright, a Pentecostal pastor and GRAMMY-nominated gospel artist, died Thursday in a New York hospital, a spokesman told the Associated Press. He was 61.

Wright, founding pastor of Grace Tabernacle Christian Center Church of God in Christ in Brooklyn, N.Y., had been seriously injured in a July 4 car accident that killed his wife, Betty, and their teenage grandson.

Considered by many to be the “godfather of gospel music,” Wright released more than a dozen gospel recordings. Along with The N.Y. Fellowship Mass Choir, Wright was nominated for a GRAMMY award for best traditional soul gospel album for 1994’s *Come Thou Almighty King*. He was again nominated in that category for the 1999 album *Been There Done That*.

His latest album, *Jesus, Jesus, Jesus*, released in 2007 and was widely acclaimed. Recorded live at a Church of God in Christ (COGIC) annual convention, the title song describes a woman displaced during Hurricane Katrina who encourages herself and others by calling Jesus’ name. Another track, “You Must Come in at the Door,” was also a Top 10 gospel recording.

In late June he released a book, *Who’s Really on the Lord’s Side*, based on his award-winning 1995 CD, *Who’s on the Lord’s Side*.

According to *Uncloudy Days: The Gospel Encyclopedia*, Wright was born in Brooklyn and began playing piano at age 12 in the COGIC church his family attended. By 1969, when he was in his early 20s, Wright was presiding over the music department at Washington Temple Church of God in Christ, a prominent

congregation led by the late Bishop F.D. Washington.

Wright wrote songs for gospel musicians such as Mattie Moss Clark and the Rev. Isaac Douglas, according to *Uncloudy Days*. Wright wrote all but one of the songs on Douglas' classic 1971 album, *Let's Go Higher*.

In 1976, he formed the Timothy Wright Concert Choir, whose top selling releases include *Who's on the Lord's Side*. He later recorded with choirs nationwide, popularizing such songs as "Troubles Don't Last Always" and "Master Can You Use Me."

Wright was critically injured in July while returning home from a COGIC convention in Detroit. His vehicle was hit head on near Loganton, Pa., by a car traveling in the wrong direction. His wife, Betty, 58, was killed in the crash. His 14-year-old grandson, D. J. Wright, died the following day in an area hospital. The driver of the other vehicle also was killed.

Funeral details are to be announced.