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Author Says Personal Peace Comes From Within, Shows Steps to get There

By Jo Jordan -- WDC Media News

2006-02-23 -- It's no accident that author L. David Harris has become a man of the people. From his humble beginnings growing up in a troubled family environment in New York City, to implementing a collaborative worldwide ministry, the award-winning author of the recently published *Know Peace Within: A Life in Transition*, has been ministering to everyone in his life since the very beginning.

"I've never known the tender and compassionate love of a father," explained Harris. "My dad seemed not to know how to be a family. There was neglect, related to basic care, like not having heat in the winter, or paying school fees on time. He did not show my mom and sister the kind of respect, love, and protection that men ought to give the women they are responsible for protecting."

But Harris persevered. Today, in addition to being an author, he is a local church elder and Bible teacher at the Community Praise Center Church in Alexandria, VA. Though the majority of his experience is in adult ministries, in the absence of a full-time youth pastor Harris has worked as an interim youth ministries coordinator at the Praise Center since July 2005, and is extremely passionate about his role in worldwide faith-based teaching.

"One of the most valuable lessons I have learned is that no person is an island," said Harris. "We all need others to move forward in life. By caring for people, we lose focus on our own problems. This does not make our problems disappear, but it gives us a more important focus: the welfare of other people."

Harris was fortunate to have the love and support of his mother, his sister Lisa, and "Uncle Chester," who he credits with teaching him many basic things about how to be an exemplary person.

"The basic courtesies he modeled for me have not fallen by the wayside," said Harris. "My uncle told me about the importance of giving, and having a strong work ethic. I still open doors for women, and let them get off elevators and public transportation before I try to get on. He taught me this."

Harris, who is an assistant registrar at Columbia Union Christian College in Maryland writes an online devotional for the college's website. He also contributes a regular column for the long-established magazine *Message*. His articles have been published in various other magazines, including *Insight* and the *New York Christian Times*. He is also the author of the two-volume devotional set *Alive at 5—Victory in Retrospect*. Recently, Xulon Press selected his work for an upcoming inspirational collection it is publishing.

"We cannot allow our so-called disadvantages to hold us back," stressed Harris. "I had many of the risk factors for failure; I am a product of the inner city, a college dropout from a dysfunctional family, and I have been told negative things all my life. But I have survived. A power outside of myself has been leading all of the way."

In December 2004 Harris, who has been happily married for five years to Simone C. Arboine, had a conversation with his mother-in-law, Ivy, that helped inspire him to write *Know Peace Within*.

"Ivy just has a passion for people who are seeking peace in their lives," he said. "As I thought about the way she is, and our conversation, somehow it immediately resonated, and I recalled my own journey. My mind was suddenly flooded with ideas about writing a book that would guide other people toward spiritual calm. *Know Peace*



Within reflects the trials and tribulations I have experienced.”

Harris was born in Rochester, NY and moved to New York City when he was three years of age. He spent some time as a youth in Jamaica, NY, but then moved to Washington, DC in July of 1991 to study psychology at Columbia Union College. Later, he trained and served extensively at CSAAC – a nonprofit agency dedicated to helping persons disabled by autism. Eventually Harris worked in the field of behavioral psychology in direct care at Rockville, MD’s Community Services for Autistic Adults and Children, and later in middle management.

“One of the most important things I learned working with people who have autism was patience,” he said. “It might take six months for minute advances to take place. It became vital to appreciate every small, desirable behavioral change. This helped me to value all people, and notice the good things in them, no matter how seemingly insignificant.”

As a high school senior, Harris met John Stoddart, who was at the time a much sought after college-aged musician. Stoddart, currently signed to Reprise Records, is now an accomplished producer, writer, composer, and instrumentalist who has graced the albums of numerous Grammy/Dove and Soul Train nominees and winners. At Columbia he was accompanist to the choir Harris belonged to; today they attend the same church. One day Stoddard approached Harris, and asked to contribute a song to his next book project.

“I was amazed that John would approach me because to many people he is considered an icon,” explained Harris. “But because John is a genuinely humble guy, you would never know he is so much in demand. We brainstormed over the next few months, and decided we could do better at spreading the message we share if we did it together.”

They came up with a downloadable companion song for Harris’ book. Like the ministries Harris has established, Know Peace Within is truly a collaboration born of the knowledge he has gleaned during a life time of challenges, valuable input from those who know him best – and who have inspired and encouraged him to bring the Word to others – and the gifts of talented people who believe as strongly as he does that living a spiritual life is a natural part of humankind’s purpose on this earth.

Harris manifests his passion for God all over the world, through his collaborative and Internet ministries, broadcast testimonial interviews, speaking engagements, published articles, and his books. He believes strongly in reaching out in all ways, including all people into the fold.

“Its ‘collaborativeness’ is the most beautiful aspect of my ministry,” explained Harris. “I have a vision of people working together for a common purpose. Today I have a nucleus of folks who I work closely with to get the message out to our dying planet.”

Three people Harris works most closely with are recording artists Angela Bryant-Brown, Denise Barclay, and Gylchris Sprauve. Together Harris and Bryant-Brown produced 15,000 spiritual brochures, and – along with their families, friends, and other members of various communities – they took to the street, giving them out to people nationwide.

“We wanted to give these folks hope where none seemed to exist, so we did it ourselves,” he said. “This is an integral part of our vision toward having a worldwide platform from which to mobilize people and encourage everyone to share what they have with those in need. As our ministry grows, we will use our influence to inspire humanitarian efforts that will have an eternal effect.”

Harris is a passionate writer, and believes that spiritual writing is a natural extension of his life’s work. In order to protect creative identity, so readers all over the world have access to his words, he has retained full distribution rights for his books. Likewise, to maintain theological control, Harris’ ministry is entirely independent, which means it does not receive funding from a church or institution.

“My goal is to become more interdependent and interactive with those who share our vision and goals, in order to make the largest impact on peoples’ lives,” he said.

For more on L. David Harris, his ministry, and his writings, visit <http://thewritingsofdavidharris.com>.

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