

ANDRAE CROUCH: Legendary Artist Never Compromised the Gospel

The pop, soul and funk sound of the 1960s undoubtedly influenced singer/songwriter Andraé Crouch to a great degree. But Crouch, who grew up in the Church of God in Christ in California, never compromised the gospel of Jesus Christ through his music throughout his legendary career.

The words to two of his biggest hits, "The Blood Will Never Lose Its Power" and "Jesus Is the Answer," couldn't have been expressed any better if they had been preached by a Pentecostal/charismatic from the pulpit. And it was that genuineness that endeared him to so many in the music industry.

Crouch passed away at the age of 72 in January after a heart attack and a bout with pneumonia. The gospel icon was mourned not only by those in the church and the Christian music industry, but also by those in the secular music world. Contemporaries and celebrities like Prince, Stevie Wonder and Quincy Jones paid tribute to him at his widely attended memorial service.

Following Crouch's death, Steve Strang, *Charisma* founding editor and publisher, who interviewed Crouch as a young reporter in the 1970s, wrote of the legendary performer: "His impact on gospel music cannot be overestimated. He was a crossover artist who made the black gospel music sound part of the Contemporary Christian Music mainstream."

Like Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King Jr., Jackie Robinson and Thurgood Marshall, Crouch was a major inspiration for many African-Americans. "He (Crouch) broke the wall of segregation where black gospel wasn't being played or being accepted,"

gospel entertainer and friend BeBe Winans said during Crouch's memorial service.